ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

2022-2024

Maritime Academy

Part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust

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STRENGTH – PRIDE – UNITY

MAKING EXCELLENCE A HABIT

Contents

Aims

This policy aims:

- To prevent occurrences of bullying at Maritime Academy.
- To ensure that all stakeholders understand what bullying is and how it is dealt with.
- To maintain the ethos of the academy and its mission statement.
- To create a positive and safe learning environment for all.
- To develop all individual's self-esteem and respect for others.
- To have a zero tolerance of incidents of bullying.
- To deal with bullying by tailoring a personalised package of student support for mediation and intervention; to include, what/how appropriate sanctions are applied.
- To ensure incidents of bullying are reported by specific categories and appropriate education is put in place in response to these

Maritime Academy wishes to work in partnership with parents and pupils, to ensure pupils can learn in a safe and supportive environment. Our policy has been put together to consider the guidance from the DfE in 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017).

This policy works alongside other Trust and school policies, for example:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- PSHE and RSE Policies

Anti-Bullying and our values

Maritime Academy is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it within our school community. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

The school actively promotes positive interpersonal relations between all members of the school community based on respect for where they learn and who they learn with. We are proud of our Students and how they demonstrate strength of character to be their best selves supporting each other to achieve success in a collaborative environment, free from all forms of bullying and discrimination. This policy has been developed

through consultation which involves all members of the school community – children, parents, carers, school staff and Governors.

To help meet our principles, we have established an effective and efficient system of communication with students, staff, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Our Academy has a zero-tolerance attitude to bullying. In this respect, this policy is intended to achieve in terms of outcomes:

- **For students:** To learn in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus. In addition, this policy is designed to enable students to recognise if bullying is occurring, how to get help and when to support a victim. Bullied victims will be listened to and reported incidents will be taken seriously and investigated. Following investigation, the bully will receive appropriate interventions and sanctions.
- **For staff:** To effectively perform their roles to enhance the learning and teaching of students in a safe, respectful and enriching school
- **For parents/carers:** To be secure that their children are safe, happy, achieving well, fully participating and are gaining skills to enhance their future study and employability.

Definition of bullying

'Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be **physical,** verbal **or psychological.** It can happen **face-to-face** or through **cyberspace**.'

Definition taken from the Anti-Bullying Alliance

'Bullying is behaviour by an **individual** or **group**, **repeated** over time, that **intentionally hurts** another individual or group either physically or emotionally'

Definition taken from the DfE's 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying

Bullying is not just physical, it can take other forms too:

- **Emotional** - Derogatory name calling of an insulting and/or personal nature. Demanding money, material goods or favours by means of threat or force.
- **Physical** - Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence because of some perceived physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural or racial difference.
- **Verbal** - Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, abuse and threats. Ridiculing an individual.

- **Cyber** - All areas of the internet, such as email and internet chat-room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology. **Appendix 2** provides further information on cyber bullying and this policy should be read alongside our E-Safety Policy when considering cyber bullying.

Examples of bullying against targeted groups include:

- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti or gestures.
- Sexual orientation – offensive behaviour because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse.
- Sexist – offensive name calling, misogynistic behaviour.
- Disablist – offensive name calling, laughing, not supporting (excluding) people with disabilities.
- Religion – derogatory remarks about a person's religious belief.

Factors implicit in examples of bullying:

- It involves an imbalance of power
- It is repetitive and happens over a period of time
- It can fit into any of the forms of behaviour listed above. It may fit into one, or many, forms.

Bullying can take place inside or outside of Academy life. For clarity, this policy extends to any bullying that happens off Academy premises, as well as within the Academy day.

In addition to our procedures for dealing with bullying, the Academy will seek police advise where they believe a hate crime has been, or could be, committed.

The frequency of bullying

Bullying can take place several times a week or day. It can go on for months and even years. There is recognition that bullying occurs often beyond the realm of an Academy, but can have manifestations in the Academy. We have an expectation of parents that they should be supportive in the process of eliminating any form of bullying.

The severity of bullying

Bullying ranges from horseplay to vicious assault. It is recognised that bullying can be extremely subtle and therefore difficult to deal with.

Direct and indirect bullying

It is important to distinguish the difference, i.e. between those who are bullies and victims, and the larger group of students who are onlookers/bystanders. Sometimes the bullies operate in secret places, but often they feel quite confident that no one will stop them and they bully others in public. The onlookers/bystanders are then part of the bullying – we expect our students to use their strength of character to intervene (when safe to do so) or report any incidents of bullying. Witnessing bullying and choosing to ignore it is to condone it, and that action goes against our school's ethos and culture.

