

Cyber -Bullying – Policy/Procedure

(Latest review: May 2021)

Language in Action embraces the advantages of modern technology in terms of the educational benefits it brings, however the company is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur.

Central to the company's anti-bullying policy is the belief that 'all students have a right not to be bullied' and that 'bullying is always unacceptable'. The company also recognises that it must 'take note of bullying perpetrated outside school which spills over into the school'.

Under powers granted by the EIA 2006, the Welfare Officer or Welfare Manager is able to police cyber-bullying, or any bullying aspects carried out by students on or off site.

Definition of Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites
- Using e-mail to message others
- Hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts
- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in chat rooms, to include Facebook, YouTube or any social media.

Legal Issues

Cyber-bullying is generally criminal in character. The law applies to cyberspace.

- It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

Policy

Language in Action educates its students both in the proper use of telecommunications and about the serious consequences of cyber-bullying and will, through meetings and lessons, continue to

inform and educate its students in these fast changing areas. Language in Action trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it. Language in Action endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems and no student is allowed to work on the internet in the Computer Room, where available, or any other location within the school which may from time to time be used for such work, without a member of staff present. Where appropriate and responsible, Language in Action audits ICT communications and regularly reviews the security arrangements in place. Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, Language in Action reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyber-bullying.

- All bullying is damaging but cyber-bullying and harassment can be invasive of privacy at all times. These acts may also be criminal acts.
- Language in Action supports victims and, when necessary, will work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts.
- Language in Action will use, as appropriate, the full range of sanctions to correct, punish or remove students who bully fellow students or harass staff in this way, both in or out of school.
- Language in Action will use its power of confiscation where necessary to prevent students from committing crimes or misusing equipment.
- All members of the School community are aware they have a duty to bring to the attention of the Welfare Officer any example of cyber-bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

Guidance for Staff

If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below:

Mobile Phones

- Ask the student to show you the mobile phone
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names
- Make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names
- Tell the student to save the message/image
- Go with the student and see the Welfare Officer, or in his/her absence, contact your line manager.

Computers

- Ask the student to get up on-screen the material in question
- Ask the student to save the material
- Print off the offending material straight away
- Make sure you have got all pages in the right order and that there are no omissions
- Accompany the student, taking the offending material, to see the Welfare Officer
- Normal procedures to interview students and to take statements will then be followed particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

Guidance for Students

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a teacher, group leader or the Welfare Officer.

- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your teacher, group leader or the Welfare Officer (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)
- Do not give out personal IT details
- Never reply to abusive e-mails
- Never reply to someone you do not know

- Stay in public areas in chat rooms

Guidance for Families, Accompanying Adults, and Agents

It is vital that all students are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. Language in Action informs agents and agency staff of the cyber-bullying policy and the procedures in place to deal with cyber-bullying.

- Parents, agency staff, group leaders and agencies can help by making sure the child in their care understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously Language in Action takes incidents of cyber-bullying.
- Parents can also explain to their sons or daughters' issues relating to cyberbullying
- If parents or any responsible adult believe that a child in their care is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be, by saving an offensive text on their or the child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything
- The responsible adult should contact the Welfare Officer as soon as possible. A meeting can then be arranged with the Welfare Officer, which may involve other relevant members of staff
- E-SAFETY AT HOME Several sites offer helpful advice to parents, particularly with respect to how they can best monitor their child's use of the computer at home.

Important and useful information can be found on the following site:

www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/safeguarding-learners/Safeguarding-learnerscontent/Parents-and-carers/

The Code of Conduct is explained and discussed with students at induction and during lessons.

National Bodies

Further support and guidance may be obtained from the following:
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/cyber-bullying
www.bullying.co.uk

The following information can be downloaded from the above website:

Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools (2007): • Cyber-bullying Guidance and Resources. Safe to Learn • Cyber-bullying Summary Leaflet

www.antibullying.net/cyber-bullying1.htm

for an Information Sheet for Teachers and other Professionals who work with Young People
www.becta.org.uk for information on safeguarding learners

Beatbullying Anti-Bullying Alliance Rochester House National Childrens Bureau 4 Belvedere
Road 8 Wakley Street London SE19 2AT EC1V 7QE

020 8771 3377 or **020 7843 1901**

www.beatbullying.org or www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk