



Meath School

Behaviour Management (Including Bullying) Policy

Mission Statement

We work to create a calm, supportive, learning environment where high standards of behaviours are expected and respected from all members of the school community.

Introduction

This document builds upon what is considered to be the best and most effective practice, and provides a formal structure within which this practice may be implemented consistently and fairly. It is designed to ensure consistency of application in encouraging respect and tolerance for others, rewarding positive attitudes, good behaviours and creating a positive and safe environment for everyone.

The document incorporates Behaviour Management, Reasonable Use of Force (Physical Intervention), Preventing Bullying, e-Safety (also see e-safety policy), Screening Searching and Confiscation, and 15 appendices.

The pupils at Meath School present with severe and complex speech and language disorders (including high functioning ASD learners) which affect, to varying extents, their ability to understand and use language effectively for all communication.

It is therefore essential that staff appreciate the difficulties a pupil may have in understanding what is expected of them, and in coping with the frustrations of their communicative challenges.. We must also recognise the communicative importance of all behaviours whether they conform or not. For some pupils, a lack of understanding of verbal or unwritten rules mean they require a highly structured approach to achieve good standards of behaviour.

We recognise that some children may:

- Need their own established routines for security and to be able to cope with the demands of the school environment.
- Need visual representations/explanations/to understand how to undertake even basic social action.
- Have strong feelings that they need to express.
- Be hypersensitive to sounds, light, touch, taste, smell, the weather or the proximity of others.
- Have a logical reason for apparently illogical behaviours.
- Be fearful of things or places that are associated in their minds with unpleasant experiences.
- Be fearful of pressure to comply.
- Appear rude without intending to be so.

- Find it difficult to accept overt praise.
- Have a restricted understanding of their own and others emotions and impact consequent.

Aims

The aims of this policy for pupils are to:

- Develop pupils' self esteem, discipline and self regulation and control
- Develop pupils' independence and sense of responsibility
- Develop a strong sense of community amongst all
- Develop social awareness and skills
- Develop a positive, non threatening environment for all
- Enable all pupils to be on task and fully engaged with their learning
- Encourage accountability for their behaviours

The aims of this policy for staff are to:

- Provide consistency of expectations and handling across the school teams.
- Build confidence when dealing with difficult behaviours
- Offer safe guidance
- Provide a safe and secure environment for adults and pupils
- Be an integral part of and provide a positive, non-threatening environment

Standards of Behaviour

- We expect that all in the community should have respect for themselves and others. This respect should show itself in the care of individuals, their property, their learning environment, and their and others' right to learn, socialise and be happy.
- We expect that no-one in the community should deliberately hurt themselves or others, or deliberately spoil or destroy their own or others' property.
- We expect all in the community to be aware of, and take responsibility for, the safety of themselves and others.

It is recognised that achievement of these standards of behaviour will be part of a developmental process for all pupils at Meath.

Principles

- Every pupil should be considered as an individual, and in the context of their school and home environments.
- Every pupil has the need for a secure and safe environment where caring relationships allow time for the development of self-discipline and control.
- All pupils should have learning behaviours which underpin and promote progress.
- Where possible, the pupil should be proactively involved in monitoring and changing unacceptable behaviours. Pupils are encouraged to use discussion and negotiation to develop awareness of their own behaviours and to promote self-discipline.
- Poor behaviour patterns should be turned around to lead to positive learning experiences. We should be working to change the behaviours, not the personality.

- Good behaviours should be based on encouragement and reward within a context where interactions between staff and pupils, staff and staff, pupils and pupils are rooted in mutual respect.
- Good behaviours should be overtly recognised using descriptive praise – if we tell people what we like about what they are doing we are reinforcing the behaviours we want to promote, eg
 - 'I like the way you came the 1st time I asked
 - I noticed how kind you were to A
 - Good helping X to play that game
 - Thank you for not shouting out
- De-escalation techniques and pre-emptive strategies are always used before any other behaviour interventions (see Team Teach strategies).
- The Principal is ultimately responsible for behaviour at the school. Meath has a multi-disciplinary working group (Behaviour At Meath) whose remit is to ensure best practise with children, that all policies, procedures and guidance are followed, and that support and practical guidance is available for all staff.