Peer on peer abuse

Bullying will not be dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up' and staff are aware that there is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive and incidents that are more properly dealt with as bullying or sexual experimentation. This is a matter for professional judgement.

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse: bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:

- There is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned.
- The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children.
- There are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused. **Appendix 3** details the Academy's approach to peer on peer abuse.

Recording bullying

It is widely recognised that there is a vast range of types of bullying and varying degrees of severity. It is often difficult to detect more subtle types of bullying which may not be obvious or overt. However, as in all matters relating to standards and expectations, what follows rests on the professional judgement of all colleagues to exercise that judgement as and where it is felt appropriate and necessary.

Staff should liaise with key individuals starting with the student's Form Tutor and the Assistant Principal. The Form Tutor will work with designated staff from within the Academy to investigate the incident. The Assistant Principal will be the key liaison with students, parents and staff; ensuring all parties are aware of the

progress/outcome of the investigation and when appropriate the sanction and intervention applied to the student(s) involved.

The Assistant Principal will have oversight of bullying issues through briefing sessions with the staff team, the student's MIS record and external services used by the Academy.

Incidents of bullying will be recorded and analysed on a termly basis and broken down into the following categories:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Verbal
- Cyber
- Sexual orientation – including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying

- Racial
- Sexist
- Disablist
- Religious

Curriculum, education and support

Our Anti-Bullying policy is communicated to staff and students in a range of different methods through day-to-day school life. These methods include:

- Education and support in issues regarding bullying, methods of dealing with bullying, prejudice and discrimination.
- Stereo-typing will be discussed in the PSHE Programme.
- Themed assemblies, with follow up work in tutor groups. These may be led by students, as well as staff.
- Focussed weeks and programmes of work within the tutor system to focus on national campaigns e.g. Black History Month, E-Safety week, anti-bullying week. In addition, to follow up high profile or relevant news stories about bullying or harassment issues, these will be discussed in tutor periods.
- PSHE inputs will cover relationships and friendships; teaching students how to manage their relationships with others constructively.
- PSHE sessions will include co-operative group work to enable students to explore issues by considering different points of view and to become integrated into the peer/tutor group.
- Staff will encourage student co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills by providing opportunities to work in groups and with partners. Sport and games teachers are particularly effective at promoting teamwork. Students will be allocated to groups selected by the teacher, when appropriate, and these will be changed at regular intervals to allow students more contact with a wider circle of students in their year group.

- Potential victims of bullying should be drawn into working groups with children who do not abuse or take advantage of them. This should be done in a discreet and sensitive manner.
- Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events such as drama productions, concerts, charity and social events and also by involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Pastoral support

Students have access to a range of support to help them recognise, deal with and report bullying issues:

- The Form Tutor, SENDCo and Extended Leadership Team will provide a one-to-one opportunity for students to talk through relationship difficulties.
- The Pupil Parliament will provide an opportunity for students to suggest improvements to aspects of Academy life.
- There will be training available for students to become Anti-Bullying Mentors who will be available to act as personal mentors on request.
- There will be other tutor-based roles for students to engage with. These roles will develop over time but will also provide every tutor group with a team of students who can support their peers.

Expectations and guidance

Staff

- Watch out for early signs of distress in students, e.g.
  - Deterioration of work.
  - Spurious illness.
  - Isolation or the desire to remain with adults.
  - Erratic attendance and punctuality.
  - Internal truancy.

Note: This behaviour may be a warning of other problems but it may be indicative of bullying.

- Listen carefully and record all incidents as per our policy.
- Offer the victim and the bully support and help by putting our Academy procedures into operation. If the victim discloses anything you deem to be a welfare or safeguarding issue then disclose this information immediately to a member of the Child Protection team (see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for further details).

Students

- As a member of the Academy, we do not expect you to tolerate any forms of bullying behaviour.
- Adults and students will work together to stop bullying.
- When someone is being bullied or in distress, inform an adult immediately of any form of bullying behaviour.
- Do not be afraid to report any incidents. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bullying.
- Do not put up with bullies in your group of friends.
- Only accept people who do not bully others. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out, or are by themselves.
- Informing is not 'telling tales' or 'snitching'.
- Recognise that everyone is important in our school community and differences should be celebrated.

Parents

- Watch for the early signs in your child (see the section on staff expectations), if you have concerns contact the Academy.
- Parents should know:
    - The Academy's expectation of the parent's responsibility.
    - Parents may be expected to attend the Academy to discuss issues.
    - That we take the issue seriously and will always deal with any parent or student concerns.

