The Milton Keynes Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Introduction, definition and aims

1.1 Introduction

At Milton Keynes Academy we are working with staff, students and parents to create a community where bullying is not tolerated. The Academy community:

1. Discusses, monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy on a regular basis. Good practice suggests the policy should be reviewed on average every two years.

2. Supports staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately.

3. Ensures that students are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that students feel safe to learn; and that students abide by the anti-bullying policy.

4. Reports back quickly to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deals promptly with complaints. Parents/carers in turn work with the Academy to uphold the anti-bullying policy.

5. Seeks to learn from anti-bullying good practice elsewhere and utilises the support of the local authority and relevant organisations when appropriate.

1.2 Definition of Bullying

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg hiding book, threatening gestures).

Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.

Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.

Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

Homophobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality.

Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

Cyber – All areas of internet such as email and internet chat room misuse, threats via mobile phones and misuse of associated technology eg camera and video facilities.

1.3 Aims

Our aims are to:

- Identify and eliminate any form of behaviour which causes distress and unhappiness.
- Devise strategies to deal sympathetically with victims and bullies to give positive help.
- Be aware of bullying and places where it occurs.
- Become a place where people freely acknowledge and reveal incidents of bullying without fear of reprisal and where they know they will receive constant support.
- Ensure that all staff, students and parents are aware of this policy and fulfil their obligations to it.

2. Characteristics of Bullies

Bullies:

- Know what they are doing – bullying is a planned act, not a sudden loss of control.
- Know what they are doing is wrong.
- Get personal satisfaction from what they do.
- Gain social status from what they do.
- Can affect a victim even when they are not with them (eg threats which lead to loss of sleep or refusing to go to school)
- Use different methods to establish dominance over others, including the use of threats, violence, intimidation, social exclusion, humiliation, extortion.
- Think that no one will do anything to stop them.
- Are often the victims of other bullies (including adults).

3. How Bullying Makes You Feel

- Ashamed
- Guilty
- Lost
- Hopeless
- Helpless
- Bad tempered
- Trapped

4. What Students Should Do If They Are Being Bullied

Tell an adult you trust immediately.

Tell yourself you do not deserve to be bullied. Try to ignore the bully.

Try not to show bullies that you are upset, which is difficult.

Avoid being alone in places where bullying happens. Stay with a group of students or adults – there is safety in numbers.

Walk quickly and be confident even if you are worried.

If you are in danger, get away and do not struggle even to keep your possessions.

Fighting back will make it worse and will not solve the problem – talk to an adult if you are tempted to fight.

If you are different in some way, be proud of it!

What Students Should Do If They Have A Friend Who Is Being Bullied

Tell a teacher.

Give your friend the above advice.

5. What Parents and Staff Should Look For – Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he/she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from the Academy
- Doesn't want to go on a bus
- Changes their route to the Academy
- Begs to be driven in
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school 'school phobic'
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay a bully)
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children and siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

6. What Parents Should Do

- Ask him or her directly.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms (see above).
- Take bullying seriously and find out the facts when told about an incident.
- Do not agree to keep the bullying a secret.
- Inform the Academy immediately (contact your child's tutor or Head of Learning Village).
- Arrange to meet your child if the bullying is happening on the way to or from the Academy.
- Check that your child is not inviting the bullying through some undesirable habit.
- Encourage your child to bring their friends home with them.
- Keep a written record if the bullying persists – it may move away from the Academy where teachers cannot monitor the problem.
- Do not encourage your child to hit back – it will only make matters worse.
- Identify the places where the bullying is taking place and work out ways to avoid them.
- Advise your child to stay with their friends in a group or near an adult.
- Advise your child not to try to 'buy off' the bully with sweets or other things and try not to give in to demands for money.
- Stress the importance of social behaviour and the need to support all other students.

7. What The Academy Will Do To Prevent Bullying

We will ensure that everyone understands what bullying is and how to deal with it through:

- Communication of this policy to parents, students, staff and governors
- Lessons and assemblies
- Induction programme for new students
- Regular reminders about courteous and respectful behaviour in normal lessons and everyday activities within the Academy
- Publication of advice in the Student Voice

All incidents of bullying will be seen as important and will be dealt with in a sensitive, consistent and urgent matter. Sanctions and counselling will be adopted. Students will be encouraged to feel able to report ALL incidents of bullying and to support each other when witnessing incidents. Friends of victims will be encouraged to report bullying if they are aware of it, even if the victims ask them not to. In all cases the victims will be given support to reassure them.

