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POLICY: Anti-Bullying Policy

STATUTORY: Yes

DATE AGREED: 21/09/21

REVIEW DATE: September 2022

RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF STAFF: Andy Williams

GOVERNOR COMMITTEE: Personnel and Welfare

SIGNED HEADTEACHER: A Evans

SIGNED CHAIR OF GOVERNORS: L Potter



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Introduction

As a school we strongly believe that bullying is totally unacceptable. We encourage an open and supportive ethos where all members of the school community should ensure tolerance and respect are shown at all times. We appreciate that bullying can have an adverse effect on individuals well into adulthood and also acknowledge that bullying is frequently a form of peer on peer abuse (for which there must be zero tolerance) and therefore is also a safeguarding, not just a behavioural matter. JMHS supports British Values and the role they play in ensuring a harmonious community. Finally, we believe that it is within safe environments that pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

The school has considered and adhered to the following legislation and non-statutory guidance in forming this policy

- Preventing and tackling bullying-Advice for headteachers/staff and governors DFE 2017
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Equalities Act 2010
- Sexual violence and harassment between students 2017
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, some types of behaviour could be a criminal offence under hate crime legislation, the 1997 Protection of Harassment Act 1997, Malicious Communications Act 1988 and 2003 plus the Public Order Act 1986. This means the school may feel that in certain circumstances it may need the support, advice or involvement of the police.

Sections 90 and 91 of the education and Inspections Act 2006 enable staff to address, investigate and discipline students outside of school premises where it would be considered reasonable to do so i.e to prevent and resolve incidents of bullying. It is important to note that the school understands that there is a framework of contextual safeguarding environments and that we have a responsibility to support and work with agencies that work in the community (including online) to tackle bullying.

2. Definitions

John Masfield High School considers bullying to be:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time*
- Difficult for victims to defend themselves against

* A singular event is covered in the JMHS Behaviour for Learning Policy which has a wide range of sanctions which would be employed based on the individual circumstances.

It includes:

Action against others because of their race, cultural background, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, physical characteristics, appearance, health, gender or disabilities. It can also take the form of a "harmful sexual behaviour."

Bullying takes many forms and therefore an exhaustive list is not possible, but four main types are:

- Physical – e.g. hitting, kicking and taking belongings.

- Cyber – e.g. using technology such as a mobile telephone or a computer to make offensive remarks or threats about or to another person.
- Verbal – e.g. name calling, insulting comments, making offensive remarks.
- Indirect – e.g. deliberately isolating someone, making someone the subject of malicious rumours or writing graffiti about someone.

All members of the school are expected to help develop an ethos based on caring, considerate and co-operative behaviour. We use a variety of methods and activities to ensure students understand that bullying in any form is unacceptable; that differences in people are to be celebrated and to see situations from other's perspectives. Parents/carers and students are encouraged to share their views in order that the policy be understood and implemented by all members of the school community. **It is important for the school to openly discuss with young people the differences that could motivate bullying and provide awareness and training for staff who work in this area. Staff must be aware that although bullying can happen to any student there is evidence that those students with disabilities and special educational needs are more vulnerable to such behaviours.**

We encourage students to speak out and tell someone if they or someone else is being bullied. Students are encouraged to do this through any means they are comfortable with. Often students choose to speak to parents or carers or to an adult or another student in school, though students are becoming increasingly confident to use email to inform us of their concerns. JMHS is committed to ensuring any and all disclosures will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in a sensitive, timely and effective manner. **Students are able to report bullying through the schools "Epraise" online system as well as in person. All allegations of bullying are recorded on the Schools safeguarding system "My Concern."**

It is our experience that bullying also exists outside of school hours and that often the root cause of bullying is to be found out of school. Because of this, it may not always be possible for the school to "solve" every situation to the satisfaction of everyone involved, but the school accepts that it has a responsibility to do its best to find a resolution.

All allegations of bullying will be taken seriously by the school. We will ensure that following any allegation the investigation will be impartial and as swift as possible. Any recommendations or actions following an investigation will always reflect the findings. However, just because bullying is alleged, it does not mean that it has taken place. Bullying issues are rarely simple and often involve counter-allegations.

