



## Anti- bullying Policy

Written by Pilar Canal 21 December 2022

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## Aims

The School aims to provide a happy, secure, caring and supportive environment in which each student feels respected as an individual. We encourage pupils to show respect, care and responsibility towards others so that all have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and to contribute positively to the community. We expect all members of the school community to treat each other with respect, tolerance and consideration.

The School has a duty of care to pupils and to staff to ensure they are safe to work, learn and develop unimpeded by fear. Where bullying is found to have taken place by any means, and whether on or off the school site, robust action shall be taken to protect the wellbeing of pupils and staff.

## Definition of Bullying

Bullying is negative behaviour directed by someone exerting power and control over another person. In bullying someone aggressively uses their "power" to target another individual with repeated, unwanted words or actions. Bullying involves one or several people (the bullies) intentionally committing a mean or violent act against another person(s) or group of people (the victims). When bullying occurs, there is no mutual participation in a disagreement; it is one-sided. Bullying victims have a hard time defending themselves. The victims want the bullying to stop, but the bully continues the behaviour.

Bullying involves:

- **Imbalance of Power.** People who bully use their power to control or harm and the people being bullied may have a hard time defending themselves.
- **Intent to Cause Harm.** Actions done by accident are not bullying; the person bullying has a goal to cause harm.
- **Repetition.** Incidents of bullying happen to the same the person over and over by the same person or group.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- **Physical** - any form of violence, deliberate jostling, pushing, shoving, moving, taking, disrespecting others' possessions;
- **Verbal** - taunting, name calling, whispering, note writing, texting, emailing, spreading rumours, laughing at another's expense;
- **Emotional** - ignoring/exclusion, manipulation;
- **Cyber** - see below.
- **Devaluing behaviour** – comments or behaviour which are designed to undermine a person's sense of self-worth.

## Difference between Peer Conflict and Bullying

Students, parents and staff must understand the difference between daily peer conflict and bullying, in order to make the best decisions and plans to help students in different situations.

Conflict is a disagreement or argument in which both sides express their views. Conflict is a struggle between two or more people who appear to have different goals or desires. Conflict occurs naturally as people interact with one another. It is a normal part of life that we will not always agree with other people about the things we want, what we think, or what we want to do. Most conflicts arise in the moment, because people of the same relative amount of power see the same situation from two different points of view. During a conflict people are equally involved in some type of disagreement. Conflict is considered mutual, meaning everyone is more or less evenly involved. On the other hand, in Bullying children intending to cause harm and behaviour goes beyond normal conflict and a bully will continue even when they know it's hurting someone. A summary of differences can be seen below:

Knowing the Difference Between Normal Peer Conflict and Bullying*	
Normal Peer Conflict	Bullying/Harassment
Peers have equal power or are friends with each other.	Imbalance of power between peers; not friends.
Conflict happens occasionally or rarely.	Repeated negative actions that happens often.
May be accidental.	Purposefully done.
May not be serious; no threat of harm.	Serious with threat of physical or emotional harm.
Equal emotional reaction from both peers.	Strong emotional reaction from victim and little or no emotional reaction from bully.
Not seeking power or attention and not trying to gain something.	Seeking power, control or material things.
General remorse - will want to take responsibility.	No remorse - bully blames victim; no guilt from bully.
Effort on both sides to solve the problem.	No effort to solve the problem.

*\*Adapted from Bully-Proofing Your School, 2004*

Normal peer conflict can be solved using conflict resolution strategies, usually guided by a teacher. Conflict resolution education attempts to instil problem-solving skills among the children in dispute. It involves allowing both parties to express their points of view, interests, and provide ways to find acceptable solutions. At LMI teachers may help students in any conflict resolution process, in order to help them solve conflict and learn important life skills through everyday interactions.

## Definition of Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is the use of information and communication technologies to support bullying and could involve various media including:

- Texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones;
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear or humiliation;

- Posting threatening, abusive, extremist, offensive or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat or YouTube);
- Using email to message others in a threatening or abusive manner;
- Hijacking or cloning email or other online accounts.

Every bit as damaging and unacceptable as bullying by more direct, face to face means, cyber-bullying has become increasingly common and has additional potentially harmful consequences; through the use of mobile phones and the internet bullying can become public and may expose a victim to unwanted attention, danger, phone calls, and harassment by strangers.

The following distinctive features of cyber-bullying need to be recognised and taken into account when determining an effective response:

- **Impact:** the scale and scope can be greater than in other forms of bullying;
- **Targets and perpetrators:** may be unlike traditional bullies and their targets;
- **Location:** the 24/7 and any-place nature of cyber-bullying is particularly unsettling and invasive. Perpetrators may not be connected to school and yet can bully directly while the victim is in school;
- **Anonymity:** the victim will not always know who is attacking them;
- **Motivation:** perpetrators may not always be aware that they are bullying;
- **Evidence:** the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence.

