Anti-bullying Policy
Manchester Grammar School

Life at The Manchester Grammar School is based upon the values of respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to treating all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate. We are also committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can enjoy and benefit from the educational and other opportunities we provide. We also expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere.

In addition, parents/carers have an important role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that the school and parents/carers have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely.

In all matters relating to safeguarding, the School will follow the procedures laid down by Manchester Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB), together with relevant DfE guidance, such as Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018 (hereafter, WTSC) and Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2019 (hereafter, KCSIE). The latter can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2.

Scope and objectives

This policy applies to all pupils and staff at the School irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the School when/if bullying behaviour occurs. It should be read alongside the School's policy on Behaviour and Discipline and the School Rules. Through its operation we aim:

- To ensure that the School’s measures designed to prevent bullying have regard to DfE guidance Preventing and Tackling Bullying – advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (October 2014), as updated
- To maintain a positive, supportive and caring culture among all pupils and staff throughout the School and
- To deter bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs, and deal with it by counselling and/or disciplinary sanctions. If necessary, this could result in the permanent exclusion of those found guilty of bullying others.

This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils via our website and is also available on request from the High Master’s Office. It is also available and known to all staff via the staff intranet, including recently appointed staff.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour which is repeated over time, hurts, humiliates or otherwise causes harm or distress by taking unfair advantage of another person in some way, making the victim feel uncomfortable or threatened. It can be verbal or physical in nature, and involve the intentional harming or humiliating of another person. This can include any threat or use of violence of any kind, insults and offensive remarks (including, but not limited to, sexualised comments),

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whether made face-to-face or electronically (e.g. via email, social media or texting). Bullying may be prejudice-based and therefore may involve actions or comments which are racist, sexual, sexist or homophobic; they may also focus on religion or cultural background, special educational needs or disabilities, and health or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). This list is not exhaustive, and the act of bullying might not be related to any obvious cause at all.

As a consequence, bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

Bullying may manifest itself in a variety of different forms. These include: physical violence and intimidation; interference with the victim’s personal property; verbal (including name-calling, taunting, teasing or insulting behaviour; demanding money or other tangible items of value; exclusionary behaviour; general acts of unkindness (including spreading rumours or producing and distributing unkind and hurtful notes or embarrassing photographs); or cyber-bullying (see below).

Bullying can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying can be so serious that it can cause physical, emotional and psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and to violent and threatening behaviour. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying: everybody has the right to be treated with respect. The School will support any pupil who is a victim of bullying. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanction and will also, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving.

The School regards bullying as a form of peer-on-peer abuse; as such, where appropriate, it will be dealt with as a safeguarding issue. Further details on the School’s approach to peer-on-peer abuse can be found in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The Seriousness of Bullying

Bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the School since: it is harmful to the person who is bullied, those who engage in bullying behaviour and those who support them. It can cause physical harm and, in some cases, lead to lasting emotional and psychological damage, and even suicide. It interferes with a pupil’s right to enjoy his learning and leisure time, free from intimidation. Bullying is contrary to all our aims and values, our internal culture and the reputation of the School. Consequently, MGS takes bullying, and allegations of bullying, very seriously.

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Not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as ‘teasing’ or ‘a game’ or ‘for the good of’ the other person. Whilst these forms of bullying are equally unacceptable, they may not be malicious and, as a result, can be corrected quickly with advice and without the need for disciplinary sanctions. However, it should be understood that any bully who does not respond appropriately to advice will face sanctions provided for by the School’s Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

Bullying which occurs on school trips or outside of the School’s premises will not be tolerated any more than bullying on school premises. The School will, where appropriate, discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside school premises and outside school hours.

Signs of bullying

Changes in behaviour which may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- unwillingness to return to school
- displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- failure to produce work, or producing unusually poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- books, bags, money and other belongings suddenly go ‘missing’, or are damaged
- change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- diminished levels of self-confidence
- frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches
- unexplained cuts and bruises
- frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class
- choosing the company of adults rather than peers
- displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares
- talking of suicide or running away from home or school.

Although there may be other causes of some of the above symptoms, a repetition or combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers and reported/recorded as appropriate (see below).

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The School is always particularly vigilant where concerns relate to children with special educational needs and disabilities, as additional barriers can exist in identifying abuse and bullying in this group of children:

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- care should be taken not to assume that indicators of bullying such as anxious behaviour, low mood and injury relate only to a child’s disability without further exploration
- it is recognised that children with SEN and other disabilities can be more vulnerable to and harmed by abusive behaviour such as bullying, even when they don’t exhibit any obvious signs of distress
- it is recognised that children with SEN and other disabilities may experience barriers in communicating their concerns about bullying and may need specific additional support.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a particularly unpleasant and insidious form of bullying which uses information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Cyberbullying can cause tremendous distress to victims and their families.

Cyberbullying could involve communications by various electronic media, including, for example:

- texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones
- the use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, offensive or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or YouTube)
- Using email to message others in a threatening or abusive manner
- hijacking/cloning email accounts.

