



Meridian Primary School Behaviour Policy

Updated October 2022. Next review October 2023.

1. Introduction:

At Meridian our values underpin all we do - everyone works hard to maintain our nurturing, inclusive learning community which values individuality and celebrates differences. We are aspirational for each and every child and recognise that children learn best when they are happy, safe and secure. We believe that positive relationships and a caring ethos are the basis for great learning, and we are committed to knowing all our children and families and working in partnership with them.

Staff and governors seek to understand children's behaviour and believe children have the capacity for growth and change. Learning is a holistic process and, as such, we feel it is important to teach, model and recognise appropriate behaviours for learning. We strive to develop the Meridian Learning Muscles in all our children (persistence, curiosity, resourcefulness, reflection and focus) and to support them in demonstrating our whole school values (nurture, aspiration, equality, inclusion and creativity).

This policy was originally written by the whole staff team based on the outcomes of whole school INSET and research projects, and took account of the views of children, staff, parents and governors. It is reviewed annually. A 'child friendly' version is published in the Mini-Guide to Meridian. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Teaching and Learning Policy and our Equality Information and Objectives document which sets out how the school meets its obligations under the public sector equality duty.

2. Aims of the policy:

- Strive to ensure that children and staff are happy, safe and secure in school;
- Provide all children with an environment which is conducive to enjoyable and effective learning, play and social and emotional development;
- Encourage all children to respect and value themselves, each other and the diversity of the school community, including those protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act;
- For staff, parents and governors to work together to manage behaviour in the same way;
- Encourage independence so that each child learns to take responsibility for his/her own behaviour and can learn from their mistakes;
- Ensure everyone knows what the rules are, why we have them and what happens when we follow or break them.

3. Responsibilities:

Staff, children, parents and governors at Meridian School have a collective responsibility to follow and support our behaviour policy. All members of the school community are also expected to be familiar with the **School Routines** outlined in **Appendix 2** of this policy and the Meridian Mini-Guide. Staff implement, reinforce and model these routines through high expectations and teaching.

a) Responsibilities for Children:

Meridian children always try hard to -

- arrive at school on time and be ready to work (e.g. remember equipment like our PE kit and glasses);
- follow the school rules so that teaching and learning can take place;
- show the school values in our everyday school life (e.g. include all children; treat everyone the same; have high expectations of ourselves; take care of our school and everyone in it; think of creative ways to solve problems and try new things);
- be prepared for playtimes and lunchtimes (e.g. collect and return coats and lunchboxes at the start and

end of sessions);

- dress appropriately and safely (e.g. hats/caps not to be worn in the school building, no high heeled shoes or flip flops, no jewellery except for small studs or sleepers and a watch, a coat in cool and wet weather);
- remember to leave toys, sweets and chewing gum at home;
- be in the right place at the right time (e.g. in a seat if eating in the dining hall);
- try our hardest and take pride in our work;
- talk to an adult in school if we're upset and tell an adult about any serious misbehaviour;
- remember that we are a 'nut free school' and nothing with nuts should be brought into school for any occasion due to the severe allergies of some children;
- volunteer and train for roles such as School Council representatives;
- be ambassadors for the school when on visits and performing to others.

Mobile phones and other electronic devices are banned in school (including on school outings and school journeys). Children who bring a mobile phone to school should hand it into the school office or their class teacher as soon as they arrive in school and must not use it on the school playground before or after school.

b) Responsibilities for Staff:

All staff work hard to establish positive relationships with children and model the behaviours we wish them to display. Positive recognition and reinforcement of good behaviour is a key factor in motivating and engaging children in the process of developing appropriate behaviour.

Staff will -

- implement, display, teach and regularly reinforce rights, rules, routines and responsibilities, rewards and consequences, consistently and fairly;
- set a good example by being on time and fully prepared for all sessions (e.g. for lessons, assemblies, end of playtime, start of lunchtime);
- always lead classes around the school, ensuring they keep in a quiet and orderly line;
- supervise children at all times, except to be sent to another teacher or on an errand;
- encourage children to go to the toilet at playtimes and be independent in collecting and returning necessary belongings;
- encourage children to keep the school neat and tidy (e.g. encourage independence in clearing away after classroom and lunchtime activities including mealtimes);
- provide appropriate activities and/or support to ensure that children can access all sessions (e.g. lessons, assemblies, lunchtimes) - this includes taking account of deaf awareness and dyslexic friendly teaching;
- take every opportunity to feedback constructively to children on their work and behaviour and show them that their efforts and hard work are valued;
- challenge inappropriate behaviours between children and not downplay these;
- deal with any incidents of misbehaviour promptly and sensitively, drawing children's attention to the inappropriate behaviour rather than to themselves;
- always listen to children's concerns and take these seriously;
- always record and follow up incidences of serious misbehaviour, including bullying, racism and other forms of discrimination (see 'serious misbehaviour');
- report all persistent misbehaviour and serious incidents to senior staff and record these incidents on My Concern;
- report all persistent misbehaviour and serious incidents to parents via Senior Meals Supervisor/Class Teachers/Leadership team;

- make class teachers/senior staff aware of any emotional or behavioural difficulties children may be experiencing (i.e. class teachers should inform meal and playtime supervisors; key information should be shared at briefing meetings where appropriate; My Concern should be completed);
- talk to children when supervising play and lunchtimes and support them in their play;
- be available for parents/carers at the end of the school day or by arranging a mutually convenient time.

