

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Leweston is 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 develop their potential. We expect our pupils to treat all members of the school community with respect, courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed but orderly atmosphere. All pupils should above all care for and support each other.

Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Leweston in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that School and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the School. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

A key provision in The Equality Act 2010 is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force on 5 April 2011, provides specific legal protection for individuals with 'protected characteristics'. These characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. Schools also have duties to ensure that pupils with special educational needs engage in the activities of the School together with children who do not have special educational needs.

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence.

If staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police. For example, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or

anxiety to the recipient. School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the School premises, but only if it would be reasonable for the School to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the School premises, such as on School or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Where bullying outside School is reported, it will be investigated and acted on. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed. While staff members have the power to discipline pupils for bullying that occurs outside School, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the School premises or when the pupil is under the lawful control of School staff, for instance on a trip.

Policy

This Policy is consistent with the requirements of the DfE Guidance Preventing and Tackling Bullying. (July 2017)

Bullying may be defined as behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying is often, but not always, characterised by an imbalance of power.

Bullying can take many forms, and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual difference between children, or perceived differences. Boarding staff in particular are aware of the fact that bullying may also be related to 'initiation/hazing type violence and rituals' in a residential environment.

Bullying is, therefore: **targeted; deliberately hurtful; repeated, often over a period of time; difficult to defend against.** The term bullying is not, however, appropriate when describing one off incidents, accidents, incidents without intent or friendship fallouts. Even though these examples are not bullying, these are still not acceptable behaviour and will still be dealt with.

Child-on-Child Abuse is defined as a serious form of bullying (abuse) between persons of a similar age and as such has wider safeguarding implications (see Child on Child Abuse Policy).

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the school's first priority, but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical. Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to

report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racial – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Religious/Cultural - religious or cultural intolerance of any sort, especially relating to views on radicalisation and terrorism
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually explicit and/or abusive comments.
- Sexist – related to a person's gender Homophobic - because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, commenting adversely on a pupil's looks.
- Exclusionary behaviour – intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group
- Disability – because of, or focussing on, a disability or special educational needs.
- Cyber – using electronic means such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, or gaming

Bullying may also be related to a person's home circumstances, for example if a child is a carer or adopted.

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 happen anywhere and at any time. Bullying can cause psychological damage and even suicide. Bullying is unacceptable behaviour at Leweston and we always treat it very seriously.

Prevention

A school's response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. Leweston prides itself on the care provided, and staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place, which involves talking to pupils about issues of difference in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, through assemblies, PSHE sessions, Tutor sessions, or one-on-one supervisions. Staff are often able to determine what will work best for pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

At Leweston, we seek to establish an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the School staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. That culture extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, chapel, the Boarding House, and beyond the School gates including travel to and from School. A clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeates the school environment, and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest. Staff are regularly trained in matters of preventing and dealing

with bullying internally by Pastoral staff, including the DSL, as well as by the Safe Schools and Communities Team (Dorset Police).

The School makes a commitment to:

- Take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child and reinforces the value of good behaviour.
- Ensure pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. Pupils must understand that when they find themselves a witness to bullying, they must not be a bystander, and therefore by their inaction in reporting the matter, condone what they have seen/are aware of.
- Regularly evaluate and update our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems. The Safe Schools and Communities Team are used regularly for both staff and pupil training.
- Make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying.
- Celebrate success throughout the School, to ensure a positive environment is created.

Cyberbullying

'Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.'

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking sites, like Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat and Instagram, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras, and gaming sites.

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Head, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the School rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is

suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

(see Online Safety and Cyberbullying (3.27) policy for further detail.)

Signs of bullying

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

- Unwillingness to be at School
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags 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 Health Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

Addressing the issue

We take the following preventative measures:

Whole School

- Tutors explain this policy to pupils when they first arrive at Leweston. The policy is also made known to parents and they are urged to contact the School promptly about any concerns.
- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the School policy on bullying.
- Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the School, and other educational means are used to raise awareness, such as projects, stories and current affairs
- Bullying is dealt with in each Year Group as part of the published PSHE programme.
- All pupils are encouraged to be vigilant and to report any incident of bullying.

- All pupils are regularly reminded of the various channels through which concerns can be communicated.
- Members of staff understand the need to be ready at any time to listen to a pupil's concerns.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents for any identifiable pattern. The DHP keeps a Bullying Log.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors, Heads of Year and House staff who support the Deputy Head Pastoral, and who are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Awareness of staff to bullying is raised through tutor meetings, HOY meetings and at INSET (for example focussing on e-safety and cyberbullying) and action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely.
- The School will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths, perhaps at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement.
- Each tutor group has an Anti-Bullying Ambassador.

Boarding

- Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged to ensure that the Boarding staff are aware of the risks of child abuse and bullying, and how to deal with cases. Boarding staff are particularly aware and sensitive to the needs of our overseas boarders and ensure that the School language policy is promulgated at all times
- In the Boarding House there is always an adequate presence of staff who can detect, and deal with bullying
- Staff are actively involved with pupils in all areas of the Boarding House when they are on duty
- Measures are taken to avoid boredom and lack of purpose among students
- There is space available for pupils' quiet withdrawal
- There is no crowding in bedrooms or common rooms
- Good behaviour and discipline is maintained
- Boarding staff keep a record of concerns. Any report or incident of bullying will be reported and discussed with the Deputy Head Pastoral.
- Incidents of bullying in the Boarding House may result in either the bully or victim moving to another room after consultation with the pupil, his or her parents and the relevant staff.

Cyberbullying – preventative measures

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Leweston:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal School email address.
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying.
- Has a team of Cyber Ambassadors, led by the E-Safety Champion; each tutor group has a Cyber Ambassador.

