



Low Level Concerns

FEBRUARY 2023

DELYTH LYNCH

(DAL@WELLINGTONCOLLEGE.ORG.UK)

Aims

- Building trust and the policy
- Getting everyone “on the bus”
- Communication and awareness raising
- Case studies
- Obstacles and barriers



Our journey

- Values
 - Kindness, courage, integrity, respect and responsibility
- The “knock on the door moment”
- IMR
- Values, Behaviours and Attitudes interviewing
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Values Guardians – now “champions”
- Restructured training
- Student ‘culture champions’

Time.....



Year	What we did
2006	Introduced the 5 school values
2010	“Safeguarding crisis”
2012	IMR
2014	VBA interviewing Low level concerns discussions
2015	Low level concerns policy
2016	Values Guardians
2018	Changed staff training (LLC scenarios)
2021	“Reboot” of Values Guardians and Low level concerns Changed structure and content of staff training
2022	Values Champions Student ‘culture champions’
2023	Parents

Bystander Apathy



Foreword: Culture Champions is a new project aiming to enact cultural change at Wellington. The project was inspired by a conversation between Emilie and Zak, the Heads of College and Mrs Lynch about the issue of bystander apathy. A group of L6th students researched bystander apathy, analysed the results of October's Staying Safe Survey, created questions from key issues raised in this and led focus discussion groups in a series of House interviews. In Issue One they have written articles about safeguarding topics that are important to them or topics that emerged from their discussions with other students.

What is Bystander Apathy? by Ondina CDM

The basic theory of Bystander Apathy:

Bystander Apathy is a social psychological theory that states how people are less likely to offer help to someone else when they are part of a group. The bigger the group, the less likely an individual is to act.

If a single individual is alone, the sense of responsibility will be strong and there'll be a positive response. However, if part of a group, each individual will show a weak sense of action, as the responsibility is spread out. There are many forces which lead us to act. Empathy or sympathy, whether you're born with it or you learn it, cause us to share at least in part a victim's distress.

States of Emergency:

There are few positive rewards for individuals to act in an emergency. Therefore, in many cases it causes individuals to ignore a potential emergency and to distort their perception of it, or rather to underestimate their responsibility in the situation of emergency.

The five basic characteristics of emergencies are:

1. to be an unusual or rare event
2. to differ widely from one another

3. to involve a threat
4. to be unforeseen
5. to require immediate action

These factors place an individual under immediate stress when they are faced in a situation in which there is no benefit to be gained for themselves. The bystander is often denied the opportunity to consider carefully his course of action as situations of emergency tend to require immediate attention, consequently these factors play a major role in forming apathy in the bystander.

The reasons for failure in action:

The failure to intervene may result from failing to:

- notice an event
- realise the event is an emergency
- feel personally responsible for dealing with the emergency
- have sufficient skill to intervene.

Evidence suggests that the more bystanders who are present, the less likely any one bystander would be to intervene and provide aid. This may be due to assuming others will do something to help. Under circumstances of individuals being in a group the punishment or blame to a particular individual is often slight to nonexistent.



to get a better understanding of the problem. According to StopBullying.gov, when bystanders become upstanders by intervening, bullying stops within 10 seconds 87 percent of the time. Intervene immediately! Stop the bullying behaviour as soon as you see it or become aware of it. Intervening is essential and should be taken seriously as

a bystander to an incident who doesn't intervene has the same morals as the bully. Reassure anyone that you see bullied that they are not to blame and support them. Be a good influence on the bully and attempt to channel the bully's behaviour in a positive direction and use encouragement for improved behaviour.

So remember the College Values, be **NICE** and **Notice It**. **Comment on it** ("It's not ok") and **Educate**

- The College Values**
- Students showing consideration of others' evolving capacity for their health.
 - Courage: the ability to confront fear, pain, danger, uncertainty or hardship.
 - To take calculated risks in the pursuit of...
 - Resilience: a positive feeling of success for a person, group, entity or quality resulting in strong with barriers. This can include setbacks, which involve not compromising one's values but to gain approval from others.
 - Integrity: consistency or authenticity. Acting in concert with one's values or beliefs. It is the opposite of hypocrisy.
 - Responsibility: being reliable, dependable and accountable for one's conduct, fulfilling a duty. Acknowledging the need to serve the communities in which we operate.