c) Responsibilities for Parents/Carers:

Parents/carers play a key role in children's learning and we greatly appreciate their support. We ask them to please -

- be aware of the behaviour policy, support this and encourage their child to follow it;
- model appropriate behaviour for children;
- ensure their child arrives at school on time with a good night's sleep, breakfast and the right equipment;
- ensure their child is dressed appropriately (e.g. coat in bad weather, sensible footwear, no jewellery except for small stud earrings and a watch);
- remind their child to leave sweets, chewing gum, anything containing nuts and toys at home, and hand in their mobile phones to their class teacher as soon as they arrive at school;
- encourage independence in their child (e.g. carry their own bags and put their own scooter away);
- support their child in completing home learning tasks such as reading;
- encourage their child to tell an adult in school about any problems so that we can do something about it;
- show an interest in what their child is doing at school and support the school when they can by attendance at parents' evenings, performances and fundraising events;
- collect children promptly at the end of the school day and inform the class teacher or school office if there are any changes to this routine; in their absence, arrange for another responsible adult, such as a family member or friend to collect their child (over 14 years of age) - inform the class teacher or office of these arrangements beforehand;
- if older children are permitted to walk home alone, ensure the school office is informed in writing;
- discuss any concerns with their child's class teacher in a calm and respectful manner (at pick up, or make an appointment for a convenient time). If the problem persists, talk to a Senior Leader. Do not confront children or other parents at any time on school property.

Violence, threatening behaviour or abuse by parents/carers towards school staff, other parents/carers or visitors, including via social media, will not be tolerated and, as a last resort, the school will consider banning parents/carers from the school premises if they do not behave appropriately.

4. The Curriculum

We recognise the relationship between effective teaching and learning and appropriate behaviours for learning, and this is backed up by research. In particular, the following make a difference:

- High expectations of the achievement of all children and a belief that all children can learn;
- The creation of positive learning environments;
- Promoting a 'growth mindset'.

As such, the elements which we know will make a difference to our children at Meridian are included as non-negotiables in our Teaching and Learning policy.

At Meridian we set aside time for the explicit teaching of social and emotional aspects of learning and understand the value of discussing issues as they arise. Through lessons (including PSHE and other subjects) and assemblies, we support children in gaining a deeper understanding of our whole school values;

identifying and managing their feelings and behaviour; nurturing empathy and fostering an appreciation of the way in which our actions can affect others; developing the Meridian Learning Muscles for resilience in learning; recognising, valuing, and celebrating diversity.

We teach children to understand 'safety' through our PSHE curriculum, assemblies and whole school themes followed up in workshops and lessons. Each year we address Anti-bullying week and celebrate Black History Month and Deaf Awareness week, as well as other national events. We teach E-safety as part of the curriculum.

We give children opportunities to take on key responsibilities which support and represent others including-

- Y6 buddying Reception children; children buddying children new to the school;
- public performances and sporting events;
- School Council;
- operating the music system in assemblies, leading singing in assemblies.

At Meridian, we are working towards becoming a Unicef Rights Respecting School. The Rights Respecting Schools Award puts children's rights at the heart of schools in the UK. Unicef works with schools in the UK to create safe and inspiring places to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive. The Rights Respecting Schools Award embeds these values in daily school life and gives children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens.

5. Relationships

We believe that positive relationships between staff, children and parents/carers are key factors in promoting positive behaviour.

We build relationships and make children feel valued through -

- noticing children, using their names, getting to know them and giving compliments;
- being warm and positive; smiling at children and each other;
- greeting children on the playground and in the classroom each morning;
- displays which demonstrate whole school values/children's rights and celebrate achievements;
- Good Learning Assemblies, completing the Silver Book, giving out rewards;
- staff eating lunch with the children when possible;
- senior leaders being highly visible around school;
- staff leading games/activities and chatting with children at playtimes and lunchtimes and where appropriate, through extra-curricular clubs;
- the provision of Breakfast Club and Play Club with subsidised places offered.

We build relationships with parents/carers and value their contributions through -

- class teachers being available to meet parents after school each day; senior leaders being on the playground before and after school;
- Parents' Evenings twice a year and a Meet the Teacher meetings at the start of the year;
- transition meetings for new children and their parents entering the Foundation Stage;
- workshops for parents to discuss key events and curriculum developments;
- regular reading times with parents across the school;
- Parent Governors being available to parents at key times;
- parents and staff working together through FROMS;
- staff being available to parents each day on the playground;
- inviting them to take part in annual events such as Sports Day, Curriculum Open Mornings, the Arts

Festival exhibition, performances;

- effective communication via the school newsletter, texts, regular class newsletters and our website.