Appendix 1 – Procedures when dealing with bullying

Staff guidance

This guidance provides general advice. Each incident will be dealt with dependant on the severity, the students involved and any relevant circumstances. It also provides an outline of the steps that could be taken when there are instances of bullying.

If bullying is reported, or if a member of staff notices a bullying incident:

- **For serious incidents** of bullying, staff will inform the Assistant Principal. Normally, the procedure outlined below will be adopted by all staff in serious incidents.

- **For incidents, where it is deemed less serious,** these will be reported to the Form Tutor, who should investigate the incident and inform the Assistant Principal of the outcome. Should the investigation find the incident is more serious, this will be treated as such.

1. Interview the victim, alleged bully and any witnesses separately

- Try to ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the students interviewed, for example by texting.

- If a student is injured, take the student immediately to the appointed first aider for a medical opinion of the extent of the injuries. The appointed first aider will record any injuries

- Use a room that allows you to interview in privacy. A witness is recommended for serious incidents.

- Avoid making premature assumptions - it is important not to be judgemental at this stage.

- Be non-confrontational.

- Ask the alleged bully and the alleged victim to write down details. This may need prompting with questions from you to obtain the full picture.

- Ask additional witnesses/bystanders for information; preferably written.

- Reiterate to witnesses that there are no innocent bystanders - they are all responsible.

- Listen carefully to all accounts - several students saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth, particularly if they have had an opportunity to discuss the incident in advance.

- Do not attach blame until your investigation is complete.

- Adopt a problem-solving approach, which moves a bully on from justifying themselves - ask the alleged bully to suggest ways in which the situation can be improved.

- Tell all students interviewed that they must not discuss the interview with other students.

2. Record details of the bullying

- Write a very brief summary of the incident. A separate interview sheet is needed for each student involved.
- Place these interview sheets in the individual files of each student involved.
- Write a more detailed single account and attach written statements of alleged victim, alleged bully and witnesses. Full names of all involved should be included in this account and send this to the Principal.
- The Assistant Principal should keep a record of all incidents of bullying for the students on the MIS
- Inform the parents of all parties that an investigation is being carried out and that they will be kept informed at every stage of the process.
- Record the telephone call on the MIS.

3. Take appropriate action to deal with the bully

- If you are satisfied that bullying did take place, help the student to understand the consequences of their actions and warn them that there must be no further intimidation. Inform them of the type of sanction to be used if the bullying is repeated.
- If possible, try for reconciliation and genuine apology from the student.
- Realise that some students do not appreciate the distress they are causing and are willing to change their behaviour. Do not however, force a face-to-face meeting. This **must** be the decision of the students.
- Try to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour.
- Prepare the student to face their peer group - discuss what they will say to others.
- Inform parents about bullying incidents and what action is being taken and record it on the MIS.
- If initial attempts to stop the bullying fail, apply an appropriate level of sanction commensurate with the seriousness of the bullying. (Sanctions can be found in an Appendix of the Behaviour for Learning Policy).
- Form Tutor and Assistant Principal will informally monitor students over the next half term.
- If bullying is racist, inform the Principal immediately.
- Support the bully.

4. Support the victim - follow up checks

- The Form Tutor should check informally on a weekly basis for a month after the complaint of bullying.
- The Assistant Principal should check formally the week after the bullying and again during the same half term.

- Encourage the victim to develop their strength of character:
  o Ignore the comments; pretend not to hear.
  o Walk away quickly; use body language to look determined, strong and positive.
  o Shout "No, go away" as loudly as possible.
- Encourage the victim to tell a trusted adult in the Academy if bullying is repeated.
- Encourage the victim to broaden their friendship groups by joining an after-school club or activity.
- Ask another student to befriend and support the victim. This may involve the formal setting up of a 'circle of friends'
- Discuss bullying in assemblies, in drama, in the tutor group or PSHE lessons, and ask the class to suggest possible solutions.
- If bullying is about a particular issue (disability for example), mount an education programme during tutorial time; not focused on a particular child.
- If bullying is by students from another school, the Head of Year should telephone the relevant Head of Year/Deputy of the other school and ask for a return call on the result of their investigation.
- Use peer mediation to resolve conflict if appropriate, using trained students only.
- Provide a peer mentor.
- Use events such as Anti-Bullying Week to highlight the issues of bullying.

5. Sanctions

Sanctions to deal with bullying behaviour will be dependent on the level, seriousness and persistence of the bullying.