Bystander Apathy in Religion by Lisa K

Religious bullying occurs when someone chooses to intentionally or unintentionally degrade another person emotionally, mentally or physically based on:

1. The bullied individual's actual or perceived religious or religiously affiliated identity
 2. The doctrines or practices of their belief
- (Definition by Alice Chan, a teacher and researcher who is a huge advocate for equality which is shown throughout her Twitter)

Effects bullying can have on their victims:

- lower self-esteem
- poor mental health
- Depression
- social anxiety
- sluggishness
- difficulty sleeping
- poor appetite
- increased chance of suffering self-injury or injury by others
- inattentiveness
- poor academic performance

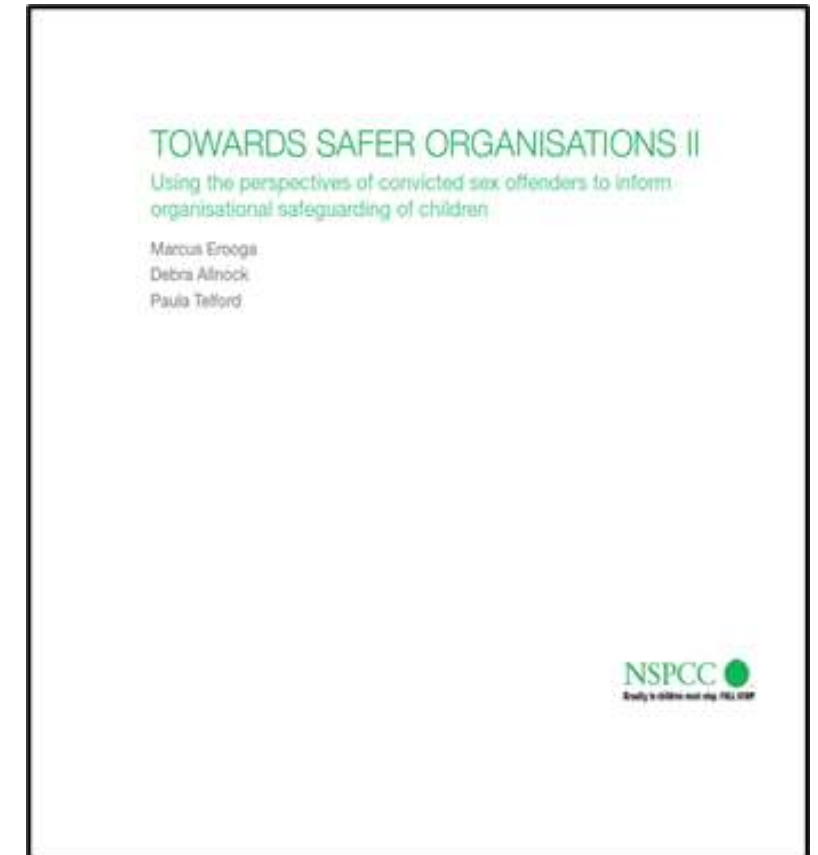
if you are a witness to bullying you are also responsible for the aftermath of what they cause to said victim. By being a bystander, you are just as guilty. The effects of bullying have proven to be extremely long lasting and detrimental to life after school. Religious bullying can be especially harmful as it can create a sense of low self-esteem as well as a loss of sense of identity. This is due to religion being a huge way in which some identify as if provides a moral compass and a familiarity to those who are a part of that religion. So by potentially hurting and threatening the way someone chooses to identify, especially over something that is mostly about love and kindness, this can have detrimental effects throughout the person's life. Is standing by whilst watching someone show discrimination and or prejudice worth the