6. Whole school rules

Clear boundaries clarify what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. Our whole school rules consist of 5 'umbrella headings' and apply **throughout the school at all times**. These are expanded upon by specific positive examples which apply to different areas of the school. They are **displayed and illustrated in all classrooms** (to give children ownership of the rules and the ways in which they apply to them), and shared areas and are taught and reinforced regularly by all staff. Visual prompts, such as signage, further reinforce these rules. Displays reference children's rights (Unicef) so children can see a purposeful link. These are the school rules with some examples of what these mean in practice:

Be polite and considerate

- ✓ *Please, thank you, excuse me*
- ✓ *Good listening (closed lips, good sitting, good looking)*
- ✓ *Raise your hand*
- ✓ *Take turns in conversations*
- ✓ *Be kind and help others*
- ✓ *Partner voices during meal times*

Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself

- ✓ *Play safely*
- ✓ *Keep 6 legs on the floor (sitting not rocking on chairs)*

Follow instructions (given by all adults)

- ✓ *Help to tidy away playground equipment*
- ✓ *Line up straight away on the bell*
- ✓ *Play in the right place at the right time*

Walk quietly around school

- ✓ *Walking feet, partner voices*
- ✓ *Keep to the left on the stairs*

Take care of everyone and everything in our school

- ✓ *Put rubbish in the bin*
- ✓ *Stay away from gates and doors*
- ✓ *Tidy up after yourself and others*
- ✓ *Use all equipment properly*

7. Rewards

A vital part of our policy is providing positive feedback to children about how they are doing. It tells children that their good behaviour, kindness and thoughtfulness have been noticed, and it also develops self-esteem and reinforces expectations of appropriate behaviour. Rewards are given to children for progress, special effort and achievement relative to their individual starting points.

We seek to ensure that -

- our positive remarks and rewards significantly outweigh any negative comments and consequences;
- rewards are given genuinely;
- that staff are explicit about why and how children receive these rewards.

(a) Whole School Merit System

We have a whole school merit system which allows all staff to reward children for good behaviour (i.e. following the classroom rules **around school** - assemblies, playtimes, lunchtimes and moving around the building):

- All the children in the school are divided into four House Teams called Red, Blue, Yellow & Green - a quarter of each class being in each house
- Individual merits are gained when any member of staff notices a child following a whole school rule around school - the member of staff gives out a Silver Token and explains why
- Children post their Silver Tokens in House Post Boxes kept directly outside the Office (or store them in class containers to be posted by Class Monitors at a more convenient time)
- House Monitors from Year 6 count up the Silver Tokens at the end of each week
- The winning house is announced during our whole school assembly each week which is rewarded by whole school applause. Also, the school Stoat, who sits in his own trophy (on display outside the office), wears the house colours for that week
- An ongoing record of scores is kept so that at the end of each half term, all members of the winning house receive a tangible reward (e.g. pens, rubbers)

(b) Whole School Silver Book

Each week, children are recognised for particularly good acts/behaviour or effort/improvement in supporting school rules and routines, or demonstrating the school values or Meridian Learning Muscles. These are recorded in the Silver Book. The Headteacher reads the entries out during Friday's Whole School Assembly. **Any member of staff can enter a child from any class into the Silver Book.** Children take home a certificate.

(c) Class Reward Schemes

All classrooms operate whole class reward systems which are clearly explained to the children and parents (via class newsletter) and which are achievable and inclusive. These are used to encourage cooperation, generate class identity, cohesion and an ethos of mutual support. These lead to a whole class negotiated reward such as a celebration dance or extra playtime in which all children are included. Such goals are always achievable within a sensible amount of time appropriate to the age of the class. Sometimes these systems incorporate an individual element (e.g. a sticker for individuals who also put a marble in the jar towards a whole class reward).

In addition to the whole class reward scheme, children may at times be given certificates and stickers and sent to visit other teachers and the Executive Headteacher or Head of School for positive feedback.

(d) Good Learning Assembly and Newsletter

Each week there is a *Good Learning Assembly* in Key Stage 1 and 2. Each class teacher chooses one or two children to be mentioned for demonstrating the Meridian Learning Muscles, making good progress in their learning or for a particular achievement. Work is shared and, where possible, a copy of this work is sent home. Children's learning is also celebrated in the weekly newsletter and achievements outside of school are often recognised in this publication.

8. Inappropriate Behaviours

Any misbehaviour which stops children from learning or puts the safety and security of others at risk is unacceptable.

From time to time, children make the wrong choice and stop themselves or others from learning, playing or enjoying their lunch. This may include -

(a) Low level misbehaviour which stops individual learning such as daydreaming/hiding in clothes; fidgeting and fiddling with objects or doodling.

(b) Other misbehaviour which interrupts teaching and learning in class or assembly, or can stop enjoyment of play or lunch such as:

- talking to each other whilst the teacher is talking or chatting frequently rather than working;
- shouting out;
- moving around the classroom for no reason;
- swearing;
- spitting on the ground/floor;
- flicking/throwing objects;
- nudging/poking others;
- pulling faces;
- making noises;
- tapping pencils;
- spoiling games or chasing children who don't want to be chased;
- jumping on others and play fighting;
- squabbling/arguing/pushing & shoving;
- inappropriate use of playground or classroom equipment;
- playing in doorways or gateways, playing around the bins;
- dropping litter;
- challenging instructions (back-chatting).

(c) Serious Misbehaviour

Occasionally, children's misbehaviour is more serious - it puts the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk and/or disrupts teaching and learning. This may include:

- throwing objects at others or overturning furniture;
- leaving the classroom or playground without permission;
- swearing at someone (including hand gestures);
- deliberately damaging the property of others, including school property;
- spitting at someone;
- deliberately hurting another child or adult;
- fighting;
- stealing;
- bullying (**defined in Appendix 1 of this policy - see page 5**);
- racism;
- use of homophobic language;
- other forms of discriminatory behaviour.