Rules, Rewards and Sanctions

- The pupils play an active part in choosing and listing the rules and sanctions in a variety of contexts, whilst taking into account their age and level of understanding. Rules are expressed positively, in as concrete a manner as possible, and are displayed within classroom. The core team (class, care, and playground support) is responsible for establishing and maintaining this 'code of conduct'. The School Council will liaise with pupils in setting and agreeing school rules. The lead professionals are also responsible for acquainting students, volunteers, etc with this code, and determining who will allocate or impose the agreed rewards and sanctions.
- Standards of good behaviour are encouraged by a wide range of positive reinforcements. These are used according to the individual needs of a pupil, group or class.

The kinds of rewards and reinforcements used are:

Verbal, i.e. praise
 Stickers
 Success charts
 Non-verbal, i.e. encouraging gestures and facial expressions
 Negotiated rewards, i.e. trophies, preferred activities
 Toys
 Certificates
 Awards
 Community recognition (i.e. at Celebration Assembly)

Food (e.g. raisins) is only used as a reward/motivator for pupils in Red Class when they first join Meath as often this is the only motivator they have known or can understand. This is withdrawn and replaced with the above rewards as soon as possible. Food rewards should never be offered outside of Red Class pupils

- Sanctions should relate to the actions the pupil has committed or be seen as consequences of certain behaviour. They should be brief, clear and to the point, and implemented as soon as possible dependent upon the age of the child. Sanctions should be discussed with pupils (when the pupil is calm and able to understand why they have been used).

Sanctions can include:

- missing part, or all of an activity or playtime, usually in order to complete unfinished work
 - time out for calming down/thinking time, for example being given space, being withdrawn from a group or early bedtime
 - withholding a reward or success indicators (eg. no green spot on charts).
 - referral to a senior member of staff
- Prohibited sanctions are as follows:
 - corporal punishment
 - deprivation of food or drink
 - restriction or refusal of parental/carer contact or contact with friends, except where it is an agreed plan for protection
 - wearing of distinctive or inappropriate clothing as a punishment
 - use or withholding of medication, or medical or dental treatment
 - the locking of a young person in a room at any time even when accompanied
 - inappropriate physical intervention e.g. pinning down

After school detentions are not used as it is not practical due to taxi arrangements for our pupils. If work is not finished due to a pupils' refusal or behaviour then time will be made to complete it in break times, making sure that they still have time to eat/drink and use the toilet.

Extra Support

We recognise that some of our pupils need extra individual support to manage their behaviour and the staff team working with them, sometimes with outside professional guidance, will put into place individual plans.

- For those individuals who are known to have behaviours that could present a danger to themselves and others, a risk assessment form is used as necessary. (see Appendix A). Staff using the form for the first time will complete it with the help and guidance of one of the Leadership Team.
- Consistent responses must be used by each adult in the class team/care group to each child, so that the child can learn to maintain the expected standards of behaviour, including the use of agreed vocabulary, signs or symbols. These responses will be formally agreed as an outcome of a Focus Meeting in a Behaviour Support Plan (see Appendix B), or in a less formal meeting between team members concerned about a child's behaviour. It is the responsibility of the team members involved to ensure that information about agreed responses is available to all who have regular contact with the child, and that progress is monitored. The daily morning staff briefing meetings should be used to share this information across all staff to ensure consistency. Behaviour Support Plans should be in view in the staff room. Care staff should have full information at handovers. All Behaviour Support Plans (and Risk Assessments) must be filed in the appropriate class/office files.

Severely disruptive behaviour which includes damage to persons or property will be taken very seriously and would swiftly lead to a Focus Meeting of the professionals working directly with a child. The Functional Analysis of Problem Behaviours [see Appendix C] may be helpful in guiding an individual or team through consideration of the problem.

Programmes have been developed to help Meath's younger population with behaviour management:

- Red Beast
 - The Red Beast (K.I-Ghani) is a book written about controlling anger in young children with Asperger's Syndrome. Behavioural science shows us that when a child is angry, they simply cannot listen or be reasoned with. Attempts to placate the child often fuels the anger often resulting in injury or destruction. The approach used in the book seeks to depersonalize the anger. It is possible to enable the child to see the anger is like a 'beast' that needs to be tamed. By teaching techniques to children when they are calm and providing somewhere calming to go, with calming activities, the children are able to re-gain some control of their emotions. The impact of the intervention is always positive: to ensure that self esteem is restored.
- Comic Strip Conversations –
 - Comic Strip conversations (Carol Gray, 1994) are a simple method of representing a conversation in a visual format. Using Comic Strip conversations various aspects of an interaction can be represented such as what someone is saying, how they might be feeling and what their intentions might be. Using simple stick figures, symbols and colours to represent an interaction, the different elements of an exchange can be presented visually so that more abstract aspects of social communication (such as interpreting the facial expressions of others) are made more 'concrete' and therefore easier to understand. Comic Strip conversations can be used to help a pupil understand a specific interaction and to understand the positive aspects of the interaction and where a communication breakdown may have occurred. It supports the pupil to see the interaction from the perspectives of others involved, and to further understand the emotional state of others involved. Comic Strip conversations can be used in conjunction with The Zones of Regulation as the same colours can be used to represent the emotional states of the people involved.
 - O.T. Resources and Toolbox