What we know about professionals who offend

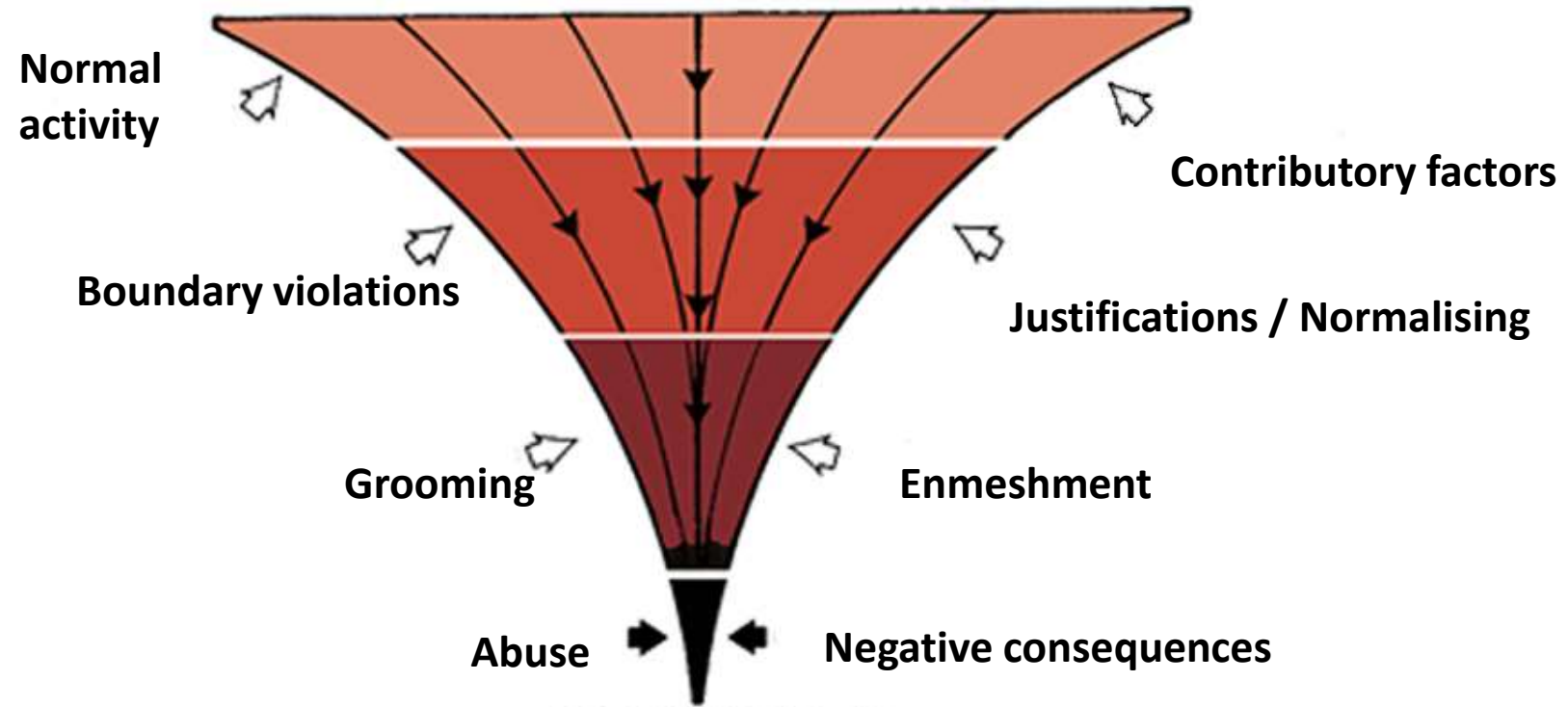
- No typology of an abuser – you can't spot them, they are “people like us”
- Some are preferential, some are situational and some are opportunistic
- Men and women abuse children
- They identify “vulnerable” children to target – disability, isolation, poor family relationships
- They groom children and those around them – families, colleagues, the community

Toward Safer Organisations: Learning about offenders

- Boundary keeping;
- Acting in children's best interests
'despite the organisation';
- Lack of awareness of impact of
behaviour on others;
- High standing or reputation
- Charismatic Leaders
- Isolated but dutiful, over helpful &
committed (Doran & Brannan, 1996)



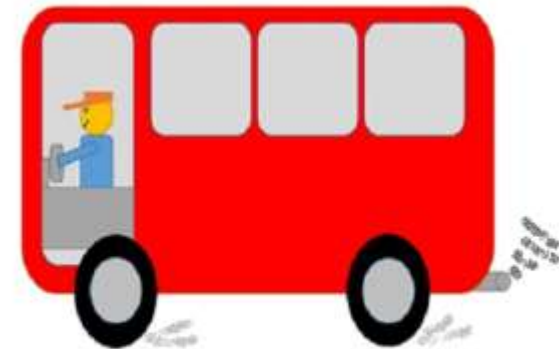
The 'slippery slope'



(Erooga, 2014)

