



### Merry Poppers Nursery

#### Prevention Of Bullying And Harassment (Children)

Merry Poppers Nursery recognises the problems associated with bullying and harassment of both children and adults and is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals can operate effectively, confidently and competently.

The Nursery believes that its children have the right to play and learn in a supportive, caring, and safe environment. If behavioural expectations are consistent and reasonable boundaries are in place by caring and supportive practitioners, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying. It is important therefore that the Nursery has a clear written policy to promote this belief. Bullying behaviour can be displayed by children as young as 3 years old, bullying is not a 'rite of passage'. It is well reached that bullying causes long term damage to both the person on the receiving end, and those who bully. Challenging bullying behaviour in the early years gives practitioners a great opportunity to 'nip it in the bud'.

Although bullying in the strongest context of the word does not generally occur at Merry Poppers Nursery it is recognised by practitioners that preschool children are developing their own personalities and friendships, as well as exploring boundaries and appropriate behaviour which can result in conflict or clashes of personalities. The definition of bullying is very important to understand when assessing the difference between 'relational conflict' – where there is a 'falling out' between individuals-and when it tips the balance to bullying. Young children tend to be egocentric by nature and are still learning to appreciate the feelings of others and develop their sense of appropriate behaviours and fairness. It would be wrong to label every incident between children as bullying.

All staff at Merry Poppers Nursery believe that every child has the right to play in a safe and supportive environment which;

- Is safe and caring
- Provides challenges but is non-threatening
- Encourages children to feel secure
- Values children's opinions
- Shows an awareness of children's individual needs and attempts to meet them.
- Allows them to develop to their full potential.

#### **Definition of Bullying and Harassment**

The following definitions provide staff with descriptors which can be considered in each situation and will be useful in assessing allegations of bullying.

However, the impact an incident has had on a child is more important than whether it is classified as bullying and appropriate responses should be made by staff as set out in this policy.

#### **BULLYING**



Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person which causes pain and distress for the victim. It is also the behaviour of a person who hurts or frightens someone smaller or less powerful, often forcing that person to do something they do not want to do (The act of intimidating someone else).

## **HARASSMENT**

Harassment is defined as any conduct which is unwanted by the recipient, or any such conduct based, on the grounds of bias or discrimination that effects the dignity of any individual. It is also when someone repeatedly behaves in a way that makes you feel scared, distressed or threatened (unwelcome conduct).

## **WHEN ITS NOT BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?**

It is important for children and young people to discuss how they feel and help them develop resilience to manage their relationships. We know that children and young people will fall out and disagree with each other as they form and build relationships. This is a normal part of growing up and most children and young people have the ability to bounce back from this type of behaviour. Children need to be supported to speak out if they think someone isn't being nice to them. They need to feel comfortable to go and tell practitioners what is happening.

### **Forms of Bullying and Harassment**

Bullying and Harassment can take many forms-

Emotional – Being unfriendly, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation, being excluded from discussions/activities or play; with those they believe to be their friends. Being deliberately unkind.

Physical – Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, pinching, violence, threats

Verbal – Name- calling, teasing, spreading rumours, sarcasm, making fun of someone.

Racist – Racial taunts, gestures

Psychological – Behaviour which is likely to instil a sense of fear or anxiety in another child.

### **Harassment – any unwelcome conduct.**

The following list highlights some of the indicators of bullying that a child might display if they were a victim, although it is important to note that although a child could be displaying some of these signs or behaviours it does not necessarily mean that the child is being bullied. It could indicate other issues. We recognise that legitimate play behaviour may include many of these aspects, but when one or more parties becomes targeted on a frequent and recurrent basis the experience of those effected can be extremely negative. In the rare cases where hurtful behaviour is defined as bullying and despite all efforts to prevent it, we will respond to all incidents thoroughly and sensitively. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable



and must be addressed quickly. Bullying should NEVER be seen as a typical part of growing up.

**Warning Signs and Symptoms of bullying, Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a child is being bullied include: •**

- . Unwillingness to return to school.
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Diminished levels of self-confidence • Unexplained cuts and bruises • Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact • Difficulty in sleeping or experiences nightmares – Easily distressed – refuses to talk about the problem.