Once a child has been identified as having self regulation needs then an individual toolbox is compiled for that child in collaboration with the OT department. Staff working with that child are advised by the O.T. Department what strategies/input may help. Staff working with that child will then support the child to identify what will work best to self regulate at the time when it is needed.

Each class LSA is responsible for OT resources being appropriately available in close liaison with the OT team.

- Zones of Regulation
 - The Zones of Regulation programme (Leah Kuypers, 2011) is a visual framework to support effective self-regulation. Self-regulation can go by many names such as self-control, self-management and impulse control. The programme is designed to help pupils recognise when they are in the different emotional zones as well as learn how to use strategies to change or stay in the zone they are in. There are four zones; blue, green, yellow and red. The blue zone is where a pupil will be if they are feeling in a low mood such as sad or a low arousal state such as tired. The green zone is the optimal zone for learning and where pupils will be if they are ready to learn, focused, happy and calm. The yellow zone is where the pupils will be if they are not ready to learn because they are over aroused, feeling worried, silly, excited, frustrated, scared or overwhelmed. The red zone is where pupils will be if they are feeling angry and out of control. Pupils in all classes receive specialist input to increase their emotional vocabulary and learn how to read facial expressions body language in others, and the impact of their actions on the feelings of others They are supported to recognise emotions and arousal states in themselves and then taught strategies to help them return or to stay in the green zone. Pupils are taught that it is OK to be in any of the zones and that we all experience the different zones for different reasons. Emphasis is put on the strategies we can use to help ourselves. The zones room is in place for the children that are having difficulty self-regulating in the classroom, and is designed so that the pupils will use appropriate strategies (e.g jumping on the trampoline, rolling on the roller, deep breathing) in order to return to the green zone. They can ask, or be asked to have some time in that room,
- G.A.S. (Good Attainment Scaling) targets setting and analysis of data should be used at any point to clarify antecedents, times, and progress in behaviours (see Appendix D). They are helpful in setting small, achievable steps to improve behaviours.
- The system of Red Discs will be used to ensure that no adult is unsupported in a difficult situation, or remains in need of assistance (see Appendix E for details of the procedure). The walkie-talkies can also be used to call for additional adult support if required
- Disruptive behaviours are identified and tracked (see Appendix F) and thereafter a Behaviour Support Plan will be produced as a result of a focus meeting. The Behaviour Support Plans are accompanied by full notes of explanation as to their purpose and use. Any use of the Calm Room must be included in the Plan with associated details. These plans are not active until signed off by Meath staff lead on behaviour. Plans should be emailed to families and signed that they understand and accept the plan. This should then be shared at the morning staff briefings and with the Care team where appropriate.
- A short time in the Calm Room can be requested by a child / suggested by an adult, , always with adult supervision (outside the room if an adult presence in the room would exacerbate a child's negative feelings) The 'Calm Room' offers immediate, short-term provision in order that, uninterrupted the child can calm and become safe. It is a place for children to re-regulate their emotions. Whenever possible, the reasons for requests to go to this room will be made clear to the pupil [and consequently to their parents/carers]. Only one pupil will occupy the room at any one time. It is a place which has been cladded and is completely free of furniture or any other, possibly harmful, distractions. If a highly agitated child agrees to go to the Calm Room, but will not stay long enough to calm or will not agree to go , the staff member will then need to:

- a) Use Team Teach physical interventions in order to keep the child and others safe, and/or let the child run in the school grounds, and track them closely (alerting another adult as to the situation)
- b) call for extra adults (including the leadership team) to keep the child, other children, staff and property safe.

Whilst a child is in the Calm Room, a staff member must position themselves so that they can always see the child. The staff must regularly ask the child if they are calm and safe to leave the room. Children are taught to request time in the Calm Room (or Safe Tent) so that they can calm themselves before they become unsafe.