For minor/single incidents

Each incident will be assessed and an appropriate sanction issued. This could range from an apology and assurance that the bullying will stop, a detention, a meeting with parent/carer **or** a temporary exclusion from certain areas of the Academy's premises. This list is not exhaustive.

In more serious cases, internal exclusion, off-site inclusion, suspension or permanent exclusion may be sanctioned.

Appendix 2 – Cyber bullying

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) outlines some legal powers which relate more directly to cyberbullying and gives the Principal (and their staff) the power, 'to such an extent that is reasonable', to regulate the conduct of students when they are offsite. The EIA also provides a defence for school staff in confiscating items such as mobile phones from pupils.

Additionally, 'Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies' July 2017 states:

"The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police."

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in UK law, some cyber-bullying activities (for example, menacing and threatening communications) could be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. There have been some instances of such prosecutions in the UK. The Malicious Communications Act of 1988 makes it an offence for:

1. Any person who sends to another person:
    (a) A letter, electronic communication or article of any description which conveys:
        (i) A message which is indecent or grossly offensive.
        (ii) A threat.
        (iii) Information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

(b)   Any article or electronic communication which is, in whole or part, of an indecent or grossly offensive nature, is guilty of an offence if his purpose, or one of his purposes, in sending it is that it should, so far as falling within paragraph (a) or (b) above, cause distress or anxiety to the recipient or to any other person to whom he intends that it or its contents or nature should be communicated.

At the Maritime Academy we work to regulate incidents of cyber-bullying through our E-Safety Policy for students, Acceptable Use of ICT Policy for staff and behaviour policy which limits students use of mobile phones within the Academy day.

Appendix 3 – Peer on peer abuse

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 (KCSIE 2018) references the capability children and young people can have to abuse their peers. This can manifest itself in many ways and is taken seriously by the academy.   This behaviour should not be treated as 'normal' between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.

Peer abuse

Peer abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others. All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from peer abuse including:

- Bullying (including cyber, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying).
- Gender based violence.
- Sexual assaults and sexting.

This abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences.
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm

Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g.

- Significant disruption in their own lives.
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse.
- Educational under-achievement.

- Involved in crime.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the first priority of any education setting, but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical.

Recognising peer abuse

An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved.
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability.
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident.
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation.
- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery.
- The effect on the victim.
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret.
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred.
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration.

Protection and action to be taken

It is not enough to respond to incidents as they arise: we proactively strive to create an environment that actively discourages abuse and challenges the attitudes which underlie it. Education around potential incidents is supported by our Curriculum programme, including PSHE and Citizenship.

All staff have a duty to raise any concerns where they consider a young person has abused another child or young person. Once Staff are in receipt of this they will deal with this allegation through our Safeguarding procedures, which will include using our professional judgements about each specific case.

Risks

Professionals should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people and the added vulnerability of children and young people who have been the victims of violent crime (e.g. mugging), including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children.

The alleged perpetrator may have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives,

may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm and in need of protection. Any long-term plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

The victim

We will consider what action is necessary to ensure the immediate safety of the identified victim(s) and what further enquiries are necessary to assess any further risk.

Where a young person has abused a sibling, planning must include consideration of the support needs of the parents. If victim and perpetrator are members of the same family/household, before making any arrangement to return the perpetrator to the family/household it is critical to ensure that the victim's views have been heard and that they feel safe.

The alleged perpetrator

Any decision on action in respect of the alleged perpetrator must be based on the risk they pose to other children and what can be done to minimise this risk. For most incidents, we will follow our Behaviour for Learning Policy in dealing with peer abuse, in severe and extreme cases this could result in the perpetrator being permanently excluded.

Given that perpetrators of abuse are likely to have suffered abuse in their own lives, we will consider any action in light of safeguarding concerns and our equality policy when working with students with SEND.

Issues

Particular difficulties arise in responding to a child or young person who abuses another child because:

- There is no clear dividing line between abusive behaviour and normal childhood behaviour.
- Many adults who abuse children repeatedly established this pattern of behaviour in childhood or adolescence, but a single incident of abuse does not indicate that a young person is likely to abuse again.
- Some young people who abuse have themselves been abused, but this cannot be assumed in any particular case.

The guiding principles for dealing with these situations are:

- The needs of the victim and the needs of the alleged perpetrator must be considered separately.

- In addition to safeguarding the identified victim, agencies must consider whether the alleged perpetrator seems to pose a risk to any other children.

- Children and young people who abuse others are responsible for their abusive behaviour, and safeguarding action must include addressing their behaviour and its causes.

- The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children.

- Where needed there should be a co-ordinated multi-agency approach.