Building Trust and understanding

- Explain the theory
- External expertise – Katie Rigg (Farrer & Co)
- Roundtable discussion question:
 - What are the unique vulnerabilities of our school?
 - Do we have the right culture to pick up on boundary violations? What evidence do we have?
 - What could we do to strengthen our safeguarding culture?
- Set up working parties (different groups across the school) to discuss results
- Brought together their ideas
- Wrote Low level concerns policy draft
 - Consultation
 - Final policy
- Staff from working parties presented (September 2015)
- One working party remained - to review and feedback



Understanding a LLC and a self-report

Examples:

- Serious Case reviews
 - William Vahey
 - Nigel Leat
 - Vanessa George
 - Jonathan Thompson-Glover
 - Bruce Roth
- Fellowship research
- Wrote our own - 'reality'
- Example self-reports
- Feedback on data

Are there any low level concerns in the paragraph that you read?

What are they?

Who should have reported them?

How should they have reported them?

Why would they not have been reported?

What would the barriers have been to reporting them?

tual

• (• ... for a school trip

• • Low level concerns police - to DSI

ar on a w ... lised

come ba ... went
coasteer ... ouse
d who sta ... d in
f stayed in ... e was a
were allo ... sted
g, after the ... ub. He
p and orga ...
who social ... al
dy away th ... lar with
o his holid

• Someone else will

• Fear of not being listened to

• Possible repercussions

• Fear of being wrong about 'gut instinct'

• It's not my place to say anything

“Jim” (Fellowship research)

Jim is your colleague – you have known him for 7 years and he teaches maths. He runs the after-school car engineering club and is utterly committed to his teaching and working at the school. He is popular amongst staff, students and parents because of his commitment. Until last year, he was happily married with 2 children. Tragically his wife and children were involved in a car accident and they were killed. You supported him through this awful event.

Jim only wanted to take 1 week off work. He wanted to be back to take his mind off what had happened. Sitting at home “did nothing for him.” He threw himself into his work. He began to run more after school clubs, focussed on helping students who were struggling with their maths.

One morning you walk into the staff room and people are talking in hushed tones. Elinor, a student in Year 11, has alleged that Jim tried to kiss her. The staff are up in arms about how Elinor could make such an accusation to someone who has been through so much already.

Are there any low level concerns in the paragraph that you read?

What are they?

Who should have reported them?

How should they have reported them?

Why would they not have been reported?

What would the barriers have been to reporting them?

Communication and awareness raising

- Interview
- Induction (Values and safeguarding)
- Safeguarding training (pre-start)
- Weekly emails
 - Scenarios
 - Sharing of information
 - Fun
- Value of the half term
- Values nominations
- Annual training
- Sharing of data



What do the values look like in practice?

It is easy to talk about "the values" but what does living out the College values mean in practice? Becoming consciously values based means that everyone commits to take responsibility for being more deliberate and more mindful in the actions that we undertake and the attitude we adopt when carrying out that action. If you are values-conscious you will be better equipped to reflect on your actions and help create a culture which nurtures and respects individuals and celebrates positive relationships.

It works both ways.....

You should expect your Line Manager / Head of Department to model the five core College values in their interactions with you and with others. You should also see your colleagues work in a way which reflects the values and in their relationship with you and with others. Here are some examples which staff have shared with us (names have been changed to protect identity).

Value	Example displayed from a Line Manager / Head of Department	Examples from Colleagues
Kindness	John has shown extraordinary kindness to me over the last month in helping me become more organised. I have always struggled with this, but John has taken time to structure my working days and given me some strategies to overcome my difficulties.	Jane sent me a lovely 'welcome to your new home' card when I moved into my new flat at Wellington. It really helped me feel part of a new community.
Courage	Philip has shown real courage in driving a new LGBTQ+ initiative across the College. This will enable staff and students to celebrate their sexuality and not to feel worried about who they are.	Susan had courage to speak out about some unprofessional behaviour shown by her line manager. This has now been dealt with and the department is a much happier place to work.
Integrity	I had to share something very personal and confidential with my line manager about something which was going on at home. They supported me and directed me to other places of help – they did not break my confidence and were also incredibly kind.	My PA has to keep an enormous amount of information confidential – I have the utmost confidence in her ability to do that. I think she has the word "integrity" written through her like a stick of rock!
Respect	My line manager has shown me huge respect to me in my new role. He has been very gracious and willing to listen to new ideas.	All of my colleagues have been really respectful about my religion. I need to find a quiet place to pray and they have been interested and curious.

