



Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of policy intent

London Christian School wishes every pupil and member of staff to thrive within a community in which everyone respects, supports and cares for everyone else. It is the school's aim to ensure that this is always true. This policy has regard to the DfE publication "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" July 2017 and Cyberbullying: DfE Advice for headteachers and school staff 2014.

Definitions

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying involves an imbalance of power and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on the grounds of special educational needs. It can also be motivated by prejudice on the grounds of age, race, religion, belief, sex or disability (all of which are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010). Bullying can happen indirectly online (cyberbullying) and can be more harmful than direct bullying.

Whilst bullying is described as behaviour that is repeated over time, a single incident can be bullying depending on the intent of the person causing harm and the impact on the individual who may, for example, fear it might happen again. A single incident of behaviour that intentionally causes harm will be investigated and a record made. One incident may be the start of a pattern of bullying behaviour. Bullying can constitute child on child abuse which is described fully in [the Safeguarding Policy](#).

Pupils are taught what bullying is with the following tool: **STOP-** (Bullying behaviour is) Several Times On Purpose.

Bullying is serious and may be verbal, physical or emotional (and may cause psychological damage) and it can include cyberbullying.

Bullying is often a group behaviour and it is important that staff and pupils are aware of the different roles that people can play in bullying. These include the ringleader, reinforcer, bystander, assistant, outsider and target. Positive changes in the behaviour of any of these can have a significant positive impact on the bullying.

Banter is the playful, good-humoured and friendly exchange of teasing remarks. It involves people with equal power, where there is no hurt involved and no intent to cause harm.

Banter becomes **bullying** when it is intentional, hurtful, repetitive and involves a power imbalance, for example, when the banter shifts from one to one to involving the whole room/class.

Cyberbullying is any form of bullying conducted over digital devices such as cell phones, computers and tablets. It may take the form of unwanted or defamatory text messages, defamatory or unkind social networking site groups or many other similar means. Both pupils and staff members can be the victims of cyberbullying. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behaviour. It is particularly harmful because it can take place during or outside school hours and both on and off the school's premises, hurtful information can be disseminated to numbers of people very easily, it often takes place in a hidden way and it can create a negative online reputation for bully and/or victim.

How we seek to prevent Bullying

This policy is part of a wider anti-bullying strategy, other elements of which are detailed below.

Atmosphere and Culture: We aim to provide an environment in which all pupils feel safe and secure and in which they treat each other with care and respect and in which all members of the school community feel a responsibility to combat bullying in an appropriate way. Teachers model care and respect in their relationships with colleagues, parents and pupils.

Raising Awareness/Education: This is done through PSHE lessons, relationships education (see Relationships and Sex Education Policy), the Computing Curriculum, by teacher-staff discussion and in regular assemblies on anti-bullying. The LCS Anti-Bullying code (Appendix 1) is displayed in each classroom and is referred to as appropriate. This policy is on the school website parents are specifically directed to it at the beginning of each term and in Anti-Bullying Week. Anti-Bullying Week is given a high profile and parents, staff and pupils are involved. Our **Online Safety Policy** and Internet Safety Week also help to address cyberbullying.

Opportunities to communicate concerns

Opportunities to express concerns **before** bullying occurs (for example before unkindness becomes bullying) include the following

- Worry boxes in each classroom
- PSHE lessons and class discussions
- Informal conversations with staff. Pupils are told that they can ask to speak to a teacher alone and if they do not wish to ask in front of others, they can make this request through the worry box
- Encouragement to speak to their parents or carers
- pupils surveys (sometimes carried out by peers via School Council)

Training: At least once a year the Head teacher or Deputy Head undertakes training on bullying and on anti-bullying strategies (including cyberbullying). This information is then passed on the LCS staff as part of CPD and in weekly staff meetings. Weekly staff meetings also provide an opportunity to identify individual pupils who may be at risk of bullying or being bullied. Staff receive in-house training in order to ensure they understand the needs of the pupils, especially those with Special Educational Needs.

Respect for others: This is embedded in the curriculum and school culture. The PSHE curriculum addresses some of the differences between people that could motivate bullying such as age, race, religion, belief, sex, special educational needs or disability. Education in these areas is an important factor in preventing bullying.

Involvement of Parents: Parents are encouraged to report concerns about bullying (either of their own child or other school pupil/s). Parents are advised what signs to look for. This is done by way of the weekly newsletter, by the availability of this policy on the school website and in paper form by request. Parents are notified of Anti-Bullying Week.