**Procedure if an allegation of Bullying or Harassment is reported/ witnessed:**

- Practitioners will inform the nursery Deputy/Manager if they witness an incident of bullying within the setting.
- Children will be encouraged to report any incidents of alleged bullying immediately and will be reassured that what they say will be taken seriously.
- They will be given the time to explain what has happened and reassured that they were right to tell someone.
- The Deputy/Manager will ask the alleged bully to explain their side and take into account their response when deciding whether bullying has occurred.
- If allegations are found to be true then practitioners will endeavour to establish why the bullying / harassment took place and encourage the child involved to appreciate how their actions have made the other child feel.

Developing respect for others and acceptable behaviours is an integral part of the early years curriculum and parents will not be required to be informed every time a child is reminded of appropriate behaviour. However, practitioners will inform the parents of children involved in any incidences of bullying, informing them of what action has been taken.

- Incidences of bullying and harassment should be recorded and monitored and will contain the following information:

- \* who was involved
- \* where and when the bullying took place
- \* action taken or resolution
- \* consideration of personal or additional support

- All children involved in any bullying incident will be offered support. The Deputy/ Manager may contact the Early Years Advisor to enquire about any support the setting can pass onto the children's parents.
- In serious cases and when bullying persists, the Manager will work with the child's parents to try to resolve the situation. This may include agreeing sanctions should incidents continue. In a very small number of children where challenging behaviour persists and gives cause for concern consideration may be given, in consultation with the parents, to referring the child to a specialist such as a child psychologist.



- Where bullying behaviour persists, the alleged bully's parents will receive a written warning that the child must stop this behaviour.
- If bullying continues the alleged bully's parents will receive a final written warning that suspension or exclusion will occur from the setting if the behaviour does not stop.
- As a final option, if bullying still continues the alleged bully will be excluded from attending the setting for a set period of time as decided by the manager.

#### **AS A NURSERY:**

- a) To provide an enabling and proactive environment in order to minimise opportunities for bullying
- b) Be clear about how children should behave respectfully towards each other e.g. having ground rules such as not being able to say 'you can't play with me/us'.
- b) Use any opportunity to discuss the appropriate way to behave towards each other e.g. Circle time, Topics, persona dolls
- c) Encourage restorative approaches including supporting children to express their feelings in a safe space and to apologise to each other in meaningful ways.
- d) Undertake empathy building activities which help young children learn how to express their feelings and recognise emotions in others, discussing the way that people are different, talking about kindness and helping others to feel better when they are upset.
- e) Encourage assertiveness in children who might find it difficult to stand up for themselves e.g. using role-play scenarios or undertake activities that show children how to express their emotions clearly and calmly.
- f) The Manager to Review the Nursery Policy and its degree of success
- g) The staff will continue to have a firm but fair approach to behaviour management. The rules should be few, simple and easy to understand
- h) Do not use materials or equipment which gives negative views of any group because of their ethnic origin, gender, etc i) Encourage children to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people exploring what friendship is
- j) Encourage children to treat everyone with respect k) We will treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from our Nursery.
- l) Have suitable training to continue personal development within Behaviour management both on an individual and group basis.
- m) Implement the anti-bullying policy and ensure that all staff are aware and know how to deal with incidents of bullying.
- n) Work with parents to ensure they understand our approach to bullying and relational conflict. Making parents aware of signs to look out for in case their worried their child might be bullied. Have a clear route for parents to report anything they might be worried about to the setting.

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#### **AS A PARENT:**

- a) Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend nursery, or they may regularly say that they feel ill.
- b) Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone and who they have spent their time with



- c) If your child encounters any problems at the Nursery inform the Nursery Manager IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will follow.
- d) It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse Tell them to ask for help and to tell an adult as soon as possible so the incident can be dealt with effectively.
- e) Try to ensure that your child maintains a positive image of themselves.

We will support children by following the six steps of conflict resolution as follows:

- Approach calmly, stopping any harmful actions
- Acknowledge all children's feelings
- Gather information from all parties
- Restate the problem
- Ask for ideas and solutions and choose one together
- Be prepared to give follow up support.

We will speak openly with parents/carers in order to formulate a mutual agreement regarding action to move the situation forwards in a way which meets individual needs. If necessary, outside agencies will be contacted in order to support the setting, child and parents/carers.

### **REVIEWING THE POLICY**

The Policy will be reviewed every year unless a change in legislation necessitates a shorter review period or there are changes in the activities or personnel of the Provision that require changes to be made.