Justice CORPS: Council to Oversee Rights & Protection of Students
An Initiative of The Amends Project
October 2018

The Justice CORPS is an initiative to address ongoing human rights violations at our private, college-preparatory schools.

As responsible citizens, we recognize the need for improved safety measures, to ensure the well-being of young people is preserved as they pursue successful college and adult professional careers. We also recognize a failure on the part of independent schools, in the wake of abuses and cover-up crimes, to enact quantifiable, root-level policy changes and protections. We insist on this comprehensive reform now.

We, as endorsers and supporters, ask that New England independent and boarding high schools adopt this Initiative, to place the needs of our kids above all else.

Structure

A volunteer committee 4-6 of adults from within a 50 mile radius of the school, which meets four (4) times/year and exists for the sole purpose of receiving, advising on and recording reports of human rights violations. Meetings will be held in August to prepare; September to attend schools and plan for the year ahead; January as a mid-year review and school visit; and June, to compile reports and rankings.

Four to Six members including a volunteer law enforcement professional and a volunteer legal professional. Must contain a minimum 50% female members, with one member of a minority ethnic group and one member of minority sexual orientation.

One to two interns from area colleges may be selected to assist in operations, for credit at the graduate or post-graduate level. A younger presence will likely decrease intimidation in high school students, and make the Justice CORPS more accessible. CORPS members will visit their assigned school at the beginning of each year and lead a school-wide workshop on “Your Rights & Reporting Protocols”. This serves the function of familiarizing high school students with the CORPS members, while teaching awareness & setting expectations. Outside agencies, with existing curriculum and expertise in the field, will be brought in to assist with this presentation as needed.
Justice CORPS members then return mid-year in January to re-familiarize students with the service, and answer any new questions that may have arisen in the first few months of academic life. The incentive to maintain positive relationships between college-preparatory high schools and the colleges & universities where students hope to attend, may serve as its own corrective measure. In future years

**Non-Affiliation**

Because our goal is clear, transparent oversight, we attend to any potential conflict of interest by carefully screening for non-affiliation with the particular school to which the corresponding Justice CORPS is assigned.

Applicants will be screened to exclude any alumni, family of alumni, current or former trustees, donors, family of faculty/staff or family of trustees or regents. Preference will be given to individuals with a direct personal or professional association with, or current major regarding, the wellbeing of children as a whole.

Members may serve for up to three (3) years, with a minimum two (2) year requirement for service. Each will sign a strict non-affiliation agreement, mandated reporter status, and a personal commitment to honor the rights of students above all else. CORPS members may serve on more than one committee, where schools’ geographic boundaries overlap.

**Communication Systems**

While anonymous communication systems are beginning to see use within private schools, we insist that a new system is utilized. The distinction will be that the destination of the information is outside the school itself. Anonymity may be useful in encouraging young people to come forward. Yet, for true oversight and to ensure justice is achieved, this information must be directed toward adults outside the school system.

Therefore, the Initiative includes creation of a confidential communication system where students may contact the Justice CORPS without impediment by any school leader, faculty or staff. The flow of communication will follow a strict protocol:

1. student and/or parent to the Justice CORPS members
2. CORPS members to the parent/s of student
3. Once signed consent is given by student, and parents where appropriate;
4. from CORPS to school

The members will respond to reports by informing students and families of their rights in writing by mail and email, and offering information on options to proceed. A police report will not be immediately required, though all members are naturally mandated reporters. The filing of charges against individuals remains the choice of the student who brings the issue, with consultation of their family and the CORPS.
Students and families may request an in-person meeting to receive the report, where appropriate. All efforts will be made to arrange for this support within 30 days of request.

All Justice CORPS members will be sworn to confidentiality outside of meetings and are also prohibited from sharing details with their corresponding school until written consent has been granted by both student and parent/s or caregiver/s.

Contact information for the Justice CORPS will be printed inside the Student Handbook, on the school’s social media platforms, and available on the school’s website online.

**Freedom from Consequence**

Students will be protected indefinitely for utilizing the Justice CORPS service, including freedom from any form of punishment, restriction or threat to enrollment status, financial aid, sports team membership and participation or scholarship funding for doing so.

Measures will be put into place to guard against any efforts to curtail use by students (see Ranking System, below).

**Reporting & Communication with Schools**

The Justice CORPS will provide a written, comprehensive report to school leaders, at the conclusion of the school year, of all consented documented incidents received. Students and families must consent to inclusion of their situation in the report, and may elect to allow recording of details while remaining anonymous.

Throughout the school year, reporting by the Justice CORPS to their assigned school will be done by the first of each month, as needed. The report will be a simple record of: 1) number of incidents received, 2) any required, legal actions to be made by school leaders, 3) requests for supporting documentation, as needed by students and/or their families, to support their efforts at seeking justice.

Ongoing and Annual Reports will be kept on file and reviewed annually by the Executive Committee. An electronic, unaltered copy of these reports will be made available to all past, current and prospective families at any time.

**Ranking System for Public Review**

A key factor of the success of the Justice CORPS initiative will be the creation of a ranking system in which human rights violations and response by school officials is made available as public information.

To start, any instance of pressure by school officials, faculty, staff, trustees, Board members or other affiliates on students to remain quiet about incidents will yield an immediate $25,000 fine, to be withdrawn from endowments.
These funds will be allocated for the long-term operation of the Justice CORPS; where excess exists, these will reside in a fund for future restitutions to students. These financial parameters will be outlined in detail by June 2019.

