

Introduction

**This policy should be viewed in conjunction with the following policies:
Child Protection, Communication, Health and Safety, Behaviour and Discipline.**

Bullying affects everyone, not just bullies and their victims. It affects observers (other pupils, staff and parents) and other pupils can be upset, intimidated or unsettled by what they see and hear. No one should underestimate the potential impact of bullying. All institutions contain some numbers of pupils with the potential for bullying behaviour. In a well disciplined and well organised school, the occurrence of bullying can be minimised.

The Ladies' College, Melrose and the Ladies College Pre-Preparatory Department believe that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. Bullying is **not** an inevitable part of school life. It is not tolerated and no one, whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour.

Our policy has been written in accordance with best practice guidelines and the DCSF guidance found in *Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools*.

Aims:

- To raise the self-esteem of all pupils and to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.
- To help pupils to develop positive strategies and to become assertive without using threatening or violent behavior.
- To promote good citizenship and it makes clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour and that it will not be tolerated.
- To be vigilant and follow up any concerns about bullying, communicating clearly with parents where necessary.
- To safeguard any pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil.
- To apply sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience.

Anti-social behaviour classified as bullying:

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace, and comes in many different forms:

- Verbal: Name calling, persistent teasing, mocking, taunting and threats.

- Physical: Any form of physical violence, intimidating behaviour, theft or the intentional damage of possessions. This includes hitting, kicking and pushing.
- Emotional: Excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation, setting people up and spreading rumours.
- Cyber: Cyber bullying is the misuse of digital technologies or communications to bully a person or a group, typically through messages or actions that are threatening and/or intended to cause offence, anxiety or humiliation.
- Damage to property or theft: Where pupils may have their property relocated, damaged or stolen.

The Responsibility of the School:

- To be vigilant and report any concerns about possible bullying to class teachers or practitioners, the Deputy Head and Head Teacher.
- To establish the facts of any bullying incident, follow school procedures and record all incidents of bullying. Where parents are informed, details should be kept by the Head Teacher.
- To maintain communication with the parents, if appropriate, and inform them if matters improve as well as if the problem continues.

Procedures for dealing with a reported incident of bullying

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform the pupils' class teacher/s and an appropriate member of the Melrose Senior Leadership Team soon as possible.
- The victim will be interviewed on her own and asked to give an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to give their account of events.
- The incident should be recorded using an Incident Report sheet. (Forms to be found in the staff room). A file note should also be made in the pastoral section of the Individual Pupil Tracking sheets.
- All class teachers and support staff should be informed. In very serious incidents, the Head Teacher may inform the Principal and will record details on The Ladies' College Bullying Log.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by her class teacher, Deputy Head or Head Teacher. It will be made clear to her not to take matters into her own hands because the matter is being dealt with by College. She will be offered support to develop strategies to help herself.

- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by her class teacher, Deputy Head or Head Teacher, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. She will be offered guidance on modifying her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions. (This could take the form of a verbal reprimand, a phone call to parents or in serious cases an internal exclusion or an external exclusion.)
- The parents/guardians of all parties will be informed if the incident is judged sufficiently significant.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. 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.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place. The matter will be raised at regular staff pastoral briefings so all staff are aware of sensitivities and any strategies put in place.
- The record of bullying offences will be reviewed by the Deputy Principal and the Pastoral teams regularly to watch for patterns and check that the policy is effective.
- If a criminal offence has been committed – harassment, assault or/and threatening behaviour it may be necessary to treat the incident as child protection (CP) concern and it will be necessary to make a report to Social Services or the Police.

Information for pupils

Pupils are made aware of bullying and where to get help through posters around the school. Junior girls are also supported by learning strategies to cope with their emotions in social situations through the Decider Skills programme.

When bullying occurs, girls are encouraged to follow these guidelines.

If you are being bullied the following responses should help

- Explain to the bully that her words/actions are upsetting; she may not be aware of this. However, if the bullying continues try not to show your feelings.
- Walk away quickly and confidently, even if you don't feel that way inside.
- If you are different in any way, be proud of it - it is good to be an individual.
- The bully will not stop if she thinks that she can get away with such behaviour. Discuss the problem with an adult.

You can help to stop bullying

- If the girl being bullied is in any danger, fetch help. If she isn't, remain with her; your presence may ease the situation.
- Show that you and your friends disapprove.
- Give sympathy and support to other girls who may be bullied.
- Be careful about teasing people and making personal remarks. If you think that they might not find your comments funny, then don't say them.

- If you know of serious bullying tell someone. The victim may be too scared or lonely to tell.

When you are talking about bullying with an adult, be clear about:

- what has happened
- how often this has happened
- who was involved
- who saw what was happening
- where it happened
- what you have done about it already

Information for parents and families

Parents and families have an important part to play in helping us deal with bullying.

- Discourage your daughter from using bullying behaviour at home and elsewhere.
- Show her how to resolve the difficult situations without using violence or aggression.
- Ensure that you and your daughter are conversant with the anti-bullying policy.
- Watch out for signs that your daughter is being bullied, or is bullying others. Parents and families are often the first to detect that a problem exists. Don't dismiss it. Contact the school immediately if you are worried.

Children sometime bully other children because:

- They don't know it is wrong.
- They are emulating older brothers or sisters or other people whom they admire.
- They haven't learnt other, better ways of mixing with their school friends.
- Their friends encourage them to bully.
- They are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings.

If your daughter has been bullied:

- Talk calmly with your daughter about her experiences.
- Make a note of what she says - particularly who was involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what has happened.
- Reassure her that she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying and discuss how the problem will be tackled.
- If she considers the school should be informed, contact your daughter's Form Teacher or the Head Teacher.

Talking with staff about bullying:

- Try and stay calm – bear in mind that the member of staff may not have been aware that your daughter is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident.
- Be as specific as possible about what your daughter says has happened – give dates, places and names of other pupils involved.
- Make a note of what action the College intends to take.
- Ascertain if there is anything you can do to help your daughter or the College.
- Stay in touch with the College. Let them know if things improve as well as if the problem continues.

If you are not satisfied.

Families who feel that their concerns are not being addressed appropriately by the College should make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Principal.

If your daughter is bullying other pupils

Pupils may be involved in bullying other pupils at some time or another. Often parents are not aware that their daughter is involved in bullying.

To stop your daughter from bullying others:

- Talk with your daughter, explain that what she is doing is unacceptable and makes other pupils unhappy.
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want.
- Show your daughter how she can join in with other pupils without bullying.
- Make an appointment to see your daughter's class teacher; explain the problems your daughter is experiencing; discuss how you and the College can stop her bullying others.
- Check regularly with your daughter how things are going at College.

Resources / strategies for support

Assemblies / Decider Skills

PSHE lessons.

School Nurse / CAMHS

Notices strategically placed around the school, telling children where to go for help if they are worried or have any concerns.

Kidscape / DCSF Guidance

Staff pastoral briefings / Incident Report forms