3. PSHE Curriculum to support anti-bullying

Year 7 and 8

There is a strong anti-bullying theme running through the Year 7 PSHE curriculum, starting in the very first week with 'boot camp' lessons delivered by tutors as part of the induction programme. The first two Year leader workshops (currently), focus on anti-bullying with an emphasis on peer-on-peer abuse. Later work, with tutors and through workshops build on this with particular focus on equalities, as well as healthy relationships. Further work through assemblies, tutor PSHE and workshops focus on online presence and how to behave online (including the consequences of not making the right choices online).

The workshops in Year 8 currently build on healthy relationships work from Year 7 (e.g. My Perfect Partner), staying safe online and peer pressure. Tutor work embeds these themes and consider cyber-bullying in more depth.

Year 9, 10 and 11

Workshops in the older year-groups currently include; 'Banter, harassment and peer abuse', 'Exploitation', 'Abusive relationships (Gaslighting and DA)', 'Toxic Masculinity', 'Homophobia' and 'Can we ever get racial equality?' Tutor PSHE work and assemblies touch on and embed these themes, whilst building on the healthy relationship work from Year 7 and 8. Further work on extremism and inclusion, family life (parenting / relationships), being a good citizen and online safety follows.

4. Cyberbullying

Increasingly bullying takes place in the online environment outside of school and the school day. The school aims to respond to this threat by:

1. Offering all parents and students access to the "safer schools" platform and application where a wide range of advice and updates can be accessed.
2. Covering a range of topics in the ICT and PSHE curriculum to highlight the implications of cyber bullying. This will include the importance of data security and confidentiality, the appropriate age levels for social media platforms, youth produced sexual imagery, the position of the law in relation to cyber bullying and how to respond to and report it.
3. Within the KS3 curriculum for Computing at JMHS we cover Cyber Safety & Cyber Security. We start by teaching our students how to safely search and browse the internet, and how to identify real and misinformation online by fact-checking and identifying multiple sources. We then move on to how to stay safe online (e-safety) and show and explain to students how communication online can be misused for cyber-bullying. As part of the e-safety training, we show students how to limit their digital footprint to avoid making themselves targets for online trolls, as well as informing them of ways to seek help and report if they have been targeted online. Moral and ethical use of the internet is also covered, where we show students how online abuse can affect an individual and what can be included as online abuse.
4. Updating staff knowledge in this important area so they are able to advise and support young people in this area.

Although the school recognises its responsibility in supporting young people in the case of cyber bullying - we will promote the age restriction guidance on social media platforms and will maintain that the most effective way to avoid such intrusions is to not engage with certain platforms and dialogue. The school is limited in its rights to control and censor the online behaviours outside of school and can only support advise and liaise with those agencies and parent/guardians that can intervene.

5. Identifying bullying

In order to identify bullying:

- Staff are asked to notice signs that may indicate bullying is taking place including withdrawn behaviour, avoidance of certain areas and classes, erratic attendance, isolation, emotional outbursts, low self-esteem, low mood, hyper alertness.
- An open culture is encouraged, where all students, staff and parents know that they may safely report any incidents or patterns of behaviour that indicate that bullying may be taking place in school or on the way to and from school.

- There are high levels of staff supervision before school, between lessons, at break and lunch and after school.
- Students or parents may report suspected bullying to any member of staff.
- **Assemblies, PSHE and other curriculum areas** will be used to raise awareness of bullying, its consequences and how bullying can be tackled.

6. Ensuring incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively

If a student or parent/carer reports that bullying has taken place:

A parent or student can report their concerns to any member of staff. It is essential that this information is acted upon. The member of staff must inform the **Year Leader** with responsibility for the student who has been a victim of the alleged bullying in the shortest possible time. All allegations of bullying must be treated as serious. If a **Year Leader** is not available then a member of the Senior Leadership Team or a **Student Support Assistant** should be informed. If a Year 12 or Year 13 student is involved, the matter would be passed to a member of the Sixth Form Leadership Team.

The parents/carers of the student(s) allegedly involved should be contacted as a priority, typically within 24 hours. This means both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator. We will immediately check that the student's safety in school is ensured and that they feel safe.