Spotting the signs: Staff are trained and parents are advised to look for signs of bullying which include;

- Decreased self-esteem and/or increased anxiety/withdrawal
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Unexplainable injuries
- Declining work standards, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Changes in eating habits
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations

There may be other causes for some of the above, but they will be addressed by staff. Parents are encouraged to notify teachers if they notice such signs.

How we deal with Bullying once it has occurred

Opportunities for pupils to disclose bullying (to “Tell”)

These include

- Worry boxes in each classroom
- PSHE lessons and class discussions

- Informal conversations with staff. Pupils are told that they can ask to speak to a teacher alone and if they do not wish to ask in front of others, they can make this request through the worry box
- Encouragement to speak to their parents or carers
- pupils surveys (sometimes carried out by peers via School Council)

Staff action and Sanctions for Bullying

1. Staff will respond calmly and consistently to allegations or incidents of bullying and all allegations of bullying will be carefully investigated and recorded.
2. Staff will report suspected cases of bullying to the Head teacher.
3. **Written records** are kept on Integris. The record states **who** was involved in any incident, **where** and **when** it happened, **what** happened, the **consequences** and **actions** taken. Records of incidents based on protected characteristics will be recorded as being so. These incidents will be treated particularly seriously and monitored as a separate category as well as part of the overall monitoring of bullying incidents.
4. The member of staff must take steps to **discuss** the problem with the bully/bullies to establish the situation and talk through any issues. An early resolution is sought. If possible, pupils will be reconciled.
5. Parents of the bully and victim will be notified. In cases where others were involved as bystanders or as indirectly facilitating the bullying, the parents of those others may be notified as appropriate. **Sanctions** for those others will be decided in accordance with the **Behaviour Policy**.
6. Those who have been bullied will be **reassured** and **offered support** to restore and build on their confidence and self-esteem.
7. **Support** will also be given to the bullying pupil to raise their self-esteem and develop appropriate social skills.
8. Those who have bullied will be helped to reflect on their behaviour, the consequences and the need to change. They will be asked to offer an **apology** and other school **sanctions** will follow as appropriate. See **Behaviour Policy** for sanctions. Bullying is considered a serious incident as defined and sanctioned under the **Behaviour Policy**.
9. Both bullied and bullying parties will be informed that the situation is being **monitored** by the class teacher/s concerned.
10. If there is no improvement or further bullying occurs, the parents of the bullying pupil must be contacted again in order to discuss the issue and to make clear that a **zero tolerance** policy is being adhered to.
11. In cases of severe and persistent bullying, fixed term **exclusion** or permanent exclusion from school may be necessary.

Monitoring and Recording Bullying Incidents

Records of bullying incidents are recorded on Integris. Information is used to measure the effectiveness of Anti-Bullying strategies and to plan for further intervention.

Bullying Outside School Premises

LCS will seek, as far as is practicable, to minimise bullying outside its premises and to send a strong signal to pupils that bullying will not be tolerated, wherever it takes place. Bullying behaviour that takes place outside school will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Bullying, Safeguarding and External Support

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of bullying, it should be addressed as a safeguarding issue. In serious cases, as determined by the Designated Safeguarding Lead in consultation with the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Safeguarding Governor if necessary), bullying may need to be reported to external agencies such as children's services or the police.

Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, we may draw on specialist services or early help services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying. Any referral to specialist services or early help services will be made in accordance with the referral threshold set by the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board.

Banter

Pupils are taught in assemblies and PSHE lessons the difference between banter and bullying and how to tell when the line is crossed. Banter that becomes bullying is treated in the same way as other forms of bullying. **Sanctions** are detailed in the ***Behaviour Policy***. Time is given to explain to the perpetrator why the banter has crossed the line.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is treated in the same way as other forms of bullying. Measures to prevent cyberbullying and sanctions to implement should it occur are detailed in the ***Online Safety Policy and Behaviour Policy***.

Policy approved by the Governing Board: November 2024

Review date: November 2025

If you see someone being bullied:

- **DON'T** rush over and take the bully on;
- **DON'T** be made to join in;
- **DO** let a teacher or another adult in school know;
- **DO** try to be a friend to the person being bullied.

If you are a victim of bullying:

- If you feel comfortable doing so **TELL** the bully to stop
- **TELL** a teacher or another adult in school or at home;
- **TAKE** a friend with you if you are scared to tell someone by yourself;
- **KEEP** telling people until someone listens;
- **DON'T** blame yourself for what has happened.