### The School's Response to Bullying

- In LMI college, it is important that all recognise bullying behaviour when it occurs, and know that it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Sanctions will be applied.
- Staff must be alert and aware of the dynamics within the groups. It is important that we help students develop the skills and assurance to stand up for others and ~~to do~~ as far as possible; they should also know that the school is a supportive listening environment, that they can communicate concerns without fear of reprisals, and that school procedures will be implemented.



- Similarly, parents are asked to let the School know directly if they have cause for concern, either on behalf of their own child or regarding incidents involving others. The School will always try to handle information discreetly, but parents will be asked to provide as much detail as possible when reporting incidents, including the names of those involved and any available evidence such as screenshots. Although the school cannot promise secrecy, if matters need to be followed up the staff will do so with sensitivity. It is always much easier to address and counter problems at an early stage.
- The PSHE programmes will consider, and aim to discourage, bullying in all its forms.

### **Signs of Bullying**

Changes in behaviour that 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 complaining 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; or
- Talking of suicide or running away from home or school.

Although there may be other causes of the above changes in behaviour, a member of staff observing any of these signs in a pupil should report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Students who may be more vulnerable than others because of their behaviour or circumstances should be carefully monitored.

### **Preventative Measures - Pupils and Parents**

If bullying occurs, pupils should tell a member of staff immediately and that they are able to seek appropriately confidential advice and guidance. They could tell a friend, teacher, SENCO/DSL or parent. If a student is told, then they should report it to any member of staff. If parents are aware of bullying behaviour, they should contact the school as soon as possible. Pupils are encouraged, if bullying occurs, to be assertive, not aggressive.



### **Preventative Measures – Staff**

- Staff must be familiar with this and related school policies and be ready to tackle bullying when it occurs.
- All staff are encouraged to be vigilant as they move around the school.
- The DSL will give support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents and on monitoring those involved in an incident after it occurs.

### **School Procedures when bullying behaviour is apparent or reported**

When bullying behaviour is reported, the individual making the report should be reassured that there is always support available in school.

The member of staff informed, or who has witnessed an incident, should inform the DSL or if she is unavailable, the principal. They will then be responsible for informing other members of the team.

Disciplinary sanctions will be applied as appropriate, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils might have and the needs of vulnerable pupils.

LMI college also takes into account the bullying Intervention Protocol designed by the Comunidad de Madrid:

1. It begins with the notification to the DSL, the principal or vice principal of the existence of signs of bullying of a student at the school, basic information (facts, witnesses, author of the notification, etc.) must be collected on the complaint.

2. Immediately after the notification is received, an investigation will start to collect the necessary information to determine the existence of bullying. The designated professionals, or teacher assigned, will collect the relevant information in accordance with the notified facts as soon as possible. After carrying out the appropriate inquiries, the information will be returned signed to the DSL in an incident form. This data will be incorporated as background information or preliminary proceedings in the event of instructing a disciplinary file. All actions related to this collection of information must be carried out with prudence and confidentiality, it being especially important that the notified indications are not considered evidence before being tested.

3. Immediately, a decision-making meeting will be organized, where teachers involved, DSL and/or vice principal or principal will attend.

At this meeting, intended to assess the data collected and to make decisions about the existence of bullying, two situations may arise:

- a.) There are NO signs of harassment or bullying: the intervention plan is not activated, but the prevention and awareness actions are carried out.



b.) If there is evidence of harassment or bullying: an intervention plan is put into operation which will take into account the victim, the harasser, and parents, who must always be notified, and involved when necessary. This plan can include a mediation process, special strategies, close monitoring, and/ or disciplinary proceedings. All actions must be recorded in a document.

4. Staff members will continue to be vigilant on the situation, to make sure that strategies are working and bullying has stopped.



## **Appendix 1**

### **Specific Advice in cases of Cyber-Bullying**

#### **1. Where the identity of the bully is unknown**

1.1. Although the technology seemingly allows anonymity, there are ways to find out information about where bullying originated. However, it is important to be aware that this may not necessarily lead to an identifiable individual. For instance, if another person's phone or school network account has been used, locating the original source will not, by itself, determine who the bully is.