Students are encouraged to report bullying from a bystander point of view and will be offered support and levels of confidentiality to do so. The school ePraise system has a portal for reporting bullying and the Student services office are also equipped and available to receive reports

7. Procedure for investigating an allegation of bullying - (See appendix 1)

1. The member of staff who receives the report will pass all relevant factual information to the relevant **Year Leader(s)**. **An initial decision will be made at this stage if the incident constitutes "Peer on Peer abuse" by assessing the alleged levels of coercion, imbalances of power between individuals, frequency of events, level of harm and other contextual factors. If this is the case then staff will default to the Child Protection policy. The Hackett continuum will be used as a broad framework for assessment.**
2. A thorough and impartial investigation will take place by a suitable member of staff, typically this will be a Year Leader or member of the SLT to establish facts and opinions about the allegation. **Students who are alleged victims of bullying will be consulted about the nature and process of an investigation (students frequently feel vulnerable during an investigation stage and may worry about repercussions of such an investigation).**
3. Following the investigation, the member of staff responsible for the report will make recommendations about any actions to take. The member of SLT responsible for co-ordinating the anti-bullying strategy will typically be the person who takes the decision about action. In their absence another member of the SLT will do this.
4. The investigation findings will be shared with the alleged bully and the victim, their parents/carers and relevant staff. We will share relevant information that complies with the GDPR legislation. The Deputy Headteacher and the Headteacher must be informed if the recommendation of the report is an exclusion.
5. **The school is aware that rarely do bullies self-identify and that perceptions of behaviours vary between stakeholders. The school will always seek to understand multiple perspectives and aim to understand the broader context behind pupil actions. We will conclude investigations with the principal of beyond "reasonable doubt" rather than proof "without doubt"**

8. Follow up to an incident

The **Year Leader** and form tutor will monitor the alleged bully and victim to ensure that the victim feels confident and safe (this may take the form of a formal safety plan). They should ensure that parents/carers and relevant staff are updated as necessary. The length of time of monitoring will vary depending on the needs of the student. **Year leaders are fully aware that perpetrators of bullying can frequently be at the end of bullying or other safeguarding issues and this must be considered and explored.**

9. Complaints

A parent wishing to make a complaint about how an allegation of bullying has been dealt with should use the JMHS Concerns and Complaints policy.

10. Monitoring and evaluation

1. All reports of potential bullying will be recorded on our 'My Concern' logging system with sanctions recorded on individual pupil behaviour records. This will be reviewed by the member of SLT responsible for leading the anti-bullying strategy who will also endeavour to seek feedback from all stakeholders.
2. The member of SLT responsible for leading the anti-bullying strategy will share information about bullying with relevant staff when appropriate to do so.
3. The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Governors' Personnel and Welfare committee following consultation with students, parents and staff.

11. Links to other policies

JMHS Child Protection and Safeguarding policy (Peer on Peer section)
JMHS Whistleblowing policy
JMHS Equalities statement
JMHS Concerns and Complaints policy
JMHS Behaviour for Learning policy

Relevant contacts at John Masefield High School		
Mr A Williams	Assistant Headteacher	Andy.williams@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Mr M Hawksworth	Head of Sixth Form	Mark.Hawksworth@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Miss C Limbrick	Year Leader	Chloe.Limbrick@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Mr A Bees	Year Leader	Anthony.Bees@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Mrs D Fox	Year Leader	Donna.Fox@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Mr D Wyatt	Year Leader	Dean.Wyatt@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Miss Newnes	Year Leader	Hayley.Newnes@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Mrs Maria Law	Year Head Sixth Form	Maria.Law@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Mrs Jessica Cullis	Year Head Sixth Form	Jessica.Cullis@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Mrs L Van Vuren	Assistant SENDCO	Louise.vanVuren@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Ms S. King	Inclusion Coordinator	Sally.King@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Lucy Potter	Chair of Governors	chair@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Mrs K Barker	SENDCO	Karen.Barker@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk

Prepared by Assistant Headteacher

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John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre
Registered Office: Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2HF
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JMHS ANTI BULLYING AND EQUALITIES PROCEDURE