Parents/Carers

- Staff work in partnership with parents/carers and the pupil, with the aim that standards of behaviour will be explained and maintained consistently throughout the school and home environments. Telephone calls, the home school diary, informal meetings with parents/carers and visits from the family support worker are all used to maintain communication and cohesive behaviour management between staff and parents/carers.
- Parental/carer understanding and support of this behaviour policy, and the reinforcement of this policy whilst the children are at home, is continually encouraged. For this reason, a copy of the Behaviour Management (inc Bullying) Policy is given to parents in their school induction packs, and Parents Guides on Behaviour and Bullying (Appendix G) will be distributed to parents/carers at the beginning of every academic year. Parents/carers can request a fully copy of the Behaviour Management (inc. Bullying) Policy from the school at anytime, or download it from the Meath School website. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the class team with regard to any queries, concerns or suggestions for improvement.
- Parents must be informed daily via the Home/School book where physical intervention and/or the Calm Room are used.
- The family support worker is available to support all families/carers and staff with behaviour management issues and to put plans in place in the home where needed.

Exclusion

In the unlikely event that we needed to temporarily exclude a child, the school would follow the ICAN Exclusion Guidance and Procedures (policy available on request).

Occasionally, because of the complex needs of the children at Meath, it can become apparent as they progress through their placement that their needs around behaviour have become such that we are no longer the most appropriate placement. If this becomes the case, the Principal and staff involved with the child will work closely with the parents/carers and LA to aid transition into a more appropriate placement.

Physical Contact, Intervention and Use of Reasonable Force

This section should be read in conjunction with:

Education and Inspections Act 2006 section 93: Power of members of staff to use force
www.legislation.gov.uk.

Use of reasonable force: Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf.

What is reasonable force?

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances, such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or by blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact, such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to manage a pupil. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil. (*Use of reasonable force, July 2015*)

The Team Teach approach to managing behaviour has been agreed and adopted as our central system. All staff are provided with regular training and should adhere to its principles and practice. Physical interventions are only a small part of a broader range of the positive handling strategies to address the needs of those whose behaviour presents as a challenge. Any physical interventions used should be 'reasonable, proportionate and necessary'. Our aim is to reduce the use of physical interventions by influencing attitudes, skills and knowledge.

There are many situations in school where staff come into physical contact with pupils. These situations may be classified as a continuum of physical intervention. This ranges from least contact, for example hand on hand to guide or, a Team Teach 'Friendly Hold' used as a contingent touch, through to greatest contact, for example physical restraint, when a pupil is unable to manage their own behaviour, which is deemed unsafe..

School staff do not require parental consent to use force on a student in serious incidents. The impact of this must be reviewed on a regular basis. All Team Teach physical intervention must be logged in the normal way.

When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to manage pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgment of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.
- The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Where it is necessary to use physical contact, intervention or use of force, in order to modify a pupil's behaviour to prevent them from endangering themselves, other people or school property, clear guidelines and procedures are necessary.

Due to the nature of the special needs catered for at Meath School, staff are aware of their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments. However, we recognise that it is sometimes necessary to use physical intervention or use of force in order to ensure the safety of all. It is essential to plan for incidents which might involve actions.

- We have a clear behaviour management policy which aims to enable us to teach pupils how to behave appropriately and how to learn how to control their own behaviour.
- Pupils are clear about which behaviours are unacceptable and what will happen if their behaviour remains unacceptable.
- We inform parents/carers of unacceptable behaviour and the action that we will take in the event of unacceptable behaviour.
- Staff are trained and guided to manage the behaviour of the pupils.
- Additional support can be requested, if necessary.

DfE guidance makes clear that all school staff have a legal right to use reasonable force and that their duty of care will include physical intervention to keep a child or other children safe. At Meath, all staff are trained in the Team Teach approach and may use 'REASONABLE FORCE' when de-escalation (the 95%) has failed to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing in:

- Hurting themselves or others.
- Causing significant damage to property.
- Causing serious disruption to the maintenance of good order and discipline in school.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.
- In school only, to maintain good order and discipline. This cannot be used in the residential setting.
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight.
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

This applies when a member of staff is at school or has control of pupils during an off-site activity. The Team Teach approach has been selected to support our work in school. All permanent Meath School staff who have pupil responsibility are trained through the 12 hour basic course as soon as possible after the start of their employment.

As far as possible, it is preferred that only Meath staff who are qualified Team Teach Practitioners (i.e. following a 12 hour course) are called upon use physical interventions.