Numerics:

- All schools begin each year with a high score of 10
- Any instance of hazing, assault, including sexual assault and harassment, threats to one’s safety and/or hate speech between students yield a deduction of 1 point
- Any instance of hazing, assault, including sexual assault and harassment, threats to one’s safety and/or hate speech between students - when there is at least a two year grade level separation (such as a senior to a sophomore or a junior to a freshman) yields a deduction of 2 points
- Any instance of physical, emotional or sexual abuse by a staff, faculty or school official, including trustees, Board members or regents, on a student of any age or minor on school campus yields a deduction of 5 points
- Awareness of, and failure to act on, instances of physical, emotion or sexual abuse by a staff, faculty or school official, including trustees, Board members or regents by another adult in above positions will also yield a deduction of 5 points
- In addition to fines, schools where any instance of pressure into silence from officials to students following any human rights violation yields a deduction of 7 points
- Negative scores will be tallied where necessary

Recovery Points

Because response is so crucial in preserving the integrity on an institution, the Justice CORPS initiative includes a measure for recovering lost ranking points by full compliance with recommendations laid out in “PREVENTION AND RESPONSE: Recommendations for Addressing Educator Sexual Misconduct in Independent Schools: by the Independent School Task Force, August 2017. https://www.boardingschools.com/media/121389/taskforcedraftreportforpubliccomment_08-22-17.pdf

Where schools are able to show thorough, verifiable documentation of compliance with these guidelines; and include a copy of written communications by the school to students and their families about incidents, a 1-3 point score may be factored in to rankings. A score of 1 is minimal compliance/response and 3 is exceptional.

For example, if the Justice CORPS receives a report of sexual abuse by an employee against a student; and the school responds according to guidelines within 60 days, recovery points may be considered. In addition, once a school has provided written notification to students and families of the nature of the incident, and an accurate record of corrective actions, points may then equal back to a deduction of zero, plus 1 or plus 2. The goal here is to incentivize the highest possible response by schools.
Student to student abuses will follow the same protocol as those laid out by the Task Force. Deductions for silencing efforts are not recoverable. Additional systems will be created to allot points for schools which adopt additional safety measures for students.

The Justice CORPS will compile a minimum two-column report - available to all and published on the school’s website - of human rights violations and recovery points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justice CORPS Ranking, 2018-2019</th>
<th>Honorable Academy, USA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Violations</td>
<td>Recovery Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 1 student/student hazing or assault</td>
<td>not earned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 2 student/student abuses, 2+ year age gap</td>
<td>+ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 1 student/student hazing or assault</td>
<td>+ 2 (gain of 1 point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 3 faculty or staff abuse to student</td>
<td>not earned</td>
</tr>
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<td>+ 3</td>
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</tbody>
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Total Justice Score (out of 10): 0  Total Recovery Points: 7

Justice CORPS Ranking = 7

Timeline Proposal

Because justice delayed is justice denied, we urge Lawrence Academy of Groton, Massachusetts to accept participation of the Justice CORPS by November 5, 2018.

Volunteer members will be confirmed in January 2019, with trainings held remotely from March - June 2019, after screening has been completed. The goal is to enact the first pilot program for the 2019-2020 school year, with a first report produced by June 2020.

Ongoing research and review will be scheduled throughout the 18 month period. With a successful first year, facilitators of The Amends Project, in conjunction with youth advocate agencies from around New England, will approach neighboring schools to join in participation. Simultaneous pilot programs for 2019-2020 will also be considered.

Implementation

As a new effort in a community-level response to a long history of injustices at schools, former Lawrence Academy student, Vanessa Osage, ‘96 - facilitator of The Amends
Project - will devote 5 - 10 hours/week from January 2019 - June 2020 on implementation, upon receipt of adjusted settlement, in full, from the school. Vanessa Osage is a Sexuality Educator, Consultant & Certified Professional Coach, with 10 years experience as Founder/Executive Director of a Nonprofit for positive youth development. www.loveandtruthrising.org

Weekly tasks will include ongoing research into effective policies and measures currently available; gathering support from related organizations, creating applications and screening systems, creating and delivering remote, online trainings to accepted members, coordinating with Universities (where appropriate) to allow for college-level credit for internships, arranging for meeting times and locations, and set-up and testing of anonymous communication systems.

Osage’s legal case began in late 2016, as a proceeding between the Offices of Attorney Mitchell Garabedian and Lawrence Academy of Groton, MA. Acknowledgement of wrong-doing in the school’s response was crucial for Osage in her settlement process, yet unavailable by means of traditional litigation. In 2018, she proposed Restorative Justice, the efforts of which were undermined by the school and incomplete.

In May 2018, she went public with her story and efforts in The Amends Project, to see a new kind of response to a pervasive problem for young people and their families. The Justice CORPS model is the result of a brainstorm with fellow alumni, feedback from numerous professionals around the country, and her adaptations into a cohesive model.

New systems will be created to fund a part-time job for facilitation, from 2020 onward.

**Long Term Vision**

In future years, parents will be able to compare Justice CORPS ratings among various schools, as currently happens in categories such as academics and athletics.

The intent of the Justice CORPS is to see a dramatic reduction in human rights violations at New England Boarding Schools over time. We embrace this initiative as a model of truly positive reform within Independent and Boarding Schools, to enhance the institutional integrity that is so crucial to their long-term success.

This system allows schools to demonstrate the level of care they claim in their mission statements, while providing outside accountability and oversight. As a model, our hope is that it may prove to be scalable and replicable to institutions in many fields of community and civic life.

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**The Amends Project**

www.theamendsproject.com

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