ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Policy Author	Chief Executive/Principals/Designated Trust Safeguarding Lead
Trust Key Reader	AC
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1. Introduction

1.1 It is a basic entitlement of all children that they receive their education in a positive learning environment and that this should be free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. We recognise the need to safeguard the welfare of all those within the school community and to encourage cooperation, tolerance and harmony. We have a responsibility to create and maintain a secure caring, friendly and safe environment for students who are in our care so that parents/carers/carers may send their children to the Trust's Academies confident in the knowledge that we will not tolerate bullying.

1.2 LEAP Multi-Academy Trust's anti-bullying policy is firmly rooted in our overall aims and is concerned fundamentally with our expectations for the development of appropriate student behaviour as outlined in our Trust/Academy values.

1.3 Our policy is clear:
   • All bullying will be acted upon promptly and effectively; therefore, every person who is part of our Trust has a responsibility to take action
   • Our organisation, administration and practices within the Trust's Academies will reflect our commitment to the prevention of bullying
   • We actively implement our anti-bullying policy and have clear pathways for reporting which are known to all members of the community.

   IMPORTANT NOTE: Covid-19 – possible interruption to normal application of policy: during the pandemic, as a result of government measures to restrict the spread of the virus, methods of delivering policy and usual timescales may be affected. For instance, communication may include a virtual / video meeting rather than an in-person one.

2. What is Bullying?

2.1 **"Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally".** (DFE 2017).

2.2 A recently adopted definition of a bully that young people may better understand, as a result of their work in the school curriculum over time, is:- **a person who habitually seeks to harm or intimidate those whom they perceive as vulnerable.**

2.3 Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) 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 differences between children, or perceived differences. Any incidents linked to protected characteristics, is recorded as such to enable the school to monitor any patterns/areas of concern so that interventions can be put into place to reduce/prevent incidents.

3. Focus of Bullying

3.1 The focus of bullying can be more or less anything that distinguishes an individual and represents a deviation from the presumed norm such as:
   •   appearance eg looks, weight, hair colour, wearing glasses, or health conditions
   •   race, religion, or culture
   •   sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation)
   •   sexist or sexual behaviour (see Safeguarding Policy re sexual violence & harassment)
   •   special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)
   •   home circumstances eg material possessions, personal background, parent's job, lifestyles, deep-seated local feuding with disagreements between adults passed onto children   or any other perceived difference.

4.   Forms of Bullying

4.1   Bullying can take many forms. It can be short or long-term and can take place anywhere, openly or covertly. It can take the form of physical, verbal or psychological attack of a more subtle nature. Some of the specific ways in which bullying occurs are:
- Physical eg pushing, hitting
- Emotional eg spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours, excluding students from groups, making unkind personal comments
- Verbal eg name calling, making offensive comments
- Extortion eg demanding money or personal possessions
- Damage to property eg theft of bags, tearing clothes ripping books
- Cyber eg during remote learning session, inappropriate texting/emailing, inappropriate use of social media and bullying via live streaming/gaming,
- Sexual harassment and sexual violence (please see Safeguarding policy section 12 for further details about child on child sexual harassment and sexual violence and the academy's response which follows the statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022).

4.2   We are aware that incidents of bullying which take place outside the Trust's Academies may have an effect on behavioural relationships within those Academies, eg during access to remote learning. Staff will address their effects in an attempt to ensure that a secure and safe environment for students is maintained; it may be that the police are informed.

5.   Possible Effects of Bullying

5.1   The most common effects of bullying are:
- poor self-esteem, which prevents students from forming positive relationships and can lead to feelings of worthlessness and betrayal
- anxiety and depression, which can lead to intermittent and long-term absence from school, resulting in under-achievement, long term mental health difficulties.

5.2   The student may show signs of:
- being frightened to walk to and from school
- poor attendance
- underachieving
- becoming withdrawn
- having possessions that are damaged or missing
- becoming distressed/stop eating
- crying easily/have nightmares
- becoming disruptive/aggressive
- beginning to steal (eg to pay the bully).

6.   Reporting Bullying

6.1   Different ways are:
- the vast majority of students talk to their form tutor or in some cases Head of Year / pastoral support member (or a member of staff they feel comfortable with)
- students can email any member of staff to ask for help and support
- students can email: studentconcerns@bri.leap-mat.org.uk
- students can drop a note into the concerns box situated near reception window
- some students who have established an ongoing working relationship with a member of staff will agree a mechanism for indicating they wish to talk, eg, go to Head of Year office and leave and previously agreed item
- parents/carers/carers should ring the school and ask for Head of Year/pastoral support assistant

7. **How we deal with bullying**

7.1 We are aware that bullying must be tackled on two levels: by focusing on preventative work but also by responding appropriately when incidents do occur. We work hard to improve behaviour and encourage students to manage their own behaviour positively. We teach students that, as well as having rights, the choices they make will also bring responsibilities.