All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children (sometimes referred to as child-on-child abuse). There is a zero-tolerance approach to bullying (see **Appendix 1** of this policy) and all forms of discriminatory behaviour including racism, the use of homophobic language and sexual harassment (e.g. sexist language) - see our safeguarding policy for more information.

Where a child **frequently exhibits low level misbehaviour or other misbehaviour which regularly** interrupts teaching and learning in class or assembly, or stops enjoyment of play or lunch, this is likely to be considered **serious misbehaviour** - see 'consequences for serious misbehaviour' below.

9. Consequences

We understand the importance of applying reasonable consequences which relate to any misbehaviour, keep dignity and respect intact and ensure that the child learns from them. Used fairly and consistently, consequences protect children's rights, reinforce expectations and redirect children to the way we want them to behave.

The aim of any intervention in responding to incidents should be **the most impact for the least intrusion**. It is the **certainty not the severity** that counts.

The Head of School/Executive Headteacher will use her discretion when considering the use of sanctions, having regard to the individual situation and the individual child, and taking into account special educational needs and disability (SEND) and the needs of vulnerable children. Consideration will be given as to whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to a consequence in response to any disability the child may have.

(a) Consequences for misbehaviour

Staff will employ a range of strategies in response to incidents of misbehaviour using the following sequence, with a 'fresh start' each session. If misbehaviour continues, staff move to the next stage. They aim to use the least intrusive techniques for the maximum impact.

- **Non-verbal responses**, e.g. a look, click, pausing, proximity to a child.
- **Incidental language and humour**, e.g. saying child's name mid-sentence, stressing a particular word.
- **Reminder**, e.g. "The rule is..." , say child's name and point to a picture of the rules, state reality - "You're talking - the rule is to be polite."
- **Choice/Warning**, e.g. "Raise your hand to speak or you will need to sit out." "Move out of the flower beds or you will need to sit out."
- **5 minute time out**. During lessons this will be within the child's own classroom, e.g. child seated at a separate desk. During playtimes and lunchtimes on a bench in the playground or on a chair away from peers in the dining hall.
- **Time out during playtime for 5 or 10 minutes**. They will miss 5/10 minutes of playtime. They will use this time to reflect on their behaviour, finish some work, put the behaviour right (e.g. clean up a mess they have created) or write a letter of apology. This time out could take place in the bottom hall at lunchtime, on a bench in playground at playtime, or with a member of staff in their office/classroom.
- **Time out with the Head of School/Executive Headteacher or other senior leader for the remainder of the session**. See below.

For instances of serious misbehaviour, the final consequence applies immediately.

(b) Consequences for Serious Misbehaviour

During lesson times and playtimes, serious behaviour is always referred to the Head of School/Executive Headteacher and the child taken to her (or another member of the Senior Leadership Team) straight away. On these occasions, the child is kept away from their classroom peers for the rest of the session. After discussing their behaviour and calming down, they will be asked to complete some school work with a senior leader or be directed to do so in another supervised classroom. If the incident happens very close to the end of a session, the consequence may carry over to the next session.

During lunchtimes, serious misbehaviour is always referred to the Senior Meals Supervisor and the child is taken to him straight away. On these occasions, the child is kept in the bottom hall or with another member of staff as appropriate. The Senior Meals Supervisor informs the Head of School/Executive Headteacher (or, in their absence, another senior leader). If the incident happens very close to the end of lunchtime/playtime, the consequence will carry over to the next play session.

In the case of persistent serious misbehaviour, or in response to a serious single incident, children may be separated from their peers during teaching and learning or play/lunchtimes for a *longer* period of time. For example, they may be expected to complete their learning in another classroom or with a senior leader for a morning, an afternoon or a whole day; they may be separated from their peers at lunch or

playtimes for several sessions.

(c) Exclusion and Suspension

In the case of persistent serious misbehaviour, which has not improved following in-school sanctions and interventions, or in response to a very serious single incident, a fixed period exclusion (called a suspension) may be necessary. This decision, made by the Executive Headteacher, would be a last resort and would be applied in accordance with the guidance issued by Greenwich Local Authority. In very rare cases, where all other strategies have been exhausted, a permanent exclusion may be necessary.

The Chair (or in her absence, the Vice Chair of Governors) is always informed of any exclusions, the parents written to and Greenwich LA informed. Where a child is at risk of permanent exclusion, a pastoral support programme is put in place with the support of the SENCo and Greenwich LA.

10. Recording and monitoring serious misbehaviour and persistent misbehaviour

Serious misbehaviour is recorded on a 'Serious Misbehaviour form' by the member of staff who sees/deals with the incident and given to the Head of School/Executive Headteacher who uploads it to My Concern, or it can be recorded directly onto My Concern. Leaders monitor serious misbehaviour to identify patterns and ensure appropriate support is put in place.

If they are concerned about on-going behaviour problems at any time, any member of staff should record a concern on My Concern (or complete a 'cause for concern sheet' and give this to the Head of School/Executive Headteacher). Regular progress review meetings and SEN review days are also forums in which staff can raise any concerns.