Guidelines for Events Involving Physical Intervention or Use of Force

The purpose of physical intervention or restraint is to allow the adults to regain control. It is never to punish.

Physical intervention or restraint should be used only when absolutely necessary. It is the last resort in managing a pupil's behaviour. Always use the minimum force necessary for the minimum time. Official guidance refers to 'reasonable force'. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result. The clearest lawful justification is that the actions of the adult are reasonable, proportionate and in the best interests of the young person. Under Human Rights legislation, they should be absolutely necessary:

- When it is necessary to 'hold' a pupil, hold to restore calm; do not initiate aggression.
- In this circumstance, tell the pupil that you are keeping them safe and that they will be released when they are calm.
- Call for assistance.
- All other pupils should be removed from the area.
- Use the 'help protocol' appropriately.

Following the incident:

- Ensure that the incident is recorded in the Physical Interventions and Behaviour Log books within 24 hours. If the incident was witnessed by another member of staff, they must sign your recording on the form to endorse it. If the other member of staff prefers, they may make a separate report (and should always do so if they disagree with the initial account).
- Incidents involving any physical restraints will be reported to parents/carers daily.

As a group of staff, we try to support one another in all aspects of managing the pupils, including behaviour. No one should feel that they are alone in managing the pupils' behaviour; we work as a team.

We recognise that any incident requiring physical intervention or use of force is distressing for both pupil and staff. Debriefing of incidents will take place to support staff and children. This may take the form of end of day briefing or a planned meeting. This will be initiated by the Behaviour At Meath team.

Following an incident involving physical intervention or use of force, if the member of staff involved feels that they need some time out, colleagues should cover in order to facilitate this.

The Principal and other members of the Senior Leadership Group are here to offer help, support and to share responsibility.

A database of incidents, across both school and care settings, is maintained and monitored by Senior Managers and other relevant staff. Analysis of incidents will identify merging patterns and trends with a particular focus on monitoring the frequency of different groups, such as primary need (disability), age, school phase, race, gender, 'looked after children' and all other groups included within the protected characteristics of the Equality Duty (2011).

Power to Search Pupils without Consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable, given the circumstances, to conduct a search for the following 'prohibited terms':

- Knives and weapons.
- Alcohol.
- Illegal drugs.
- Stolen items.
- Tobacco and cigarette papers.
- Fireworks.
- Pornographic images.
- Any article that has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.
- Radicalisation/prevent text/objects.

Force **cannot** be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

What happens if a student, parent or colleague complains or a student is injured?

- All complaints / allegations that a physical intervention was 'unreasonable', used undue force or injured a student must be notified to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LA DO) in line with NSCB procedures
- Similarly, the advice of the LA DO will be sought in relation to any use of force that is not conducted in line with the school's 'physical contact' guidelines or where colleagues have expressed concern that the intervention was not proportionate.
- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution, or other civil or public law action.
- When a complaint is made, the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Schools should refer to 'Keeping children safe in education' (DfE 2016) and the I CAN 'Managing Allegations Against Staff' policy (see the 'Further sources of information' section below) where an allegation of using excessive force is made.
- This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought.

- Schools must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.
- If a decision is taken to suspend a staff member, the school should ensure that the staff member has access to a named contact who can provide support.
- The organisation should always consider whether a staff member has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against the staff.
- As employers, I CAN and its schools have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that appropriate pastoral care is provided to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a 'use of force' incident.

When dealing with complaints, please refer to the Managing Allegations against Staff Policy.

What about other physical contact with pupils?

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school.
- When comforting a distressed pupil.
- To provide intimate or personal care.
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised.
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during therapy, PE lessons or sports coaching.
- To give first aid.
- In the residential setting at bedtime

References and useful guidance

Use of reasonable force in schools (DfE 2013 amended 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf

Keeping children safe in education (DfE 2016) – especially part 4

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf

Guidance on physical intervention for children with additional needs

<http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/learning-disability-assets/statementonrestrictivephysicalinterventionswithchildren.pdf>

I CAN Managing Allegations Against Staff policy

I CAN Disciplinary policy

Meath School Child protection policy

PREVENTING BULLYING

At Meath we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell an adult of their choice and know incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. Bullying behaviour will be taken very seriously and it is recognised that meeting the needs of both the pupil/s affected by the behaviour and the perpetrator are of equal importance when dealing with any incident.

