

*The School's policies which are made from time to time are made pursuant to the requirements set out in section 47 of the Education Act and of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards for registration of the school.*

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

Lycee Condorcet- The International French School of Sydney does not tolerate bullying behaviour. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. We believe that it is every child's right to experience safety and freedom from violence, abuse or any form of intimidation, both covert and overt.

Challenging bullying effectively will improve the safety and happiness of students, show that the school cares and make clear to bullies that the behaviour is unacceptable.

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to disclose that bullying has occurred and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Strategies to counter bullying form part of the school's implementation of the Student Welfare Policy.

## THE EXISTENCE OF BULLYING

The first crucial step in developing and applying a policy on bullying is to acknowledge that it exists in society to some degree. The aim is to minimise its occurrence and to modify behaviour so that every student feels safe. This document is based upon that premise.

It is important for the school community to accept the following in relation to bullying in schools:

- it is largely hidden and not easily observable
- the reduction of the problem relies on information getting to those who are most able to act. Silence on the part of victims, their parents, staff and other students only contribute to the problem
- a whole school approach is necessary for effective measures
- education and awareness are key elements in the process
- the policy needs to be well publicised so that everyone in the school community is familiar with it and can be involved in its implementation.
- there is need for on-going review of strategies
- no one strategy works; effective reduction of bullying comes from a multi- faceted approach

Although most students are not actively involved in bullying (either as the bully or the victim) and they know that it is wrong, they are unlikely to help the victim unless they are asked, or they are made to feel that they have a responsibility to act. There are many misconceptions about bullying. Many students believe that the victims of bullying bring such action upon themselves; that bullying 'toughens' a weak person; and that it teaches victims appropriate behaviour.

The victims of bullying often do not report incidents to adults because they do not want to be labelled by their peers as 'dobbers'. They think it will only increase their harassment further and they believe adults

cannot help or will side with the bully. Consequently, teachers (and other adults) are often not aware of bullying incidents, as it is frequently not reported to them.

## **RATIONALE**

A sense of security is fundamental to emotional well-being. In order to feel connected to others within the school environment and to schooling itself, young people need to feel safe, not just safe from physical harm or threats of physical harm, but also safe to have and express opinions, safe to be themselves, whatever their gender, ethnicity, family background and interests. They also need to feel that they are able to take part in school and class activities without being left out or isolated.

The school sees bullying as an extremely serious form of anti-social behaviour and operates a continuous anti-bullying campaign through teachers, support staff and English lessons.

## **AIMS OF THE POLICY**

Being committed to the care and welfare of all our students, the school expects the policy to:

- raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, students, parents/guardians
- counter views that bullying is an inevitable part of school life
- provide a safe, happy and positive learning environment for our students and staff
- create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying behaviour
- develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour
- develop procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour
- develop a program of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in it
- create a supportive climate and to break down the code of secrecy that protects the bully
- provide suitable counselling services for both the bully and the victim
- provide strategies for parents, teachers and students to respond to bullying incidents

## Definition: What is bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression conducted by an individual or group against others with the intention of hurting another person. It usually has three common features: it is **deliberate**, hurtful behaviour, it is **repeated**, often over a period of time and it is difficult for those being bullied to **defend** themselves. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, taking belongings, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, insulting, threats

Bullying is different from ordinary teasing. What makes it different is that the incidents are ongoing, and there is usually an imbalance of size, strength and power between the children involved. The bully might have power not only because he or she is bigger and stronger, but also because other children side with the bully often to protect themselves. Research shows that boys are more often bullied by a single individual, girls more often by groups.

## Signs and symptoms

Bullying may be very hard to see. Victims may already be having trouble getting on with other children or with teachers. Bullying usually happens out of sight, away from teachers or other adults. The people who are most likely to know what is going on are other children.

They feel it is wrong to 'dob in' other children. If they tell anyone, it is most likely they will tell their parents – usually their mother – or their friends before they will tell a teacher.

There are however signs which may indicate that a child is being bullied. For an extensive list, refer to Appendix A.