The School takes very seriously any incidents of cyberbullying, whether during or outside school hours, and whether committed on or off-site. It is committed to ensuring that the scope for cyberbullying is limited on site by preventing access to social media sites and inappropriate websites. The School manages access to the internet via the School’s networks through the use of industry-leading firewall and content filtering software (Smoothwall). The technical aspects of this are managed by the Head of Computer Services, and the list of blocked sites is managed by the Head of Computer Science. Junior School pupils do not have unsupervised access to the School’s computer network.

Acceptable Use Policy

The school publishes and implements an Acceptable Use Policy which is designed to support both its safeguarding and anti-bullying systems. The AUP seeks to combat cyber-bullying by preventing misuse of the school’s computers and electronic equipment; promote e-safety amongst pupils and staff; and to facilitate a system for reporting instances where electronic devices have been misused.

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Cyberbullying – preventative measures

For the prevention of cyberbullying, in addition to the measures described above, the School:

- expects all pupils to act in accordance with the School’s rules and its policies on Acceptable Use, E-Safety and Use of Personal Devices
- blocks inappropriate sites and material via its filtering system, and has usage monitored by the senior safeguarding team
- may impose disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet
- issues all pupils with their own personal school email address.
- prevents pupils from accessing social media and non-school, personal email using the School’s network and wi-fi
- offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons
- offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe
- does not allow the use of cameras or mobile phone cameras in toilets, washing and changing areas.

Educating Pupils about Cyberbullying

The School seeks to give its pupils an age-appropriate understanding of how to promote both their own safety and well-being when online. This is done through a variety of means, including the PSHE programme, Computer Science lessons, tutor periods and assemblies. In addition, the Head of Computer Science acts as moderator on two school-based discussion fora (on www.mgscentral.org). Pastoral staff, the Head of Computer Science and the Head of PSHE liaise over provision so that pupils are well-informed and develop resilience.

Mobile Phones and other Digital Technology

Pupils are allowed to use mobile phones and other digital technology in school because the School appreciates that they are valuable, given the independence our boys need to develop, travelling to and from school, and as a means of accessing information. The use of mobile phones in lessons is not permitted unless directly authorised by the teacher. The School understands that mobile phones can be used in an anti-social way and for bullying, and always takes instances of this sort of behaviour very seriously. The School expects its pupils to make good, well-informed decisions about appropriate use of mobile phones and other digital technology. It seeks to educate its pupils about responsible, ethical behaviour through its PSHE curriculum, as well as occasional assemblies.

The School’s Procedures for Dealing with Bullying

All pupils are given clear guidance by the School on how to report bullying.

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The School ensures that all instances of, or concerns about, bullying and cyberbullying, whether on or off-site, are easy to report and recorded properly. Records of instances of bullying and allegations of bullying are monitored to enable the school to identify patterns of behaviour and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.

A pupil who is being bullied, or who is worried about another pupil being bullied, whether inside or outside school, should share their concerns immediately in any of the following ways:

- inform a responsible adult (whether a parent, his Tutor, his Head of Year or Section, a member of the School Medical Service, or another member of staff he feels he can approach), or a responsible older pupil
- contact Childline (0800 1111) – contact details are in the school diary
- contact the relevant department of children’s social care for advice. These details can be found in the School’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which is posted on the School’s website. A hard copy of this policy document is available on request from the High Master’s office.

Parents who are concerned that their son is being bullied should inform his Tutor, Head of Year or Head of Section immediately. The School values its very strong lines of communication with parents and encourages them to report any concerns they might have about a pupil’s welfare, whether or not that pupil is a member of their family.

Any member of staff who learns of alleged bullying behaviour must respond quickly and sensitively by offering advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim. He or she must report the allegation to the Pastoral Head(s) of both the victim and the alleged bully as soon as possible: this will be the Head of Year, Head of College or Head of Section.

The Pastoral Head must record the complaint and consult with other members of the Pastoral Team (if applicable) to agree a strategy. Where the allegation is particularly serious the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed, and will personally supervise the resulting investigation.

The alleged victim’s Pastoral Head, with another member of staff, will normally conduct and make a written record of interviews with the pupil and (unless the case is very serious) any witnesses and the alleged bully. They will reach a view of the nature and seriousness of the incident(s). Where they judge that serious bullying behaviour has taken place, they will always inform the DSL. The parents of both the victim and the bully will be contacted by a senior member of the Pastoral team.

When an allegation is upheld, the action will be recorded by the Pastoral Head. The range of possible responses would normally include one or more of the following:

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- advice, and support for the victim (which may involve counselling from the School’s medical service), and, where appropriate, implementation of a practical action plan
- advice, and support for the bully in assisting him to change his behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning. The School recognises that sometimes young people who exhibit bullying behaviours are themselves the victims of physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Appropriate safeguarding action will be taken by the School in these circumstances.
- a disciplinary sanction might be imposed on the bully, in accordance with the school’s Behaviour and Discipline Policy such as a detention (Punishment School) or a temporary exclusion.

In the most serious cases, a pupil may be required to leave the School permanently, in accordance with the School’s Exclusions Policy.