We expect pupils to act safely and feel safe in school. They should understand the issues relating to bullying and feel confident to seek support from school if they feel unsafe.

We would also want parents/carers to feel confident that their child/children are safe and cared for in school. They should feel that incidents, when they do arise, are dealt with promptly and according to this policy.

Bullying is not confined to the school premises. It may also occur outside school, in the local community - on the journey to and from school.

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet also has new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims (see e-Safety Policy).

Bullying can take place between:

- Young people
- Young people and staff
- Staff
- Individual or groups

What is Bullying?

Bullying is planned, repeated behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that has purposeful intent to hurt another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

How does bullying differ from teasing/falling out between friends or other types of aggressive behaviour?

- Bullying is vindictive
- There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate
- There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves
- It is usually persistent

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent - if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of hate crime related bullying and cyber-bullying. If the victim might be in danger, then urgent intervention is required.

Bullying can include:

Emotional	being overtly unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any other use of violence

Racist	racist taunts, graffiti, gestures, behaviour or language that makes a pupil feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, religion or national origin
Sexual	unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
Homophobic	occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people
Verbal	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, false accusations.
Cyber	All areas of the internet, such as email, internet chat room misuse, mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities to deliberately upset someone else. (Also see e-Safety Policy).
Special Needs	manipulating or making the disabled person do something they should not, or deliberately engineering their discomfort or isolation

There is no hierarchy of bullying - all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

It may not always be possible to convey to our SEN pupils exactly what bullying means in the way that other children and adults understand it. Clear rules about what is and is not permitted in the playground, classroom and care setting may be a more appropriate method of dealing with unacceptable behaviour. It is not helpful to label a child a 'bully' if he/she is unable to appreciate what this involves. With older/more able pupils it may be possible and necessary to work towards an understanding of what bullying is. Meath pupils can misinterpret some interactions as bullying, but investigation often reveals confusion around the word "bully" and the concept that underpins it (e.g. with our ASD learners).

The aim of our preventing-bullying policy is:

- To assist in creating an ethos in which attending Meath School is a positive experience for all.
- To make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable.
- To make everyone feel safe and pupils feel encouraged to report incidents of bullying.
- To support and protect victims of bullying and ensure they have someone to talk to and are listened to.
- To help/support pupils who display bullying behaviour to change their attitudes and understand why it needs to change.

The objectives of our preventing bullying policy are:

- To maintain and develop effective listening systems for pupils, staff and parents/carers.
- To involve all staff in dealing with any incidents of bullying effectively and promptly.
- To equip all staff with the skills and information necessary to deal with incidents of bullying.
- To ensure all incidents of bullying are recorded, and appropriate use is made of the information.

What we do to prevent bullying (see Appendix J):

- Convey a clear understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.
- Have a school wide expectation of acceptable behaviours
- Provide positive role models.
- Be supportive of each other.
- Regular behaviour discussions in daily staff meetings.
- All pupils have a 'help card' with their chosen adults that they can talk to identified.

Staff will:

- Provide a high level of supervision and observe, record and report any incidents of bullying behaviour and follow the Bullying Procedure (see appendix J) if required.
- Provide pupils with clear, consistent rules and behaviour expectations.
- Emphasise and behave in a respectful and caring manner to pupils and colleagues, to set a good tone and help create a positive atmosphere.
- Raise awareness of bullying through activities, stories, discussion, PSHE, School Council, children's forum, etc.
- Provide a key member of staff who is responsible for monitoring the policy.

Recording:

- All incidents of bullying (inside and outside the school setting) will be properly recorded on behaviour log sheets (Appendix L) by the school staff, and the record is updated as necessary throughout an investigation.
- Parents of all pupils involved will be informed of what has happened and how the incident has been dealt with.

Dealing with an incident:

- Use Restorative Approaches techniques with all involved.
- Discuss which rule(s) have been broken.
- Explanation of why the inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable.
- Implement disciplinary sanctions that reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others can see that bullying is unacceptable.
- Safeguarding procedures will be followed when child protection concerns arise.
- Use specific anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record and / or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying should school staff not have the relevant expertise.

Reparation (repairing relationships, or ‘making good’)

When things go wrong, a clear distinction is made between the child and their behaviour, so as to maintain a positive self image for all. We believe that children and young people should always be given the opportunity to repair, and that they want to do this. Even children with complex needs can be supported to repair; we can't make assumptions about what children feel. Unresolved difficulties can make children and young people very anxious and this can cause poor behaviour to escalate or become habitual.