Some incidents may be relatively minor eg hiding a bag or a coat or using nicknames etc and may be dealt with by reprimand, a warning and a clear statement that such behaviour is unacceptable at Milton Keynes Academy. However, minor cases will be recorded and passed to the appropriate Tutor or Head of Learning Village. Repetition or serious cases of abuse or bullying will result in parents being notified and/or interviewed and in more severe cases sanctions being used with the bully eg fixed-term exclusion.

8. The Academy's Procedure :

- Make it clear to students that bullying is unacceptable.
- Teach students how to co-operate in controlling bullying eg posters, newsletters etc.
- Respond immediately if a student reports an incident of bullying by either dealing with it or referring it to the student's Tutor or Head of Learning Village.
- Interview the victim(s) and friends to get a written account.
- Interview the bully and friends to get a written account.
- Complete an incident report form for the Tutor or Head of Learning Village.
- Discuss the incident with the victim and the bully together to resolve the situation if possible.
- Inform parents of the victim and the bully of the incident and the actions taken.
- Interview the parents of the victim and bully if necessary.
- Exclude the bully if appropriate.
- Refer the bully to the Governors.
- Involve the Police if appropriate.
- Try to make sure that the bullying is prevented by being vigilant on duty before and after school, at break and lunch time and during lesson changeovers.
- Deploy strategies for improving the self-esteem of and offering care for the victim eg inter-agency work (Education Welfare Service), resolution meetings, rewards, listen and value what the victim says, give direct access to Tutors, Village Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team, opportunities for confidential conversations with learning mentors etc.
- Deploy strategies for changing the behaviour of the bully eg inter-agency work, resolution meetings, behaviour support plans etc.
- Follow the normal procedures of the behaviour referral system unless there is a need for 'fast-track' action to help the victim or the bully.

In dealing with incidents of bullying we will remember at all times that:

- Incidents should be resolved and not just smoothed over.

- Those who feel aggrieved want to see justice done.
- Blame may not all be on one side.
- It may not be possible to prove what actually happened.
- Few incidents are resolved by the removal of the bully from the school.
- Levels of tolerance vary enormously.
- Expectations may be unrealistic.

9. Cyberbullying

9.1 Definition

Cyberbullying is the use of ICT (Information Communications Technology), particularly mobile phones and the internet to deliberately upset someone else. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing another route to harass their target.

It differs in several ways from other kinds of bullying:

- 24/7 and is the invasion of home and personal space. Cyberbullying can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe or personal.
- The audience can be very large and reached rapidly. The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages means the scope and scale can be greater than for other forms of bullying.
- People who cyberbully may attempt to remain anonymous. This can be extremely distressing for those being bullied. The person cyberbullying may never be in the same physical space as their target.
- The profile of the bully and target. Cyberbullying can take place between peers and across generations, teachers have also been targets. Bystanders can also become accessories to the bullying, eg by passing on a humiliating image.
- Some instances of cyberbullying are known to be unintentional. It can be the result of not thinking (something sent as a joke may be upsetting) or a lack of awareness of the consequences eg saying something negative on-line about another student that they don't expect to be forwarded on.
- Many cyberbullying incidents can themselves act as evidence.

Cyberbullying and the Law

Cyberbullying, like all bullying will be taken very seriously at the Milton Keynes Academy. The Principal has the power to "such an extent as is reasonable" to regulate the conduct of students when they are off site under the 2006 Education and Inspections Act. Although cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment and threatening and menacing communications. The Academy may contact the Police if they feel the law has been broken.

9.2 Preventing Cyberbullying

The best way to deal with cyberbullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. There is no single solution to the problem. These are the four key areas addressed by the Academy to form an effective prevention plan:

<u>1. Understanding and talking about cyberbullying</u>

Everyone at the Academy will be aware of what cyberbullying is, its impact and the ways in which if differs from other forms of bullying. Students and parents will be made aware of students' responsibilities in their use

of ICT and what the sanctions are for misuse. Students and parents will be supported if cyberbullying takes place out of school. We will keep cyberbullying a live issue and celebrate our successes in preventing it.