(see Online Safety and Cyberbullying (3.27) policy for further detail.)

Procedures for dealing with reported bullying

A case of bullying may be reported in a number of ways, for instance by:

- the pupil contacting the teachers charged with dealing with "Worries and Concerns" - Deputy Head Pastoral in the Senior School or any member of staff in the Prep.
- approaching a tutor /prefect/HoY/Pastoral Lead/Houseparent/another member of staff/Counsellor
- another pupil approaching a prefect/member of staff
- a member of staff observing an incident or pattern of incidents
- a parent contacting a member of staff
- an anonymous informant

When early-stage or emerging bullying-behaviour is suspected, the HoY will conduct a 'light touch' investigation in order to determine the level of severity and the appropriate response. This may include individual pupil interviews or group discussions to gather information. During this process, all attempts will be made to ensure that all pupil's views are heard in a fair, supported and non-judgmental way.

Pupils with SEND needs which may impede independent understanding or limit communication, will be supported appropriately by staff throughout this process.

If the HoY concludes that there is no immediate threat to pupil safety, nor conclusive proof of wrongdoing, they will continue to address the situation with a 'No Blame' approach.

Staff will consider carefully at what stage parents should be informed, if they are not already aware of what is happening. Some complaints of 'bullying' are the result of normal (albeit distressing) changes in friendships, temporary exam stress, friction within a group about a particular issue and so on. These are best dealt with in a low-key way, as part of the everyday running of the House or class, and the aim will be a speedy resolution and reconciliation without undue disruption to normal routine.

Parents will not automatically be informed in such cases. Where / when the HoY deems it appropriate to make parental contact, this is done to inform parents of the process, the findings of the investigation and the decision reached by staff and to gain support for a consistent response.

While staff will always communicate openly with parents and will take an interest in any relevant context brought to their attention, parents should not expect to be 'consulted' prior to the school's investigation, nor should they expect to influence the outcome of the investigation. It is important that staff are able to investigate reports at an early stage, to gain an unbiased view of events.

The school's response, including applying sanctions, will be determined in line with the sanctions policy.

Guide to the 'No Blame Approach'

Step 1 Interview

An adult talks to the pupil experiencing distress about his or her feelings. (She/he does not question the pupil about the incidents but she does need to know who was involved). She/he then explains the rudiments of the No-blame Approach and the reasons for it and obtains permission from the pupil to arrange a meeting with those causing the distress.

Step 2 Convene a meeting

The meeting takes place led by the adult. The first point made, even as the meeting is being set up, is that it is a meeting, not a telling off. The tone set should be a friendly one: we have a problem in School, let's see if we can solve it.

Step 3 Explain the problem

The adult tells the meeting about the way the pupil is feeling. At no time does she/he discuss the details of the incidents or allocate blame to the group.

Step 4 Share the responsibility

The adult states that she/he knows that the group can help resolve the situation

Step 5 Ask the group for ideas

Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the distressed pupil could be made to feel happier. The adult gives some positive responses but she/he does not go on to exact a promise of improved behaviour.

Step 6 Leave it up to them Location

The adult ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. She/he arranges to meet them again to see how things are going.

Step 7 Meet them again

About a week later the adult discusses with each pupil how things have been going. This allows some monitoring of the bullying and keeps all the pupils involved in the process.

Response to bullying:

If bullying continues following the “No Blame Approach”, or if the reported behaviour is believed by staff to be bullying, or if it constitutes a clear and significant breach of the pupil code of conduct (Stage 5), the pupil or pupils responsible can expect to be temporarily or permanently excluded.

A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and support will be determined by the HoY, with support from the DHP, if necessary. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures. The measures outlined in the Rewards and Sanctions Policy, and the Admissions, Misbehaviour and Exclusions Policy should be referred to and considered.

It is the policy of Leweston to attempt to resolve issues of bullying internally under the School’s own disciplinary procedures. However, If there is reasonable cause to suspect that, as a result of bullying, a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, ‘significant harm’ then the member of staff must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who, if they still have concerns, will report these to the local social care department. In cases where significant harm and / or abuse is believed to have taken place, the police may also be contacted. This will always be done in consultation with the Head and / or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Last Review: August 2025

Next Review: August 2026

Further Help and Guidance

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA): Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.

The Diana Award: Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme to empower young people to take responsibility for changing the attitudes and behaviour of their peers towards bullying. It will achieve this by identifying, training and supporting school anti-bullying ambassadors.

Kidscape: Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.

ChildNet International: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves.

Digizen: provides online safety information for educators, parents, carers and young people.

Internet Matters: provides help to keep children safe in the digital world.

Think U Know: resources provided by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) for children and young people, parents, carers and teachers.

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) has produced a range of resources for schools, colleges and parents about how to keep children safe online, this includes advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of 'sexting' or Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (YPSI).

Barnardos: through its LGBTQ Hub, offers guidance to young people, parents and teachers on how to support LGBT students and tackle LGBT prejudice-based bullying

EACH: (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia): provides a national freephone Actionline for targets of homophobic or transphobic bullying and training to schools on sexual orientation, gender identity matters and cyberhomophobia.

Stonewall: An LGB equality organisation with considerable expertise in LGB bullying in schools.

Mencap: Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people.

Educate Against Hate: provides teachers, parents and school leaders practical advice and information on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation.

Tell MAMA: Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks (MAMA) allows people from across England to report any form of Anti-Muslim abuse, MAMA can also refer victims for support through partner agencies.

Disrespect No Body: a Home Office led campaign which helps young people understand what a healthy relationship is.

Refer also to the following policies:

Online Safety and Cyberbullying

Code of Conduct (Behaviour Policy)

Code of Conduct for Sixth Form