The parents of the pupils involved will be kept fully informed regarding the School’s response. Where a bullying incident gives reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, it will be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported to the relevant department of children’s social care, in accordance with the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If the School believes that a criminal offence may have been committed, it will contact the police.

The situation will be monitored for as long as is necessary. Action may include sharing information with staff and pupils on a ‘need to know’ basis, so that they can monitor behaviour and provide reassurance and support to the victim, and on-going counselling. Pupil awareness and views on bullying in the School are monitored through a variety of mechanisms, including surveys, questionnaires and dialogue with the School Council.

Record Keeping

A confidential, electronic central record of all bullying incidents in the School (including both the Junior and Senior Schools) is maintained senior pastoral staff, with oversight by the DSL. The register of bullying incidents is organised so that a complete historical record is maintained. It records, amongst other things, whether an incident was prejudiced-based.

The register records how the issue was resolved and follow-up actions. The DSL and Pastoral Heads routinely scrutinise the register in order both to evaluate the effectiveness of the School’s anti-bullying system and identify any patterns of bullying behaviour.

At important transition points in a pupil’s school career, senior pastoral staff meet to share significant information regarding, amongst other things, any bullying incidents, in order to ensure continuity of pastoral care.

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Creating an anti-bullying culture

All members of the school community are expected to uphold the rules published in the school diary and abide by the School’s policies. Any pupil or member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying is expected to report it. Any complaint of bullying will be always taken seriously, and no-one will tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone else is being bullied.

Through their training and experience, staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by celebrating achievement; anticipating problems and providing support; disciplining pupils sensibly and fairly; making opportunities to listen to pupils, and acting as advocates of pupils. Pupils are taught that bullying will not be tolerated at MGS and are given guidance, both on how to report bullying and how to seek support. They are encouraged to celebrate the effort and achievements of others, promote positive attitudes, share problems with staff, turn to someone they trust, if they have a problem, and not to feel guilty when making complaints. Through its curriculum, pastoral system and co-curriculum the School seeks to educate its pupils to be respectful, thoughtful, emotionally robust and resilient.

Discriminatory words and behaviour are unacceptable at MGS. Our pupils are encouraged through their whole educational experience at MGS to treat all people with equal respect and dignity, and not discriminate against anyone on any basis, including disability, race, culture, gender, religion or sexual orientation.

A wide-ranging PSHE programme exists across the School to educate pupils about the impact of bullying, the differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language. In addition, pupils are involved in anti-bullying work through peer mentoring, Buddy Club and form prefecting. Senior pupils (and especially prefects) are expected to set a good example and be helpful to younger pupils. In particular, Form Prefects seek to befriend and look out for younger pupils, offering support where it is needed. To this end, Form Prefects receive training at the beginning of the academic year on how to treat younger pupils sensitively and when to report concerns to staff.

Bullying is the subject of assemblies. The School’s Medical Service gives an annual assembly on the subject to all Year 7 pupils. Anti-Bullying messages are also given and reinforced during tutor periods. The Junior School takes part in Anti-bullying Week. From time to time meetings are held for parents regarding internet safety and cyber-bullying.

The Importance of Pupil Voice

The School employs a number of strategies to ensure that its pupils have the opportunity to express their views on bullying and give feedback on the effectiveness of the School’s policies and procedures. These include School Council, occasional questionnaires and discussion with pupils.

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Staff Training

The prevention of bullying is one of a number of pastoral issues provided for by the induction programme for newly appointed teachers. Appropriate training in all aspects of care is also arranged to ensure that the Pastoral Team and other staff have the necessary professional skills, especially awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying, and know how to respond to individual cases. This training includes provision for raising awareness of the additional vulnerability of particular groups within the school community, e.g. those with special educational needs and gay or bisexual pupils. The School regularly liaises with appropriate external agencies (e.g. Stonewall and 42nd Street) to seek advice on how to improve the effectiveness of its anti-bullying system.

Staff are trained and expected to be vigilant with regards to pupil welfare at all times and report any concerns. They are encouraged to be alert to changes in behaviour or other evidence that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied or suicide.

Senior pastoral staff are trained to ensure a consistent and appropriate response to any reports of bullying. Bullying is regularly discussed in a wide variety of meetings and fora, involving, for example, the Senior Management Team, School Council, the Pastoral and Welfare Committee, the wider Pastoral Team, Tutors, the Proctors, School Officers and Prefects, and the School’s Medical Service.

If parents are unhappy with the School’s handling

We always endeavour to address any issue of bullying. If parents feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly, they are invited to make a complaint using the School’s Complaints Procedure, which is accessible via the school website and available on request from the High Master’s Office.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Pastoral Deputy Head is responsible for the on-going monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy and its implementation, taking account of feedback from pastoral staff, pupils and parents. The Senior Management Team meet annually to review the effectiveness of the policy.

SMT lead: Pastoral Deputy Head

Governing Body lead: Joy Kingsley

Date reviewed by the Governing Body: 27 September 2018

Next Governing Body review: Lent term 2020

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