Limehurst Academy Policy Document

Anti-Bullying incorporating Cyberbullying Policy

Date Approved by Governors: Autumn 2023

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Headteacher's signature:

Chair of Governors' signature:

Introduction

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Limehurst Academy. At our school, the safety, welfare and well-being of all students and staff is a key priority. We take all incidences of bullying seriously and it is our duty as a whole school community to take measures to prevent and tackle any bullying, harassment or discrimination. We actively promote values of respect and equality and work to ensure that difference and diversity is celebrated across the whole school community. We want to enable our students to become responsible citizens and to prepare them for life in the 21st Century Britain. These values reflect those that will be expected of our students by society when they leave Limehurst and enter the world of work or further study. We are committed to improving our school's approach to tackling bullying by regularly monitoring, reviewing and assessing the impact of our preventative measures.

Definitions

Bullying – Is hurtful or unkind behaviour, which is deliberate and repeated. Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group of people towards another individual or group, where the bully or bullies hold more power than those being bullied.

Baiting – Can be used in bullying, both on and offline. It can be used to bully someone to get 'a rise' out of them and it can be used to antagonise those who might be bullying others to get them to bully. Sometimes baiting is used secretively to try and get a person to explode in a rage or react negatively/loudly, so that they get into trouble.

Banter – The dictionary describes banter as 'the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks. Bullying is sometimes justified as being 'just banter'. It may start as banter, but some types of banter are bullying and need to be addressed as bullying. Types of banter include:

- Friendly banter – There's no intention to hurt and everyone knows it's limits
- Ignorant banter – Crosses the line with no intention to hurt and will often say sorry
- Malicious banter – Done to humiliate a person (often in public)

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying, even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of hate crime related bullying and cyberbullying. If the victim might be in danger, then interventions are urgently required.

The nature of bullying

Bullying behaviour can be:

- **Physical** – such as hitting or physically intimidating someone or using inappropriate or unwanted physical contact towards someone.
- **Attacking property** – such as damaging, stealing or hiding someone's possessions.
- **Verbal** – such as name calling, spreading rumours about someone, using derogatory or offensive language or threatening someone.
- **Psychological** – such as deliberately excluding or ignoring people.
- **Online/Cyber** – such as using text, email or other social media to write or say hurtful things about someone.
- **Sexual** – such as unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.

Specific types of bullying can include:
- **Race** (racist bullying)
- **Religion or belief**
- **Culture or class**
- **Gender** (sexist bullying)
- **Sexual orientation** (homophobic or biphobic bullying)
- **Gender identity** (transphobic bullying)
- **Special educational needs or disability**

- **Appearance or health condition**
- **Home or other personal situation** (e.g., young carers etc)
- **School or Academy rivalry in the community**

Prejudice related language

Racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist language includes terms of abuse used towards people because of their race/ethnicity/sexuality/disability/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or are perceived to be, or have a family member who is, because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language is generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior. This may also be used to taunt young people who are different in some way or their friends and family members.

In the case of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language, dismissing it as banter is not helpful as even these terms are not referring to a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. They are using the terms to interpret this as bad, broken or wrong. As a school, we will challenge the use of prejudice related language, even if it appears to be being used without any intent. Persistent use of prejudice related language and/or bullying will be dealt with, as with any other form of bullying.

Cyberbullying and inappropriate online behaviour

The ever increasing use of the internet and social media has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims. Cyberbullying can take many forms and bullying online can often start in school and then be progressed online or start online and influence behaviour in school. Whilst most incidents of Cyberbullying occur outside of school, we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat Cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying.

Cyberbullying can include:

- Hacking into someone's accounts/sites
- Posting prejudice/hate messages
- Impersonating someone online
- Public posting of images
- Threats and manipulation
- Stalking

We will ensure that all students are taught safe ways to use the internet and encourage good online behaviour.