2. Keeping policies and practices updated

Regular reviews will be held to ensure that anti-bullying are working and are up-to-date. We will publicise our policy to staff, parents and students.

3. Making reporting cyberbullying easier

No one should feel they have to deal with this type of bullying alone. The Academy will provide and publicise different ways of reporting it eg peer reporting, anonymous reporting and providing information about contacting service providers directly. We will keep records of any incidents of cyberbullying.

4. Promoting the positive use of technology

Technology is being used to support engaging, positive and effective learning and to increase the potential of personalised learning by making learning more flexible, creative and accessible. We will explore safe ways of using technology with students to support self-esteem, assertiveness, participation and to develop friendships. We will promote and discuss 'netiquette', e-safety and digital literacy.

9.3 Responding to Cyberbullying

We will support the person being bullied by:

- Giving reassurance that the person has done the right thing by speaking out.
- Advising on the next steps that the person should take.
- Take action to contain the incident when content has been circulated.
- In cases of illegal content, contact the police.

Investigate incidents by:

- Advising students and staff to try and keep a record of the bullying as evidence.
- Taking steps to identify the bully, including looking at Academy systems, identifying and interviewing possible witnesses and contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.

Work with the bully

Once the bully is identified, steps will be taken to change their attitude and behaviour as well as ensuring access to any support that is required. Factors taken into consideration when determining the appropriate sanctions include the impact on the victim and the motivation of the bully. Technology specific sanctions for cyberbullying behaviour could include limiting internet access for a period of time or removing the right to bring a mobile phone into the Academy.

10. Bullying Related to SEN and Disability

10.1 Introduction

"Every child is unique – in characteristics, interests, abilities and needs; and every child has the ability to enjoy his or her rights without discrimination of any kind". (Thomas Hammarberg, 1997)

Bullying is one of the most damaging forms of discrimination. Research shows that children and young people with SEN and disabilities are more at risk of bullying than their peers. Students with SEN and disabilities do not always have the levels of social confidence and competence, and the robust friendship bonds that can protect

against bullying. They may not recognise that they are being bullied or that their own behaviour may be seen by someone else as bullying.

Where children with SEN and disabilities are themselves found to be bullying, in most cases (except those related to specific conditions) they should expect the same standards of behaviour as apply to the rest of the Academy community, having made the reasonable adjustments necessary.

10.2 Preventing bullying related to SEN and disability

As an Academy we aim to:

- Support learners with SEN and disabilities.
- Understand, prevent and respond to bullying of children with SEN and disabilities.
- Eliminate disability based discrimination and harassment.
- Develop a non-bullying ethos.

And by doing so:

- Raise achievement and participation in safe, positive environments.
- Meet legal safeguarding obligations and comply with the Disability Discrimination Acts and other legislation.
- Build on the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice.
- Uphold the fundamental human right of children to be free from abuse.

Children with SEN and disabilities are a diverse population. They have many skills and talents. They also have a wide range of very different needs. This includes children with complex health needs, children with learning disabilities, children with sensory impairments and children with social and behavioural needs. Some of these children will require support in the Academy, some will not. For all children with SEN and disabilities discrimination based on their needs can be a challenge. Children with SEN and disabilities may:

- Be adversely affected by negative attitudes to disability and perceptions of difference.
- Find it more difficult to resist bullies.
- Be more isolated, not have many friends.
- Not understand that what is happening is bullying.
- Have difficulties telling people about bullying.

It is also important to recognise that all children are potentially vulnerable to bullying and that learners with SEN and disabilities may be bullied for a range of other reasons too. Some are less likely than others to recognise and report bullying behaviour and they may need help to do this. Because such children have varied needs, selecting the right approach needs sensitivity and awareness of the strengths of the children involved, eg

- Learners with language difficulties are less likely to find verbal fogging techniques work for them.
- Some learners will struggle to remember details of an incident several days later. This means that in their case, action should be taken at once if it is to be meaningful.
- Some cannot recognise bullying behaviour nor identify the student who is using bullying behaviour. In such circumstances, work with bystanders and on-going proactive work will be most productive.
- Learners with autism often find change difficult and may be particularly anxious around times of moving between settings.