## Preventing Bullying

Prevention is better than cure so at we will be vigilant for signs of bullying and always take reports of incidents seriously. We will use the curriculum whenever possible to reinforce the ethos of the school and help students to develop strategies to combat bullying-type behaviour.

Pro-active strategies:

- making time and space for anxious parents
- knowing the previous track record
- establishing a clear monitoring framework to re-assure parent and child
- setting a deadline for improvement or further action
- empowerment, involvement and accountability of playground supervisors, classroom teachers and mentors.

Practical ideas:

- look at the classroom arrangement and seating positions
- look into ways of improving playground supervision
- investigate improving playground provision and zoning areas
- "Buddying up" vulnerable children
- anti-bullying lessons are taught in the Personal Development/ Health/Physical Education (PD/H/PE), and English/Drama Key Learning Areas.
- extensive peer support

Appendix 2 gives advice to parents on how they can help their child with bullying issues.

## Procedures

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

It is just as important to empower the victim to deal with their fear as it is to change the behaviour of the bully.

If there is a clear procedure for dealing with bullying behaviour students are more likely to tell teachers when they are bullied or see someone being bullied. Parents are reassured and students feel safe at school.

### Procedures to respond to reported or observed incidents of bullying, harassment or violence

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

1. All bullying is unacceptable. No one at Lycee Condorcet- The International French School of Sydney should ever be made to feel unhappy, undervalued or humiliated.
2. All members of the school have a responsibility to recognise bullying and to take action when they are aware of it happening. They should treat any report of bullying seriously and take action.
3. The children being bullied should be assured that they have acted correctly in reporting the bullying. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be investigated and dealt with. In that way students will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance.
4. Staff should first listen to the student or students, and make such enquiries as may be necessary to clarify exactly what has been happening.
5. The teacher will then refer the matter to **Vie Scolaire** who will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with the incidents.
6. In any incident of bullying, the **Proviseur Adjoint** will speak separately to the students involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way. Everyone involved should complete an Incident Report to write down their account of the incident. Copies of these reports should be filed by **Vie Scolaire**.
7. Once this has been done the aim of the intervention will be to stop the abuse. The most effective way of stopping the abuse is to ensure that the bully changes his or her behaviour. As a follow-up, the student who is bullying will be spoken to by the CPE to explain clearly why their action was wrong and to ensure a commitment from the student not to repeat the bullying.
9. **The child (children) doing the bullying** will be made to recognise that not only is their behaviour damaging the victim, but that the other people in the school do not like the behaviour. Bullies shall be required to write an apology to the victim. Be aware that comments such as "It was just a bit of fun", "But I

didn't mean it", "I was only joking", "We were only mucking around" and "They're only being boys", do not excuse a bully from their actions.

10. **The Victim** will be told that we are relieved that the behaviour is 'out in the open' and that it can now be dealt with. The child will be given advice on how to deal with any further incidents and which members of staff to refer the problems to.

11. Counselling will be made available to both bully and victim if this is felt appropriate.

12. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by students will be referred immediately to the CPE who may in turn refer it to the Principal depending on the severity of the bullying.

13. In serious cases parents will be informed and they will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.

14. Where cases of bullying involve assault or any form of physical violence with the potential for injury, the matter will be referred to the Principal who will arrange for a meeting with the student and his/her parents and the student will be suspended from school. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.

15. Repeated offences may also result in suspension or termination of enrolment. For continued, serious cases of bullying (when all attempts at reason and reconciliation are found to be ineffective) a student may be expelled from the School.

16. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

17. In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should be raised directly with the Principal.

The school has developed the following protocol to assist in a timely and comprehensive response to reports or observations of unacceptable behaviours. This protocol will be reviewed and updated as programs in conflict resolution and assertiveness are incorporated into the school curriculum.

## Responsibilities

It is the duty of everyone who sees an instance of bullying – or potential bullying – to act to stop it. This duty applies to all students, teachers and other members of staff.

Bullying is a concern for the entire school community: consequently all students, staff and parents have a role to play in eliminating it from our School.