Child on child abuse

Child on child abuse of any kind is unacceptable at our school, though we recognise it could happen here. If child on child abuse does occur, all students can talk to someone, secure in the knowledge that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Our commitment is to educate our students effectively aiding them to realise safe and healthy relationships, at school and as they continue in life. Preventative education is most effective way to prepare students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. This is reflected in our school values. We aim to create a culture in which the voice of our students is central, where students feel able to share their concerns openly, knowing that they will be listened to, will not be judged and will be involved in all the next steps, whatever they may be.

What is child on child abuse?

Child on child abuse can take the form of verbal, online or physical behaviour and may incorporate one or more of the following:
- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse)
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- upskirting (which is a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

Why is it important to respond to child on child abuse?

All children have the right to come to school, feel safe, enjoy their learning and be treated with respect. No-one deserves to be a victim of child on child abuse. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of child on child abuse of all kinds. In our school we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It is never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys". We recognise that dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them. Allegations in relation to child on child abuse of sexualised nature are managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and follow the same procedures, including seeking advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

The Governing body ensures its school makes every effort to minimise the risk of child on child abuse, is clear about how child on child abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with; and that there are clear processes about how victims, perpetrators and any other child/young person affected by child on child abuse will be supported.

Harmful sexual behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour can manifest itself in many ways. This may include:

- inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm;
- pressurising, forcing, or coercing someone to share nude images (known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- asking for sexualised images to be sent to you;
- sharing sexual images of a person without their consent;
- bullying of a sexual nature online or offline, for example sexual or sexist name calling;
- misogynistic, derogatory and abusive language, such as 'fat shaming', references to girls' moods being due to menstruation and threats to rape or cause sexual harm.

Our school also understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with harmful sexual behaviour.

Young people can experience harmful sexual behaviour in a variety of settings. This includes at school, at home (or at another home), in public places, and online. At school, issues can occur in places which are supervised and unsupervised. For example, abuse may occur in toilets, corridors, changing areas, outside spaces such as the playground and sports facilities. We have mapped where these more vulnerable places are on our school plan and train staff, particularly midday supervisors, duty staff and PE staff to be additionally vigilant when supervising these areas.

Responding to bullying

As a school, we will always respond to any incidents of bullying, whether witnessed by or reported to any member of staff. When a member of staff receives information that a student may have been the victim of a bullying incident, this will be taken seriously and investigated fully.

A student may report any inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, confidentially via our report form on Microsoft Forms. However, it must be noted that this form is not monitored outside of school hours or during the school holidays and so in an emergency, where a student may be at risk, they should call 999.

Once a report is received, a member of the pastoral team will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response. This response will be determined by the student's individual needs but may include:

- Immediate action to stop the incident and secure the child's safety.
- Positive reinforcement of how brave a step it was in disclosing the information.
- Take reasonable measures to protect the victim e.g., separating the bully and the victim.
- Interviewing all parties and recording the details.
- School sanctions, which may include suspensions.
- Taking action to change the bully's attitude.
- Reconcile the student's involved, if appropriate.
- Provide the victim with self-help strategies to restore self-esteem.

Strategies for preventing bullying

As part of our ongoing commitment to the safety and welfare of our students, we have developed the following strategies to promote positive behaviour and discourage bullying behaviour:

- Actively promote the celebration of difference and diversity.
- Through assemblies, where students are informed of the actions that will be taken to prevent bullying taking place.
- Anti-bullying week in November and Safer Internet Day in February will be used as an opportunity to raise the profile of these issues.
- Through PD and Citizenship lessons, with a strong focus on developing anti-bullying messages and encouraging the building of friendships and positive relationships.
- We recognise that there are particular times where students may be more vulnerable to bullying, for example the beginning and end of the school day, as well as break and lunch times. During these times, adequate supervision will be in place, to reduce the risk of bullying incidents. The Student Support room will be used to provide support for vulnerable students.
- Peer mentoring programme (MVP) available for those students who require extra support and discourage the 'bystander culture'.
- Use of restorative justice processes.