Transfers between settings require preparation and support. They may also make learners vulnerable to bullying if not handled with care. Learners report that where they are seen as outsiders they are more at risk. Their safety can rely on bystander support and proactive strategies already in place. The Academy will set up the following:

- Induction Groups for new learners.
- Opportunities to view the other site on a webcam or DVD.
- Prepare welcome booklets.
- Provide support groups of peers.
- Have trained peer supporters visit before the proposed move.

Learners with a range of needs including learning disability, sensory impairment and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) may require specific communication support to state their views. Also in reporting bullying, staff will need to check their understanding. Many children with autism for example are assumed to understand much more than they do in social situations. A range of tools will be developed with learners to counter prejudice and foster a positive ethos. These include:

- Posters
- Films on DVD.
- Anti-bullying songs.
- Drama productions about bullying or difference.
- Powerpoint presentations.
- Online activities including researching topics and producing information for the Academy.
- Assemblies with a focus around different needs.

Where learners with SEN and disabilities are concerned, communication across the staff team is essential. All staff working with students need to know their individual needs, although will not need to have detailed information on a particular child's SEN and disability unless there is a specific reason. This could be a reasonable adjustment to support their needs. They will need to know the extent to which a learners' SEN and disability may lead them to bully others or display disruptive behaviour.

Staff need to be alert to changes in students' behaviour and make sure they understand the cause. Often it is due to factors unrelated to their SEN or disability. Some may be unable to recognise that they are being bullied and may not be able to report it. They may have been threatened or feel that they will not be believed. The list below highlights how the Academy will make sure that all students feel confident that they can report bullying and be heard:

- Provision of a quiet place to go to talk.
- Staff members recognising the student's communication needs, including understanding the member of staff.
- Student's personal communication tools are available to them.
- Students have had time to calm down and can tell fully what they want to.
- A supporter if the student needs one.
- Staff that are visible and available to students out of the classroom.

Bullying should not be tolerated and should always be followed by an immediate and appropriate response. This response should be selected from a menu of tools within a consistently applied framework. A 'one size fits all' approach is unhelpful when supporting students with a range of SEN and disabilities who experience bullying.

When choosing an approach, knowledge of the students particular needs and the impact on their social development is essential, eg for some children with learning difficulties that have been bullied, it may be necessary to act very quickly while they can remember what took place. In other cases allowances need to be made because a student with BESD demonstrates anti-social behaviour but did not intend to bully.

10.3 Responsibilities

Governors have a responsibility to:

- Lead on shaping the ethos of the Academy.
- Review the Academy's behaviour policies, set the agenda for making these effective; publish and review a disability equality plan and ensure that staff and students are protected from discrimination on the grounds of disability.

The Principal's legal responsibilities are to:

- Determine and publicise the more detailed measures (rules, sanctions, rewards and behaviour management strategies) on behaviour and discipline that form the Academy's behaviour policy, acting in accordance with the governing body's statement of principles. The measures must be determined with a view to encouraging good behaviour and respect for other students and preventing all forms of bullying.
- Consider whether any adjustments are needed to the policy to take account of the needs of students with SEN and disabilities.

As policies are updated in line with disability equality duties, the senior leadership team will ensure that they are understood and followed by the whole Academy community, to enhance the experience of Academy life for students with SEN and disabilities.

The Upgrade Team Leader will:

- Be a champion for inclusion.
- Encourage staff training in disability equality and raise awareness of the disability equality duties.
- Contribute to policy development and review and enable the participation of disabled students in consultations.
- Ensure learners with SEN and disabilities who are bullied receive support and help in preventing and dealing with it.
- Monitor the impact of anti-bullying interventions on individual learners with SEN and disabilities.
- Ensure students with social and behavioural needs receive appropriate support to prevent bullying behaviour where needed.

11. Bullying Related to Race, Religion and Culture

11.1 Definition

Our definition of racist bullying is 'a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status.'

The Academy seeks to be at the heart of a tolerant and diverse community. Racism and bullying will have no place. Every student and member of staff deserves respect and a safe learning environment whatever their racial or religious background. The law recognises the seriousness of abuse and attacks that are motivated by racism.

Our principles in this area are:

- To acknowledge that racism exists in wider society and that it can lead to racist bullying in schools.
- To let students know where we stand.
- To listen to all members of the Academy community; students, parents and staff and to involve them in solutions.
- To implement strategies for both prevention and intervention.