We use restorative approaches, which offer a powerful approach to promoting harmonious relationships in our school, and can lead to the successful resolution of any conflict. Restorative approaches focus on making, maintaining and repairing relationships while fostering a sense of social responsibility and shared accountability. This approach helps to develop relationship skills, emotional literacy, health and wellbeing, participatory and collaborative teaching and peer support. The approaches involve including the wrongdoer in finding a solution to the problem, and recognises that all sides need:

- A chance to tell their side of the story – their experience
- An opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings
- A better understanding of how the situation happened
- An understanding of how it can be avoided another time
- A feeling that they are understood by the others involved
- An acknowledgement of the harm caused
- A way to move on with restored relationships

Strategies for preventing bullying:

- Friends Awards half termly.
- Star of the Week positive reward system.
- Residential reward charts.
- Displays of posters/leaflets.
- “Knowing Me Knowing You” and “Personal, Social, Learning Behaviours” targets and programmed teaching.
- Cross-curriculum lessons.
- Weekly Friends Group in each class.
- Student Council/Forums.
- Playground buddying.
- Staff support for parents/carers, including The Family Support Worker.
- Recommendations from the Standard 20 Inspector.

Screening, Searching and Confiscation

Although unlikely at Meath, we acknowledge that we may need to search a pupil for items that are not allowed in school and/or are illegal.

The special educational needs and lack of understanding of some of our pupils mean that sometimes they take items that do not belong to them without realising it is wrong, or the consequences.

Members of staff can undertake a search without consent if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil may have in his or her possession a prohibited or stolen item.

The Screening, Searching and Confiscation Guidance (DfE, 2012) states:

- School staff can search a pupil for any item banned under the school rules, if the pupil gives verbal consent (including pupils' bag and pockets).
- School staff can ask a pupil to turn out their pockets or bag, and impose a punishment if they refuse.
- Principals, and staff authorised by them, have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they suspect the pupil has certain prohibited items (see below).
- School staff can seize any banned or prohibited item found as a result of a search or which they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline.

The following are prohibited and must not be brought into school, and as well as being confiscated may result in the police being informed:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Pornography
- Fireworks
- Cigarettes and other tobacco products
- Stolen Items

These items will not be returned and will be disposed of accordingly (if necessary after taking police advice).

We acknowledge that the journey to and from school is often long for most of our pupils and that they bring items from home to keep them occupied on the journey. All of these items are to be left in the front office for safe keeping, and the pupils can then pick them up when they leave to go home.

If a pupil is to be searched then the following will happen:

- If possible the member of staff conducting the search will be the same sex as the pupil being searched.
- If possible there will be a witness (also a staff member) who should, ideally, be the same gender as the pupil being searched. A pupil may be searched by a member of staff of the opposite sex without a witness if the staff member believes that serious harm will be caused by someone if they do not carry out the search urgently or that it is not reasonably practical for the search to be witnessed in this way.
- The person conducting the search will only ask for the removal of outer clothing (coats, hats, shoes, boots, jumpers, gloves and scarves) and may ask a pupil to turn out their pockets or bags. They may not do an intimate search (removing clothing that is worn next to the skin or immediately over underwear).
- Reasonable force may be used to conduct the search where necessary.
- Parents/carers will be informed through either a phone call or in the home/school diary, depending on how serious the incident is.
- Complaints about screening or searching should be dealt with through the normal school complaints procedure.

Support and Training in Behaviour Management

There is a commitment to regular staff training. This is co-ordinated by the leadership team. This includes:

- Regular updating of information about, and increasing staff awareness of, behaviour issues.
- Provision of opportunities to discuss examples of behaviour management.
- Induction and update training of TeamTeach for all behaviour management, restraint and control including de-escalation strategies, plus where this is appropriate.
- Provision of time to feedback to groups of staff from relevant courses.
- Relevant articles and books are available in the Staff Library.
- The Behaviour Management Policy is included in induction packs and all staff must sign their agreement to abide by the policy. It is important to ensure at the interview stage that applicants for jobs understand and can work within the core principles set out in the Behaviour Management (including Bullying) Policy. From appointment, all staff receive training appropriate to their level of involvement with the children.
- The Principal co-ordinates the full implementation and any necessary updating of the Behaviour Management (including Bullying) Policy.