Leaders monitor serious misbehaviour and causes for concern to build up a holistic picture of the child. In consultation with class teachers, parents and inclusion team (Inclusion Leader/SENCo/Lead ToD/DSL), an intervention with a clear timescale and objectives may be put into place (e.g. IEP; CAMHs/Music therapy; Waterside referral (behaviour outreach support) to support the child; Early Help).

11. Communicating with Parents/Carers

We value the support of parents in improving behaviour. At Parents' Evening there should be 'no surprises' and, if we notice persistent misbehaviour, class teachers will contact parents at that time. Wherever possible, this is done by the class teacher before or after school, face to face or via the telephone.

For incidents of serious misbehaviour, and whenever a child is removed from the classroom, the Head of School/Executive Headteacher will contact parents the same day or may delegate this responsibility to another appropriate member of staff such as another senior leader or the class teacher.

12. Putting things right

After any incidents of misbehaviour, we recognise the importance of putting things right. Staff will talk to children about their behaviour in a constructive way after the event and once the child is calm. The focus is on teaching appropriate behaviour, highlighting what the child should be doing rather than just 'telling them off' for what they shouldn't. We encourage children to suggest ways of putting it right and helping them to think about what they could do differently next time. These discussions usually take place during playtimes or lunchtimes. Children are rarely kept behind after school, and only with agreement of a parent/carer and Head of School/Executive Headteacher.

Sometimes, with the agreement of the children, a restorative approach or Circle of Friends can be used to rebuild/support relationships between children.

13. Understanding and supporting children's behaviour

Sometimes children's behaviours fall outside the usual range of expected behaviour for all children in the school. There may be a number of factors which are causing this which can be significant and complex. These factors may include SEND, home circumstances, unmet emotional needs, trauma or low self-esteem.

(a) Seeking advice

Whilst we do not excuse misbehaviour, we can seek to explain it. In supporting children to manage their behaviour, we seek to better understand the child and any underlying causes of misbehaviour. In doing so, staff will:

- seek and take advice from the SENCo/Lead Teacher of the Deaf/Inclusion Leader/DSL/Senior Mental Health Lead as appropriate;
- take account of advice from outside agencies, such as Waterside and ASD Outreach, as appropriate;
- consider whether any misbehaviour gives cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm - where this may be the case, staff will speak to the DSL who will consider whether any additional support (such as pastoral support, an early help intervention or a referral to children's social care) is appropriate.

(b) Supporting a distressed child

When a child is distressed, following incidents of misbehaviour, we understand the importance of trying to create a calm and supportive environment which shows we are listening to the child and respect them. This includes:

- Providing a quiet and calm space away from peers where possible;
- Giving children the chance to express themselves and talk about how they feel;
- Reflecting responses back to the child to show them they have been understood;
- Responding to the feelings of the child (which lie beneath the behaviour) as well as to the behaviour itself;
- Recognising that 'the problem' is 'the problem' and not 'the child'.

(c) Individual Behaviour Plans/SEND children

At Meridian we are mindful of the need to consider whether a child's SEND has contributed to any misbehaviour. Children with special educational needs (including social, emotional and mental health needs) often need differentiated behaviour plans. We recognise that it is important to understand a child's strengths as well as difficulties and to talk to the child about how best to support them.

Behaviour plans are written collaboratively with the teacher, child, SENCo/Lead ToD/Inclusion Leader, any other relevant staff and, wherever possible, parents/carers. These are monitored by the SENCo/Lead ToD/Inclusion Leader and evaluated within a set timescale. They may include an individual system of rewards and consequences which can be tied into the whole school/class reward system. This behaviour plan is usually shared with the whole staff so that the management of SEND children is consistent across the school. (See the SEND policy.)

(d) CAMHs/Music Therapy Project

For many years, Meridian has commissioned a bespoke school project which provides at least nine children and their parents with support each year. Parents benefit from the professional advice of CAMHs and the children from music therapy. Staff also benefit from the expertise of these key professionals in school who help them to better understand the children's needs and manage their behaviour. Staff can refer children to the music therapy project via the SENCo.

14. Supportive Handling

At Meridian we recognise that there are occasions when a child may be a danger to themselves or others, be at risk of damaging school property or be causing significant disruption to teaching and learning. In these cases, staff will try to diffuse the situation or lead the rest of the class to an alternative teaching and learning space. However, as a last resort, staff may need to **supportively handle** the child. The school's policy for **Supportive Handling** is outlined in **Appendix 3**. Such incidents are always recorded afterwards on a 'Supportive Handling Form' and reported to the Head of School/Executive Headteacher (or other senior leader in her absence). Parents are informed on the same day.

15. Off-site Behaviour

School staff will apply the behaviour policy to any misbehaviour which takes place outside of school when children are representing the school, such as on a trip, taking part in a School Journey (e.g. Camp) or taking part in an off-site sporting event.

Sometimes children may misbehave outside of school in a way that could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school, pose a threat to another pupil or member of the public, or could adversely affect the reputation of the school. This may include the use of social media. In these cases, and in accordance with the law, the Head of School/Executive Headteacher may apply appropriate sanctions within school.

16. Searching and Confiscation

Searching children and confiscation of items is conducted in line with the DfE's latest guidance, 'Searching, screening and confiscation - Advice for Headteachers, school staff and governing bodies, 2022'.

By law, staff can search a child for any item if s/he agrees by asking the child to turn out his or her pockets or asking if they can look in his/her bag.