11.2 Preventing racist bullying

We have two main strands of work to prevent racist bullying; self-evaluation of the extent to which students feel safe in the Academy from bullying and racist incidents; and curriculum work designed to create an ethos which reduces the likelihood that racist bullying will happen.

Self-evaluation will use documentation, discussion, monitoring and review of perceptions of the Academy community.

On the curriculum we will incorporate six themes:

- Shared humanity – similarity, sameness and universality
- Difference and diversity – contrasting stories and interpretations
- Interdependence – borrowing, mingling and mutual influence
- Excellence everywhere
- Identity and belonging
- Race, ethnicity and justice

11.3 Responding to racist bullying

Following any allegations of racist bullying the Academy will investigate and ask the victim what action they would like to see take place, whether the person would like other people to help solve the situation that has arisen and whether they would like, in the case of a student, their parents to be informed and involved. We will stress that the person themselves was not the cause of the bullying.

We will adopt a rounded approach to challenging those responsible for racist bullying, which does not rely solely on disciplinary sanctions but also on reasoning and explanation. Those responsible need to be clear that what they have done is wrong, within the framework of the Academy's behaviour policy. They also need to be helped to understand their own behaviour and to change it.

12. Homophobic Bullying

12.1 Definition

Homophobic bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people.

Evidence of homophobic bullying suggests that students who are gay or lesbian (or perceived to be) face a higher risk of victimisation than their peers. Homophobic bullying is perhaps the form of bullying least likely to be self-reported, since disclosure carries risks not associated with other forms of bullying. The student may not want to report bullying if it means 'coming out' to teachers and parents before they are ready to.

Who experiences this bullying?

- People who are gay or lesbian or bisexual (or perceived to be), including students or teachers.
- People who have gay friends or family.

Who does the bullying?

- Anyone. Especially if they have not been told that it is wrong.
- They think that people should be bullied because they believe gay people are "wrong".
- People who might themselves be gay and are angry about that.
- People who think that "boys should act like boys" and "girls should act like girls".
- People who think that gay people shouldn't have the same rights as heterosexual people and use this as a justification for bullying.
- People who think that gay parenting is wrong and students should be treated differently because of it.

What forms can homophobic bullying take?

Generally homophobic bullying looks like other forms of bullying, but in particular it can include:

Verbal abuse – including spreading rumours that someone is gay.

Physical abuse - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.

Cyberbullying – the use of ICT, particularly mobile phones and the internet, to deliberately upset someone.

12.2 Preventing homophobic bullying

Prevention is a central focus of the Academy in tackling homophobic bullying since taking steps to prevent it makes it easier to respond if incidents should occur.

We will:

- Create an ethos in which students are clear that bullying is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Assess and monitor the extent of bullying through anonymous staff and student surveys, and measures such as 'bullying boxes.' The responses will be evaluated and we will ensure consistent recording and reporting.
- Raise awareness of bullying and how the Academy will respond.
- Evaluate and make use of curriculum opportunities in order to instil respect for others.
- Develop effective intervention strategies.
- Know how to provide sensitive support to lesbian and gay students to help them feel safe and able to tell staff about incidents of bullying.

12.3 Responding to homophobic bullying

The response of Milton Keynes Academy to instances of this type of bullying will be swift, proportionate, discreet, influential and effective. Staff will be trained to instil confidence in students and parents that issues will be dealt with.

When an incident of **homophobic language** occurs it will be challenged to:

- Ensure that students know that homophobic language is offensive and will not be tolerated.
- If a student continues to make homophobic remarks, explain in detail the effects that this bullying has on others.
- If a student makes persistent remarks they will be removed from the classroom and staff will talk to them in more detail about why their comments are unacceptable.
- If the problem persists, involve the Academy's senior team and parents.

For incidents of **physical abuse related to homophobia**, the Academy will operate the same procedures as for other forms of physical abuse bullying. Homophobic violence can be a crime. Anti-bullying policy will be rigorously enforced in order to keep students safe from physical abuse.

13. Policy Ownership, Monitoring and Review

The responsibility for ensuring that the Academy adheres to this policy and that this policy is periodically reviewed rests with: Principal of the Milton Keynes Academy.