Anti-bullying Procedures and Guidance for all Staff, Students and Parents

1. Context

Bullying is a complex issue, which we address in school. We seek to foster mutual respect and create a safe, caring community, where members feel free to voice their concerns. We expect all members of The Academy community to act in a considerate, respectful and courteous manner at all times.

2. Definition

Bullying is behaviour that is deliberately hurtful, repeated often over a period of time and where it is difficult for victims to defend themselves. Bullying is an abuse of power and can take many forms including:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings.
- Verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks.
- Indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone; exclusion from social groups; being made the subject of malicious rumours; malicious text messages; recording electronically malicious websites; malicious use of social media; taking images of members of The Academy community without consent.

Bullying is usually part of a pattern of behaviour rather than an isolated incident. If an individual considers themselves to have been bullied, this may have a negative impact on their emotional well-being, which can perpetuate the fear of a further perceived or real incident and thus will need to be dealt with. Particular children and young people are more vulnerable to experiencing bullying, i.e. Looked After Children, Traveller Children, Children with a Disability, Children with SEN, bullying motivated by racism, homophobia or transphobia.

Students and parents need to be clear about what does and does not constitute bullying:

Types of bullying behaviour

- There are some specific types of bullying behaviour:
- **Verbal or written abuse** - such as targeted name-calling or jokes, or displaying offensive posters
- **Violence** - including threats of violence
- **Sexual violence and sexual harassment** -- unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any age and sex.** It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and off line (both physically and verbally) and re never

acceptable. It is important that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children, adult students and school staff are supported and protected in line with our robust safeguarding procedures and regular training updates to staff.

- Sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is NOT an inevitable part of growing up
- We will not tolerate or dismiss sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"
- Challenging behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia and flicking bras and lifting up skirts, upskirting – the practice of taking unauthorised photographs under the skirt of a woman or girl will not be dismissed or tolerated as doing so risks "normalising" such behaviours
- We understand that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond our school, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and every day sexist language.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment advice, education and training is provided as a whole school approach. Students and staff receive regular updates in line with our safeguarding procedures, assemblies, SRE and PSHE curriculum, liaison with our Safer Schools Officer and external supporting agencies. We also ensure that parents are provided with information and national updates in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Homophobia and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual are different forms of sexual orientation. *Sexual orientation is a protected characteristic in the 2010 and 2006 Equality Acts and within legislation regarding community cohesion*. Transgender is different. This term does not relate to sexuality. Instead transgender refers to people who feel they have been assigned the incorrect gender.

A 2016 research study 'Queer Futures' by Lancaster and Huddersfield universities identities that young LGBT+ youth are at a much higher risk of suicide and self-harm compared to their heterosexual counterparts. This review provided those who had self-harmed and/or had a disability had an increased likelihood of planned or attempted suicide.

According to the study, "gender identity was also a risk factor for self-harm and suicide. Those who were gender diverse (Trans/unsure) were nearly twice as likely to have self-harmed and one and a half times more likely to have planned or attempted suicide than cisgender participants. Cisgender males were the least likely to plan or attempt suicide, or self-harm compared to other gender identities". Five areas of the study determined why the elevated risk of suicide and self-harm in LGBT youth occurred and were as follows:

1. Homophobia, biphobia or transphobia
2. Sexual and gender norms
3. Managing sexual orientation and gender identity across multiple areas of life
4. Being unable to talk
5. Other life crises

For LGBT+ children in particular, we must do all we can to ensure that the following practices are embedded:

- LGB, transgender and non-conforming identities do not constitute a safeguarding issue in isolation and therefore our obligation is to the student in the first instance and any such disclosures will not be disclosed to parents or carers
- Student Managers, and our Designated Safeguarding Lead are our current designated members of staff for LGB, transgender and gender non-conforming students to speak to. (However a student can speak to any member of staff that they feel comfortable with and they will then signpost them to the best member of staff to provide additional support.)
- The use of terms such as 'Gay' are actively challenged by all members of staff
- Children need to be supported and feel safe enough to 'come out' and to be accepted
- We should ensure that our policies or procedures such as our Sex and Religious Education and Behaviour policies refer to homophobic, bi-phobic and trans- phobic bullying (HBT) as well as LGB, transgender and non-conforming identities.
- Staff receive annual training and attend CPD sessions, INSET days and understand fully that HBT bullying is an issue for everyone to prevent and tackle
- Incidents of HBT bullying are recorded and staff know how to actively challenge such incidents
- Ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of our LGB, transgender and non-conforming students

- **Discrimination including racial discrimination** - treating people differently because of their identity

  - **Cyberbullying** -- either online or via mobile phone. Parents/Carers MUST report all such incidents of cyberbullying to the Police via 101 in the first instance. Parents/Carers are responsible for the safeguarding and monitoring of their child/child in their care outside of school hours. Parents are not to wait for their child to inform a member of staff at school of any such incidents. Once a Parent/Carer has reported their concerns to the Police our Safer Schools Officer will liaise with Parents/Carers and the school to reach a positive outcome for the child affected by cyberbullying.

What is not bullying?

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- **Mutual conflict** - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- **Single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying.
- **Social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

3. Aims and Ethos

At The Harefield Academy we believe in the following aims, ethos and equality of opportunity:

Ours aims and ethos:

- Nurturing and developing potential to the full
- Developing compassionate, thinking and concerned citizens
- All round achievement and success
- Enabling fulfilment in life after school
- Providing a foundation for lifelong learning

Our ethos is based on the following values:

Honesty, Aspiration, Respect, Excellence, Friendship, Inspiration, Equality, Leadership, Determination.