It is recognised that all staff need support in implementing the Behaviour Management (including Bullying) Policy, particularly when very disruptive incidents occur. This support consists of:

- Internal support from other members of staff, both immediately and after an incident:
- An available member of the Senior Leadership Team can be called to any major disruptive incident and will monitor the well-being of the staff as well as the pupil involved during the incident. Other staff will provide support as requested. It is realised that after a stressful incident staff, as well as the pupil, may need a quiet space, and/or time before returning to work. Team members will ensure that this need is recognised and made possible.
- The Family Support Worker, although a part-time member of staff, is available to support staff when requested.
- Time is made available to discuss behaviour management issues within the staff teams. Time is also made available during a regular whole school staff meetings to outline the management of the behaviour of particular individuals and discuss any difficulties which this may present to staff; especially at play breaks.
- As a staff we are committed to investing the appropriate authority in all members of a team.

Recording and Monitoring [Summary see Appendix K]

Formal systems of recording and procedures for using them have been established. Copies are included in the Appendices.

- The Behaviour Log Book - all significant incidents are to be entered within 24 hours of the event (see sample page, Appendix L). This record also includes a check box in which staff can indicate any incident which appears to have a racist element or basis. All parts of the form must be completed; for Pupil Voice staff can use facial expression, and body language if a child refuses to/or cannot comment. . Time spent in the Calm Room must be accurately detailed.
- The Physical Intervention Book - any physical intervention used for overt control or restraint must be entered within 24 hours after the event, and a corresponding entry made in the Behaviour Book (see sample page, Appendix M) and cross referenced on a child's main file (see Appendix M)
- A Sanctions Book is maintained by the Residential Services Manager. Within this, a record is kept of all sanctions used which are permitted, but are beyond the norm described within this Behaviour Management (including Bullying) Policy.
- Accident and Health and Safety forms may need completing, if appropriate, [c.f. Medical and Health and Safety Policies]; (Appendix N).
- Monitoring of changes to behaviour as a result of introduction/increase/decrease/change of medication. (see Appendix P). These should be shared with families and medical teams involved.
- A flow chart of when and how to record in the Behaviour and Physical Intervention books details the escalation of interventions for adverse behaviours (see Appendix Q).

- Focus Meeting forms - for recording discussions and actions (see Appendix B)
- Cause for Concern forms must be completed as appropriate and passed to Principal (c.f. the Child Protection Policy), or a senior leader in the Principal's absence (see Appendix R).
- Risk assessment forms must be attached to each Behaviour Support Plan (see Appendix A).

Monitoring of policy implementation is also formalised:

- The Senior Leadership Group regularly monitors and analyses entries in the Behaviour and Physical Intervention Books to see if there are any patterns or trends which need specific actions.

The standard 20 inspector also monitors these books.

- Termly analysis of behaviour is carried out by the Principal, and this is reported to the Governors and I CAN Trustees termly

All staff have regular opportunities to have input into the continuing development and review of the Behaviour Management (including Bullying) Policy and related procedures via the Behaviour At Meath Group (BAM)

Equality and Inclusion

At Meath School we will continuously seek to ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect and dignity. Every individual will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their gender, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, sexuality, disability or special educational needs and ability, and other factors as detailed within the school's Equality Policy. These meet in full the requirements of the Equality Act, October 2010.

DfE Circulars Relating to Behaviour Management Update

Copies of these documents are held by the Head Teacher and Residential Services Manager.

- Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act 1996: “The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils”
- July 2002, LEA 0242 “Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who Display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disabilities and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders”. N.B. Appendix 1 is the letter from Chris Webb to Chief Education Officer on the Use of Positive Handling Strategies, sent 24th April 2001
- Section 21 of the Education Act 2002, as amended by section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 – Guidance on School Behaviour and the Power to Discipline
- September 2003, LEA/0264 “Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties”
- Section 246 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, on Governing Bodies’ Responsibilities for Ensuring that a Procedure is in Place for Recording each Significant Incident in which a Member of Staff uses Force on a Pupil
- “The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils”, Guidance for Schools in England, DCSF April 2010
- “Ensuring Good Behaviour” DFE April 2012
- “Screening, Searching and Confiscation” DFE April 2012
- “Behaviour and Discipline in Schools” DFE April 2012
- “Use of Reasonable Force” DFE April 2012
- “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” DFE April 2012
- Safeguarding
- SEN Code of Practice
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- School Information (England) Regulations 2008
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Feb 2014
- Positive Environments Where Children Can Flourish (Ofsted March 2018)