7.2 We use the following strategies to ensure that we have a clear, consistent and effective approach to bullying:
- a strong ethos, which promotes tolerance and respect for difference and diversity
- an anti-bullying policy and a clear guide for students and parents/carers, available on the school website. The policy is reviewed regularly by staff, Governors, parents/carers and students
- a planned approach in the Ethics/Life curriculum and through assemblies to the issue of bullying in a context which promotes self-esteem and confidence in relationships
- training for staff to raise and maintain awareness, to alert them to indicators which may suggest bullying and to equip them with ways of responding to it
- training for student leaders
- periodic consultation with students to inform our knowledge of bullying
- varied methods for alerting us to current instances of bullying eg verbal, email, telephone
- independent listeners, including older students and other adults, in addition to staff, to whom victims of bullying may turn
- encouraging co-operative behaviour
- contact with the Academy's Police Liaison Officer as deemed necessary
- our recording systems ensure that patterns of behaviour can be identified and strategies and interventions can be implemented

7.3 Whole-Trust approach to the maintenance of an anti-bullying ethos within its Academies includes:
- staff tackling low level disruption and setting clear expectations of behaviour to prevent escalation of negative behaviours
- involving student leaders
- a consistent system of recording incidents of bullying in line with relevant local authority guidelines
- informing parents/carers of the complaints procedure policy and following through this policy as the need arises.

8. Implications for all Members of Staff, Students and Parents/carers/Carers

8.1 All bullying, seen or reported, will be acted upon as quickly as possible and seen to be acted upon. This will involve:
- the reporting of incidents from several viewpoints (eg victim, witness)
- the involvement of the relevant staff (Form Tutor/SEND Support Team/Head of Year/Pastoral Support/Head of Department/Senior Leadership Team)
- the taking of statements from the bully and the bullied student, as well as witnesses
- the contacting and the involvement of parents/carers/carers of both victim and bully
- supporting and helping both the victim and the bully
- enforcing the agreed action
- recording incidents, including prejudice related incidents, as outlined in staff planner

8.2 Particular responsibilities of all staff will include:
- ensuring delivery of curriculum content regarding bullying issues
- ensuring policies, practice and consequences are clear to students and parents/carers/carers
- evaluating policies, structures and practices
- facilitating staff training and development
- particular vigilance of vulnerable groups eg students with SEND, students who identify or who are allies of the LGBTQ+ community.

8.3 Parents/carers/carers should:
- identify early signs of possible bullying as given in the 'possible effects' of bullying
- contact us immediately and speak to the student's Form Tutor, Head of Year/Pastoral Support Assistant, SEND Support Team or a senior member of staff as appropriate
- Report incidents that occur outside the Academy environment, to the Police via '101' and inform Academy staff
- not encourage their child to hit back in the case of physical bullying
- encourage their child to have a wide circle of friends.

8.4 Students should:
- understand what bullying is, its causes, effects and methods of prevention
- accept that they have a responsibility to themselves
- accept that they have a responsibility to prevent and report the bullying of others in the school community.

9. <u>Actions</u>

9.1 There are different levels of bullying and this will be taken into account when deciding how to deal with individual incidents. We will take actions that are firm but fair and which take account of individual cases. Follow up procedures may include:
- immediate action for low level incidents
- prompt counselling of both bully and victim
- sanctions eg detentions, supervised social time
- restorative work
- circle time/group work
- work to enhance the academy (Community Service)
- encouraging students to widen their circle of friends
- withdrawal from timetable
- involvement of external agencies
- suspension

10. <u>Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body</u>

10.1 Responsibilities are:
- will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness
- will satisfy themselves that the Trust/Academy policy, structures and systems are preventative and yet, should bullying occur, are also capable of dealing effectively with the problem
- will be asked to support the Academy in the use of appropriate sanctions if the safety and education of other students is persistently threatened by a student.

10.2 This policy should be read along with the Trust/Academy Safeguarding Policy and the Trust's Behaviour Policy.

HELPFUL ORGANISATIONS:
Childline 0800 1111
National Bullying helpline 0300 323 0169
Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 0300 0115 142
KIDSCAPE Parent Advice Line 07496 682785
Think You Know – website about staying safe online https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/
Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
Youth Access 020 8772 9900