LEITHS EDUCATION

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Lead for review:	Culinary School Director
Notable changes:	None

Rationale

Bullying can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing. The bullying of students or staff will not be tolerated and will be dealt with promptly.
At Leiths we believe that no one deserves to be a victim of bullying; everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Bullying can have a significant impact on an individual's emotional and psychological wellbeing and, in some circumstances, may constitute a safeguarding concern.
Leiths has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to concerns about bullying. Where bullying may indicate abuse, exploitation, harassment, discrimination or a risk of significant harm, the matter will also be considered under the **Leiths Adult Safeguarding Policy**.
By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, Leiths can help to create a safe environment where students and staff are able to learn and work safely and fulfil their potential.

Definition

Bullying can be defined as “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”.

Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; belittling; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

Bullying may also involve behaviour that is discriminatory or abusive and may, depending on the circumstances, constitute a safeguarding concern.
This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online (online/cyberbullying).

Safeguarding and Bullying

Bullying and safeguarding are closely connected. Not every incident of bullying will constitute a safeguarding concern; however, staff must remain alert to circumstances in which bullying may indicate abuse, exploitation, harassment, discriminatory abuse or a risk of significant harm.

Any concern involving a vulnerable adult must be considered in accordance with the **Leiths Adult Safeguarding Policy**.

Staff must report concerns about bullying to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)**. The DSL/DDSL will determine whether the matter should be managed under this policy alone, referred to another Leiths procedure, or escalated under the Adult Safeguarding Policy.

Where there is any uncertainty about whether a concern constitutes an adult safeguarding concern, the DSL/DDSL should seek appropriate advice rather than making assumptions about the threshold.

Where a concern indicates that a vulnerable adult is, or is likely to be, at significant risk of harm, the procedures in the Adult Safeguarding Policy must be followed, including consideration of referral to **Hammersmith & Fulham Adult Social Care** and/or the Police where appropriate.

Where the DSL is unavailable, staff should follow the arrangements set out in the Adult Safeguarding Policy. In the absence of the DSL or DDSL, staff may need to refer directly to adult safeguarding services or the Police where there is a significant concern.

Response to bullying

Leiths will respond to bullying in a proportionate manner, taking account of the circumstances, seriousness and impact of the behaviour.

The initial response may include discussion, mediation, restorative approaches, management intervention, additional support, disciplinary action or other appropriate measures.

However, mediation or direct contact between the individuals involved must **not** be used where this could place a student or vulnerable adult at further risk, compromise an investigation, or otherwise be inappropriate in light of the safeguarding circumstances.

Where bullying is sufficiently serious to constitute gross misconduct or serious misconduct, the appropriate disciplinary procedure may be followed, including exclusion or termination of a student's course where appropriate.

Where bullying involves a member of staff, the matter may be dealt with under the relevant disciplinary, grievance, whistleblowing or safeguarding procedures.

Reporting an incident

Students who believe they are experiencing bullying should be encouraged to report their concerns to their tutor, the DSL, a DDSL or another member of staff they trust.

Students should be reassured that bullying is not their fault and that concerns will be taken seriously.

Where a student is a vulnerable adult, staff should also consider whether the bullying may be affecting the student's ability to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

The student's wishes, views and desired outcomes should be taken into account wherever possible. However, information may need to be shared without consent where this is lawful and necessary to protect the student or others, including where there is a significant risk of harm or another lawful basis for information sharing applies.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may constitute bullying, harassment, discriminatory behaviour or, in more serious circumstances, a safeguarding concern.

Students and staff should preserve relevant evidence, including messages, emails, photographs, videos, screenshots and social media content.

Where online behaviour involves threats, coercion, exploitation, sexual abuse, sharing of intimate images without consent, stalking or other potentially criminal behaviour, the concern must be referred immediately to the DSL/DDSL for consideration under the Adult Safeguarding Policy and, where appropriate, referral to the Police.

The Leiths Online Safety Policy should be read alongside this section.

Safeguarding Records

All safeguarding concerns arising from bullying will be recorded and managed in accordance with the **Leiths Adult Safeguarding Policy**.

Safeguarding records must be:

- made contemporaneously;
- factual and objective;
- clear about the difference between fact and opinion;
- clear about whether information is first- or second-hand;
- inclusive of the voice and wishes of the student wherever appropriate; and
- stored securely in accordance with Leiths' GDPR and information-sharing requirements.

The Adult Safeguarding Policy states that safeguarding information is shared on a **need-to-know basis** and that confidentiality cannot be promised where doing so could compromise the safety or wellbeing of an adult.

A bullying incident which does not constitute a safeguarding concern may continue to be recorded through the appropriate internal procedure. Where the incident does constitute a safeguarding concern, the safeguarding record and procedures take precedence.

Low-Level Concerns

Where bullying or inappropriate behaviour involves an adult working in or on behalf of Leiths, consideration should also be given to whether the behaviour constitutes a **low-level concern** under the Leiths Low-Level Concerns Policy.

A low-level concern may be appropriate where behaviour causes a sense of unease or represents conduct inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct but does not meet the threshold for an allegation or safeguarding referral.

The DSL/DDSL must consider whether the concern should instead be treated as a higher-level safeguarding concern. A pattern of low-level concerns may also indicate a more serious concern and must therefore be monitored.

The Adult Safeguarding Policy expressly cross-references Leiths' Low-Level Concerns Policy and requires concerns about adults to be recorded and appropriately monitored.

Bullying Related to Protected Characteristics

Leiths does not tolerate bullying or harassment relating to protected characteristics or any other characteristic or personal circumstance.

This includes bullying relating to:

- race, ethnicity or nationality;
- religion, faith or belief;
- disability or additional needs;
- sexual orientation;
- gender;
- gender reassignment or transgender identity;
- age;
- pregnancy or maternity;
- physical or mental health;
- appearance; and
- any other characteristic or circumstance used to target or discriminate against an individual.

Where such behaviour may constitute harassment, abuse, exploitation or a safeguarding concern, the matter must also be considered under the Adult Safeguarding Policy and any other relevant Leiths policy.

Relationship with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **Adult Safeguarding Policy 2026.27**
- **Low-Level Concerns Policy**
- **Online Safety Policy**
- **Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy**
- **Whistleblowing Policy**
- **Staff Code of Conduct**
- **Disciplinary Policy**
- **Complaints Policy**

Where a concern falls within more than one policy, the DSL or relevant senior manager will determine the appropriate process. Safeguarding considerations will take priority where there is a potential risk of harm.