Children are not allowed to have mobile phones, electronic devices, toys, sweets or chewing gum in school. If a child has these items in school, they will be confiscated and will usually be returned at the end of the school day following a conversation with parents. We will also confiscate other items which we believe to be harmful or detrimental to school discipline.

In the unlikely event that the school has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item (listed in the DfE guidance [Searching, Screening and Confiscation - GOV.UK](#) paragraph 3), they have the right to search a child without consent. Any prohibited items found in a child's possession will be confiscated and a discussion will take place with a parent/carer. Only the Executive Headteacher or Head of School, or a member of staff authorised by them, can carry out a search. In exceptional circumstances, where a member of staff reasonably believes that there is an immediate risk of serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency and it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff, they will conduct a search immediately.

The Executive Headteacher and Head of School will oversee the school's practice of searching to ensure that a culture of safe, proportionate and appropriate searching is maintained, which safeguards the welfare of all pupils and staff with support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (see our safeguarding policy). Any search by a member of staff for a prohibited item will be recorded in the school's safeguarding reporting system, including whether or not an item is found.

17. Allegations against staff

Please refer to our safeguarding policy for information on how the school manages allegations against staff.

The Headteacher will, in accordance with paragraph 17 of 'Department for Education: Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Guidance for Governing Bodies' ([Behaviour in schools guidance](#)), draw on the advice in the 'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff' guidance, when considering the pastoral support school staff can expect to receive if an allegation is made against them.

Where a child makes an accusation against a member of staff and that accusation is shown to have been malicious, the Headteacher will consider an appropriate sanction relative to the individual needs of the child and the circumstances in which the accusation was made.

Anti-Bullying

NURTURE ASPIRATION EQUALITY INCLUSION CREATIVITY

Meridian is a diverse school which values individuality and celebrates differences. We believe that everyone should be treated fairly and with respect and that everyone should feel safe and welcome. Bullying is not tolerated at Meridian and we continually strive to eliminate all forms. We are committed to continually raising awareness among children, staff, parents and governors about what bullying is so that there is a culture where all members of our community are able to recognise it and take action if it should occur.

1. Definition of bullying

At Meridian we define bullying as -

- **purposefully** hurtful behaviour (intentional hurting);
- is **persistent** (repetitive/repeated over a period of time);
- and often involves an imbalance of **power**.

It can happen face to face or online.

Bullying takes many different forms and includes -

- **Physical** - such as hitting, kicking, pushing, poking;
- **Verbal** - such as name-calling, spreading rumours, making threats, teasing, belittling, making discriminatory comments;
- **Non-verbal** - excluding or isolating a person, hiding belongings, making rude or threatening gestures;
- **Emotional** - ridiculing, humiliating, intimidating, manipulating;
- **Online/cyber-bullying** - sending intimidating or insulting comments by text, email or by posting on social media.

Bullying is **not** - play fighting, one child bumping into another, when children fall out or when a child lashes out because they are frustrated or angry. It is not one-off incidents of misbehaviour.

2. Preventing Bullying

We recognise that each of us has a responsibility in maintaining our friendly and inclusive learning community. We teach children that we should take care of others and do something about it if we see someone being treated unkindly or unfairly. Some of the ways in which we work to reduce/prevent bullying are -

- Teaching about diversity through our curriculum
- Implementing and monitoring systems such as playground friends, Peer Mediation and buddies
- Using lessons and assemblies to develop children's understanding of what bullying is and how it can be tackled; exploring potential difficulties around children 'getting on and falling out', peer pressure and managing feelings
- Nurturing strong relationships between children and staff and reassuring children that they are safe in reporting incidents of bullying, e.g. staff building relationships with children, high visibility of SLT around school
- Giving children lots of opportunities to talk to adults; observing children's interactions with each other - playclub, breakfast club, extra-curricular clubs, staff leading games in the playground, weekly circle

time/PSHE lessons, staff eating lunch with the children where possible

- Implementing and reviewing the whole school behaviour policy
- Working with CAMHs/Music Therapist, Educational Psychologist and Waterside Outreach to support children in managing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Encouraging parents to talk to a member of staff if they have any concerns at any time - reminders in newsletter, Mini-Guide to Meridian and an 'open door' policy.

Children and adults have a role to play in dealing with bullying. Children are encouraged to tell staff if either they think they are being bullied or if they think someone else is being bullied.

3. Dealing with allegations of bullying

If an allegation of bullying occurs -

- Staff will take it seriously and record the details, reporting it to the class teacher and Executive Headteacher/Head of School as soon as possible, providing reassurance to the child who has been bullied/has reported the bullying
- The class teacher and/or a member of SLT member will act as quickly as possible to establish the facts by investigating the matter and talking to all children involved separately, recording what is said and making it clear that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

4. Dealing with incidents of bullying

In supporting a child who has been bullied, the steps staff will take include the following:

- Telling the child that we are taking it seriously, it's not their fault and they don't have to put up with it;
- Asking them how they are feeling and how they think it can be resolved;
- Telling them what we have done/will do next;
- Giving them the opportunity to talk to and spend time with a designated member of staff as a one-off or for a series of sessions over time;
- Monitoring the situation including observing the future behaviour of all children and 'checking in' with those involved.