Students should:

- take appropriate steps to discourage or prevent bullying
- advise staff of bullying
- discuss these experiences with their parents

Staff should:

- be alert to bullying behaviour and signs of distress in students
- respond to incidences of bullying according to the policy of the School
- model anti-bullying behaviour

Parents should:

- encourage their children to be open with them about bullying behaviour
- be alert to signs of distress in their children
- advise the school of any concerns regarding bullying
- model anti-bullying behaviour for their children

### Evaluation

Anti-bullying programs need to be evaluated according to their stated aims every year.

### HELP ORGANISATIONS:

School Liaison Police	Constables Rachael Delucyk (Mascot) and Karin Parr-Jaeger (at Maroubra Police Station)
Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	<b>(02) 9281 8133</b>
Children's Legal Services	<b>1800 10 18 10</b>
Parentline	<b>1300 1300 52</b>
Youth Access	<b>(02) 9936 8100</b>
Lifeline	<b>131114</b>

Implementation of the Anti-bullying policy will help develop a school culture of concern and support, both inside and outside the classroom to develop a culture where everyone is treated with respect and bullying behaviour is not tolerated and a culture where it is safe to report incidences of bullying without fear of reprisals.

Date of Policy: 30 August 2014

Policy to be reviewed by Deputy Principal

Proposed review date of policy: 30 August 2017

## Bullying: Incident Report

*To be completed after all incidents of bullying*

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Room: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief summary of incident: include where, when, who, and why as appropriate.

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Immediate action taken:

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Further action required: Yes/No

(If yes, provide explanation)

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Persons or staff notified and time & date:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Principal Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **APPENDIX 1 - Signs and Symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

## APPENDIX 2

### SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS - WHAT CAN YOU DO?

By the time children tell their parents they are being bullied, they may have tried everything they can to deal with it on their own. Telling parents is often a very hard step to take.

Children need to:

- feel believed and listened to
- develop trust in how parents will handle it
- talk more openly about what has happened
- gain some control over what is happening
- learn things they can do to protect themselves
- regain self-confidence

It helps if parents:

- involve the children in making decisions about what to do
- listen to what children say
- tell them they understand

It does not help if parents:

- get angry or upset
- feel guilty or ashamed
- make the children think it is not important
- blame the children
- blame the school
- accuse people without knowing the facts
- look for scapegoats
- demand to know all the details at once
- look for easy solutions

Many parents do get angry, quite understandably, and want to go to the school and sort it out NOW! This might not be the best first step.

For one thing, the child will almost certainly be reluctant to involve the school straight away because something they would rather keep quiet could be spread around. The child might also feel at risk of the bully taking revenge.

As a first step, it is usually best to:

- encourage the child to talk through it as far as he or she wants to, so you get the basic facts straight
- try to keep an open mind, remembering you are hearing one part of the story only
- ask questions gently
- help the child reflect on what has been done so far
- help the child work out what might be done.

It is important to find out:

- what happened
- who was involved
- where
- when
- did anybody else see it, and, if so, who

**Never try to sort out the bullies yourself. This rarely works and often makes matters worse.**

## HELPING YOUR CHILD COPE

- If the bullying is happening on the way to or from school, see if your child can go a different way or join up with other children. This might help while things are being sorted out. It might also be possible for your child to be paired with another more robust child for the time being too. The school could help with this.
- If your child finds it hard to make friends, encourage them to make a special effort. One good friend can make a big difference. Invite school friends home to strengthen the relationships begun at school.
- Talk to your child about some of the things that have happened, and discuss some ways of dealing with them, such as:

pretending not to hear hurtful comments

using silent 'self-talk' such as, 'That's their problem, not mine', or, 'I'm OK', to reinforce self-confidence;

developing greater self-assertiveness, so as to be able to face the bully without becoming scared, upset, abusive or violent

Believing that it is OK to tell someone when bullying happens – that it is not 'dobbing'.

It is important that children understand the difference between 'dobbing in' and reporting something that is serious. Bullying is serious. People get hurt, and some are harmed for a long time.