4. Equality of Opportunity

Any behaviour, which undervalues a person for reasons such as culture, ethnic origin, appearance, religion, disability, gender, sexuality, gender reassignment, age, ability or medical condition is unacceptable.

We have the following guiding principles:

- Equality of opportunity is fundamental to school life.
- Equality of opportunity is about recognising and respecting individual attitudes and differences.
- All members of The Harefield Academy community have a responsibility for promoting respect and support.
- All students are entitled to a curriculum that meets their needs.
- The curriculum should encourage sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others and raise awareness of diversity and inequalities of society.
- Students are encouraged to think for themselves and make informed judgements and challenge prejudice.

5. Aims and Objectives

We aim to prevent and deal with any behaviour deemed as bullying, and to promote an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable, so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in.

This will happen through:

- Raising awareness of, and defining bullying as well as gaining an understanding as to why some children bully.
- Positive action to prevent bullying within the scheme of work for PSHE, there are also Teacher led sessions delivered in Tutor Time and assemblies.

- Development of a consistent response to any bullying incidents of which the school is aware.
- Provision of support for all members of The Academy community who may be involved in a bullying situation.
- Developing and supporting home, school and community partnerships.

6. Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying

When a bullying incident occurs of which we are aware, we will investigate and support as detailed in The Harefield Academy Student Support Guidance documents.

The following core principles will apply:

- Any child who is being bullied is encouraged to tell someone or write it down so that steps can be taken to stop the bullying as detailed below. If a parent/carer or friend is informed we ask that it is reported to a member of staff at the earliest opportunity.
- The child is then involved in the discussion of the incident and a statement taken.
- Records are completed for all incidents.
- Regular communication takes place with parents/carers.
- Prejudice motivated bullying is treated extremely seriously.

Interventions should include the opportunity for follow up to evaluate support and if necessary provide a further course of action and/or punishment which may include:

- A verbal reprimand and/or warning.
- Break time, lunchtime or after school detention.
- Social Isolation at breaks and/or lunchtimes.
- Removal from a lesson to a Head of Faculty or Department or other designated person in faculty or department, internal exclusion from one, some, or all lessons for a period of time.
- Exclusion from school.

Parents/carers will be routinely informed of any incidents of bullying and records kept by Student Managers for external scrutiny.

7. Strategies for the Prevention and Reduction of Bullying

We promote behaviour to prevent and reduce bullying by:

- The delivery of high quality teaching and the promotion of a positive learning environment
- Through the taught elements in the PSHE curriculum
- The delivery of an e-safety assemblies to all year groups
- Through Teacher Led Tutor Time Sessions
- Co-operative group-work
- Befriending
- Peer Mentoring
- Mediation by adults
- Mediation by peers
- Circle of friends
- Use of School Counsellor
- Whole school and whole year group Tutor Time activities and assemblies
- E-safety education for students and parents/carers

8. Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is defined as the use of the internet, mobile phones and social networking sites deliberately to upset someone else. Cyber-bullying can be responsible for negative effects on academic performance and self-confidence and in extreme cases, can even lead to suicide. The Education Act 2011 gives schools the power to search electronic devices and delete data where appropriate.

The Academy may take action when cyber-bullying has taken place off school premises, if the conduct affects The Academy's reputation or the welfare of a member of The Academy community. Cyber-bullying may contravene the Equality Act 2010, under which harassment on grounds of 'protected characteristics' for example race and sexual orientation, is unlawful. In addition, the act of cyber-bullying may contravene the Obscene Publications Act 1959 or the Protection of Children Act 1978. In all such cases, we will refer the matter, and pass any evidence, to the police.

Any student found to have instigated or participated in cyber-bullying will be subject to disciplinary action, as detailed on page 8 of the Student Support Guidance. In appropriate cases, the matter may be passed to the police.

Parents are reminded that any child under 13 years old is not permitted to have a Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or Snapchat account. All Year 7 and some Year 8 students should therefore NOT be using these forms of social media. In addition, the age requirement for using WhatsApp is 16, so students below Y11 should not be using it.

We would ask parents and carers' support in monitoring their children's computer or tablet use to ensure problems in school are not created.

9. Sharing Images

Students are advised to take great care when sharing images. Any student who is deemed to have **passed on** an indecent image may be guilty under the Protection of Children Act 1978 as amended in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 of distribution of an indecent image. This does not have to be pornographic, it may just be provocative. The possible consequences of being guilty of this offence are very serious; up to six months in prison and a fine, plus the potential to be put on the Sex Offenders' Register. Parents/carers should also be aware that their child's phone may be registered in the parent/carer's name, which could be compromising in the event of inappropriate images being shared.

We would respectfully remind parents/carers that they are responsible for the monitoring of their child's Smartphone and internet use. Any concerns relating to the sharing of inappropriate images or cyber bullying must be reported to the Police via 101 in the first instance. Our Safer Schools Officer with then liaise with parents/carers and school staff to reach a positive outcome for those involved.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation of Bullying

Monitoring and evaluation will occur through the collection of data:

- Surveying a sample of students, staff, parents/carers.
- Using curriculum time and tutor time to focus on anti-bullying work.
- Recording bullying incidents.

Success indicators:

- Willingness to report incidents of bullying
- High levels of attendance
- High achievement
- Reduced bullying incidents
- Reduced fixed term and permanent exclusions for bullying
- Students perceptions that The Academy is prepared to take action
- Bystander action/increased sense of collective responsibility
- Student perceptions that The Academy is safe

This appendix will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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