If a child has been found to have bullied another child, this will be treated as serious misbehaviour and next steps for the bully will include:

- Ensuring they understand the impact of their actions and supporting them in seeking to redress any emotional or physical harm caused, including apologising to the child they have bullied;
- Applying appropriate consequences (see serious misbehaviour).

Sometimes children who have been bullying need support too. The Headteacher will decide in consultation with the SENCo/Lead ToD whether a behaviour plan is needed for the child, or whether further external support is necessary (e.g. CAMHs).

Reporting to parents and governors

The Headteacher or another senior member of staff will give feedback to the parents of the child who has bullied and the parents of the child who was bullied to explain what has happened and how this has been managed.

All incidents of bullying will be reported to governors.

Meridian Routines

Clear routines support our rights and promote positive behaviour:

Start of day

For Children -

- Arrive at school on time and line up with your class or go straight upstairs depending on the current routines
- Wash your hands
- Put your lunchbox and coats away
- Switch off any mobile phones and give them to your class teacher

For Staff -

- Be in your classroom or on the playground on time to greet your class
- Encourage children to walk up the stairs/line up in an orderly manner
- Be ready to take the register and start lessons on time

For Parents -

- Ensure children are on the playground on time
- Encourage children to line up or go straight into school independently, depending on the current routine
- Encourage children to put away their own coats and lunchboxes

Playtime and Lunchtimes

For Children -

- Collect coats, visit the toilet and wash your hands
- Line up with your teacher
- Walk in a quiet and orderly line to the playground or dining hall with your teacher/TA
- Play safely in the right places
- Ask to use the toilet
- Help to tidy away the playground equipment
- Line up quickly on the bell, in an orderly line
- Walk in a quiet and orderly line to the classroom
- Return your coats to the cloakrooms. wash your hands and use this time to get a drink of water if you need one
- Be ready to start your lessons on time

Staff -

- Remind children to visit the toilet, wash their hands and collect their coats
- Line your class up then escort them to the playground in a quiet and orderly line
- Be in the playground on time when on duty
- Supervise all areas of the playground, including the ball court and the main entrance - talk to the children and play with them
- Ring the playground bell promptly at the appropriate times
- Be on the playground on time to collect your class
- Ensure your class are lined up in an orderly and silent line before escorting them into the building - using reward systems to reinforce appropriate behaviour.

Assembly

Children -

- Line up with your teacher and walk into the hall in a silent and orderly manner
- Sit down in rows, starting a new row sensibly when the first one is full
- Show Good Listening - Good Sitting, Good Looking, Closed Lips

Staff -

- Line your class up at your classroom door in plenty of time
- Escort your class into the hall in a silent and orderly line
- Take an active role in reinforcing acceptable behaviour in a sensitive manner and set an example of appropriate behaviour to children - e.g. joining in with the singing and using a quiet voice when supporting children
- If leading the assembly, ensure a prompt start and finish
- At the end of assembly, escort children to the playground, dining hall or classroom as appropriate

Dining hall

School Dinners -

- Wash your hands before eating
- Queue up calmly by the dinner trolleys and choose your lunch politely
- Raise your hand to leave your seat
- Empty your leftovers into the bins and put away your plate and cutlery/lunchbox
- Always walk

Staff -

- Talk to the children
- Encourage children to be independent in eating and collecting things, but provide support as necessary
- Encourage children to eat as much of their lunch as possible but do not 'force them' to finish
- Inform the class teacher and complete a 'cause for concern' if you notice children not eating or other concerning behaviour

End of day

Children -

- Collect all your belongings from the classroom and cloakroom quietly and quickly
- Walk down the stairs with your teacher in a quiet and orderly line
- Do not switch your mobile phone on until you leave school
- Wait for your parents/whoever is picking up with a member of staff on the playground, or if you are allowed, go straight home alone

Staff -

- Allow children time to collect their belongings
- Escort them to the playground in a quiet, orderly line
- Wait with children on the playground until they are collected and be available to talk to parents

Parents -

- Collect children on time.
- In your absence, arrange for another responsible adult (over 14 years of age) to collect him/her - inform the class teacher or office of these arrangements beforehand
- If your KS2 child is allowed to walk home alone, ensure they know this and that you have written to the school office to confirm your permission

Meridian Supportive Handling Policy

It is the responsibility of all staff to provide a safe and secure environment for the entire school community (children and staff) and to promote and sustain appropriate behaviour. This policy has been prepared for the support of staff in doing so and has been written in line with guidance from a range of sources including from the DfE and in consideration of whole school 'Supportive Handling Training' with Greenwich Waterside Outreach Team.

Aims of the policy

- Create a learning environment in which all children and staff feel safe;
- Protect everyone in the school community from harm;
- Protect all children against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful;
- Guide staff so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to control or restrain children and how such force might be used;
- Prevent serious damage to school property.

Definition of reasonable force

Staff at Meridian have a duty of care to themselves, children and other staff and can use reasonable force to achieve the above aims. Reasonable force has no legal definition and is a broad term that covers physical contact with pupils.

Reasonable force can be used to control or to restrain as a last resort. This may range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm, standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, through to more extreme circumstances such breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. It may also include removing a child from the classroom where they are causing a significant disruption to teaching and learning or preventing a child from leaving a room where allowing the child to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.

When staff decide that physical intervention is needed, it is important that they consider the circumstances and what force is reasonable for those circumstances.