1.2. In cases where the identity of the bully is unknown, some key questions to look at:

- Was the bullying carried out on the school system? If yes, are there logs in school to see who it was? Contact the school ICT staff or ICT support to see if this is possible.
- Are there identifiable witnesses that can be interviewed? For example, there may be children who have visited the offending site and left comments.
- If the bullying was not carried out on the school system, was it carried out on a mobile or a particular internet service (e.g. IM or social networking site)? As discussed, the service provider, when contacted, may be able to take some steps to stop the abuse by blocking the aggressor, or removing content it considers defamatory or breaks their terms of service.
- If the bullying was via mobile phone, has the bully withheld their number? If so, it is important to record the date and time of the message, and contact the mobile operator. Steps can be taken to trace the originating phone, but the mobile operator can only disclose this information to the police, so police would need to be involved. If the number is not withheld it may be possible for the school to identify the caller
- Has a potential criminal offence been committed? If so the police may have a duty to investigate.

#### **Key principles**

2.1. Key principles include reassuring the victim that it is right to talk, recognising that the situation must have been hard for them to deal with, and stressing that no one has a right to treat them in that way.

2.2.

- It is important to advise the person being bullied not to retaliate or return the message. Replying to messages, particularly in anger, is probably just what the bully wants, and by not replying the bully may think that the target did not receive or see the message, or that they were not bothered by it. Instead, the victim should keep the evidence and take it to their parent or a member of staff.
- Advise the pupil to think about the information they have in the public domain and where they go online. It is important that pupils are careful about who they give their mobile phone number to and that they consider whether they should stay members of, for example, chatrooms where people are treating them badly.
- Advising the child to change their contact details, such as their mobile phone number, can be an effective way of stopping unwanted contact. However, it is important to be aware that some children may not want to do this, and will see this as a last resort for both practical and social reasons, and they may feel that they are being punished.





### **3. Containing the incident**

3.1. Some forms of cyber-bullying involve the distribution of content, or links to content, which can exacerbate, extend and prolong the bullying. There are advantages in trying to contain the 'spread' of this. If bullying content, e.g. embarrassing images, have been circulated, it is important to look at whether this content can be removed from the web.

3.2. Members of the school staff, as well as pupils, have been bullied online with insulting comments and material posted about them. This material should be dealt with seriously and incidents contained in the ways described below to ensure the wellbeing of staff.

3.3. Steps that can be taken to try to stop it spreading:

- The quickest and most effective route to getting inappropriate material taken down from the web will be to ask the person who originally posted it to remove it. If you know who the person responsible is, ensure that they understand why the material is hurtful and ask them to remove it. Contact the host (e.g. social networking site) to make a report to get the content taken down (see When and how to contact the service provider). The material posted may breach the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can then be removed.
- Confiscation of phones containing offending content/asking pupils to delete the content and say to whom they have sent it: school staff can confiscate a mobile phone as a disciplinary penalty, and have a legal defence in respect of this in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (s 94). The Education Act 2011 gives schools the power to search electronic devices and to delete data where appropriate, or to hand phones or data to the police. Procedures in relation to searching and confiscation must be reasonable (more information can be found in the School's Searching and Confiscation of Banned Items Policy).
- Contact the police in cases of actual/suspected illegal content. The police will be able to determine what content is needed for evidential purposes, potentially allowing the remaining content to be deleted.

### **4. Preventing recurrence (e.g. blocking or changing contact details)**

4.1. There are some steps that the person being bullied can take, depending on the service that the bully has used, which can allow users to manage who they share information with and also who can contact them. These features can help a person being bullied to stop further contact from the person harassing them, e.g. blocking the person from their email will mean that they will not receive messages from that particular sender anymore.

4.2. Pupils or their parents should be advised to contact the service provider or host (i.e. the chatroom, the social network provider or mobile operator) to inform them of what has happened, and get their advice on how to stop this happening again. The service provider may be able to block particular senders or callers (for landlines), or advise on how to change contact details and potentially delete the accounts of those that are abusing the service.

### **5. Working with the bully and applying sanctions**

5.1. With any form of bullying, steps should be taken to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, and to ensure access to any support that they may need. Mediation between the bully and the victim can work.

When determining the appropriate response, it is important to consider the ways in which cyberbullying incidents might differ in impact to other forms of bullying. Key considerations



may include the bully's attempts to disguise their identity, the public nature of posted material (and the extent of the humiliation), and the difficulty in controlling copies of the material (the difficulty in gaining closure over the event).

5.2. All students should know that bullying behaviour is unacceptable but it should be recognised that some cyber-bullying has been known to be unintentional, or at least carried out with little awareness of the consequences. Determining appropriate sanctions for incidents will then require sensitivity to the impact on the person being bullied, as well as any misunderstanding or thoughtlessness on the part of the cyber-bully. Consideration should also be given to the possibility that the cyber-bullying could be a part of retaliation to previous bullying endured by the perpetrator.

## **6. Sanctions for bullying behaviour**

Technology-specific sanctions for pupils engaged in cyber-bullying behaviour could include limiting internet access for a period of time within school. However, depending on the frequency or pattern of bullying in each individual case, more serious sanctions, including suspension and exclusion, may apply.