Staff will always try to avoid injury but in extreme cases this may not always be possible.

Training

Most staff have received some training in 'supportive handling' through whole staff INSET - 'Approach Training LTD' (Bill Thorpe) delivered by the Waterside Outreach team. This approach is based on 25 years of practice research and training. Training will be updated regularly for key staff.

Staff authorised to use supportive handling

All members of school staff have a duty of care towards their pupils and have a legal power to use reasonable force as outlined above. For children who have an individual handling plan (see below), staff are named on the child's plan.

Minimising the need to use force

All staff should work together to create a calm environment that **minimises the risk of incidents that might require using force**. This includes -

- The use of de-escalation strategies which avoid confrontation such as diversion, withdrawal of attention (audience) and use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high). This may include leading the rest of the class to an alternative teaching and learning space.
- Ensuring all staff follow the school behaviour policy which builds relationships and sets clear expectations and boundaries.
- The teaching of weekly circle time or PSHE which focuses on social and emotional aspects of learning in all classes and supports children in how to manage conflict and strong feelings.
- Ensuring that children with significant behaviour difficulties have an individual behaviour plan which is clearly understood by staff who support that child.

If children are behaving in a disruptive way, strategies outlined in the behaviour policy will be used to manage this behaviour positively and **prevent a possible deterioration of the situation**. These strategies include -

- Rewarding positive behaviour of other class members;
- Reminder of rules and consequences;
- 'Time outs'.

At Meridian, when a child is upset or distressed, we understand the importance of trying to create a calm and supportive environment which shows we are listening to and respect the child. This includes:

- Providing a quiet and calm space away from peers where possible;
- Giving children the chance to express themselves and talk about how they feel;
- Reflecting responses back to the child to show them they have been understood;
- Responding to the feelings of the child (which lie beneath the behaviour) as well as to the behaviour itself;
- Recognising that 'the problem' is 'the problem' and not 'the child'.

Deciding whether to use reasonable force

The use of reasonable force is a last resort when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.

A member of staff must use their professional judgement to decide whether or not supportive handling is reasonable and appropriate in situations where -

- ***there is a risk to the safety of children (including the child him/herself), staff or visitors;***
- ***there is a risk of serious damage to property;***
- ***a child's behaviour is significantly prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline;***
- ***a child is committing a criminal offence.***

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force may be used:

- Children are fighting
- A child attacks another child or member of staff
- A child is engaging in or about to commit deliberate serious damage or vandalism to a property
- A child is causing, or at risk of causing, damage or injury by accident, rough play, misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- A child leaves a room or the school **and** could be at risk if not kept in the school or room
- A child is persistently refusing to leave a classroom or causing extreme disruption which is significantly stopping others from teaching and learning

A member of staff should never intervene in an incident without help if s/he believes that there is the risk of personal injury. Sometimes, where practical, a member of staff with a close working relationship with a child may be the best person to positively handle that child and s/he can be sent for.

Before intervening physically, a member of staff will, wherever practicable, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if s/he does not.

Using reasonable force

The following approaches are regarded as reasonable force in appropriate circumstances:

- Physically interposing between two children
- Blocking a child's path
- Guiding a child's movement (rather than a push which might cause a child to fall over)
- Escorting a child by the arm
- Where necessary, the use of other supportive handling methods (as taught at 'Approach Training')

Where appropriate some children will have an individual handling plan and risk assessment.

In exceptional circumstances a member of staff may hold a child for security and to reduce anxiety. This is where there is potential risk, even when a child is not yet out of control and is for the purpose of preventing or defusing escalation.

Supportive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment:

- A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed.
- Staff should not give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration.
- Whilst using reasonable force, a member of staff will continue attempting to communicate with the child throughout the incident.
- Staff should make it clear to the child that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

Recording incidents

All incidents that require the use of force/supportive handling must be recorded by the staff member/s involved as soon as possible and given to the Executive Headteacher/Head of School.

Reporting to parents

Parents will always be informed of the above incidents on the same day.

Post-incident support

Serious incidents that require the use of force can be upsetting for all concerned and may result in injuries to the child or staff. Appropriate support will be offered to children and staff involved:

- Straight after an incident, first aid or medical support will be administered to anyone who needs it.
- The child will be given time to calm down under the supervision of staff.
- When the child calms down (may be several hours later), a member of staff will discuss the incident with him/her and try to ascertain the reasons. The child will be given the opportunity to give their point of view. If it is not possible to talk to the child that same day, this will take place as soon as possible on the child's return to school.

- The member(s) of staff involved will be given a break/support as appropriate and the chance to debrief as soon as is practicably possible.
- All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish relationships between staff and children.
- Children who may have witnessed the incident will be given support as necessary. Class teachers will use their professional judgement in deciding how to respond, e.g. through Circle Time or individual support.
- An Individual Behaviour Plan may be set up if the child does not already have one. The plan will include strategies to prevent and deal with the recurrence of incidents requiring the use of force.
- The Headteacher will decide in consultation with the SENCo/SLT whether multi-agency partners need to be involved, e.g. CAMHS.
- The parents of the pupil involved will be included in discussions about further actions and support.
- If a complaint is made by a pupil or parent against a member of staff, these will be dealt with under the school's Complaints Procedure. Also, please refer to the Safeguarding Policy for dealing with allegations of abuse.