- Share a link to an article about something a colleague finds interesting – it could be about a band, a film or a hobby they might enjoy.
- Listen - if a colleague is struggling with something, hear them out without trying to solve their problem.
- Bring in a small gift to a colleague on their birthday or a "work-iversary".

What does courage look like in the workplace?

- Asking a question if you are not sure about something.
- Being honest about something which has made you feel uncomfortable – addressing it with a line manager or directly with a colleague.
- Changing the way in which you work in order to incorporate a new initiative or idea which you may not be familiar with or is a step outside of your comfort zone.
- Suggesting a better way of doing something.
- Taking time to process a request and saying 'no' if you are someone who always says 'yes' and saying 'yes' if you always say 'no'.
- Standing up for something you believe in.
- Doing something that you know you will find hard and being prepared to ask for help.

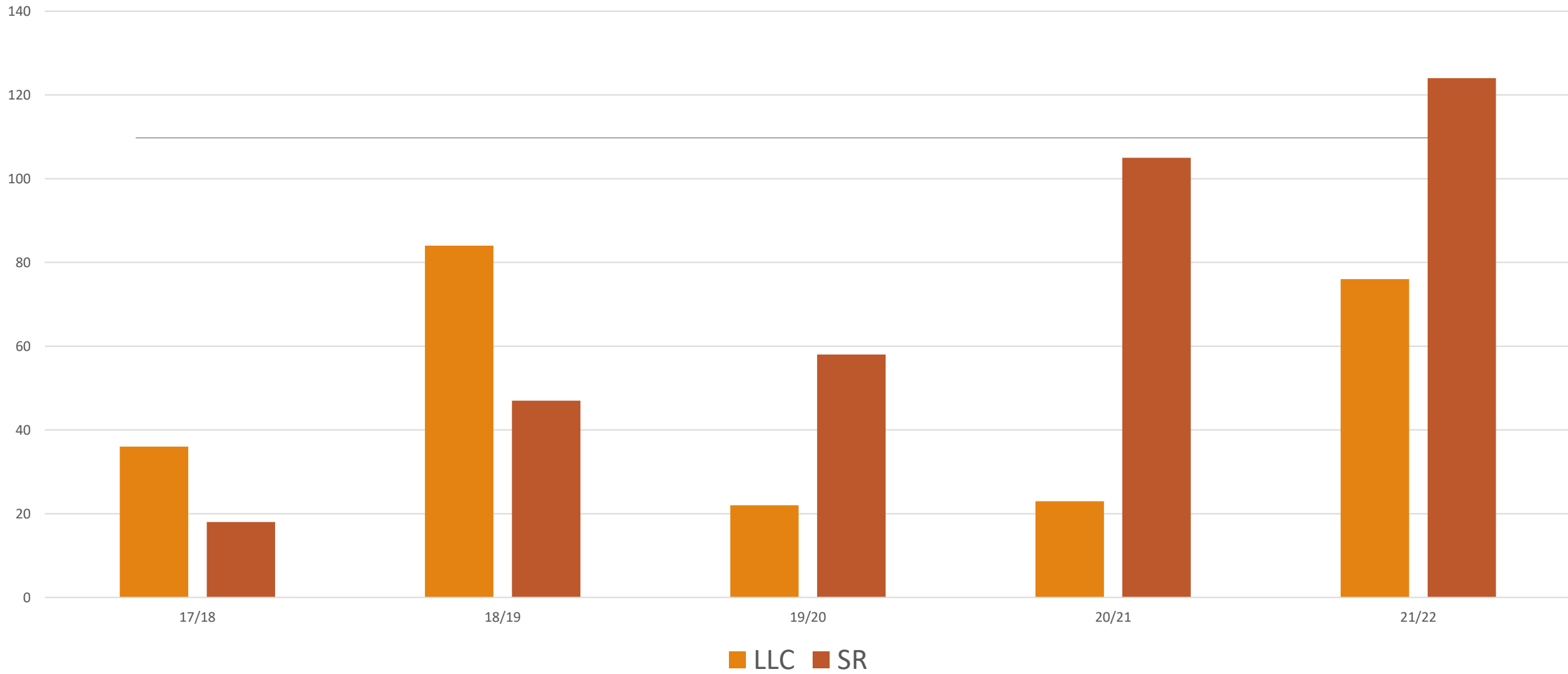
What does integrity look like in the workplace? ("doing the right thing when no one is watching")

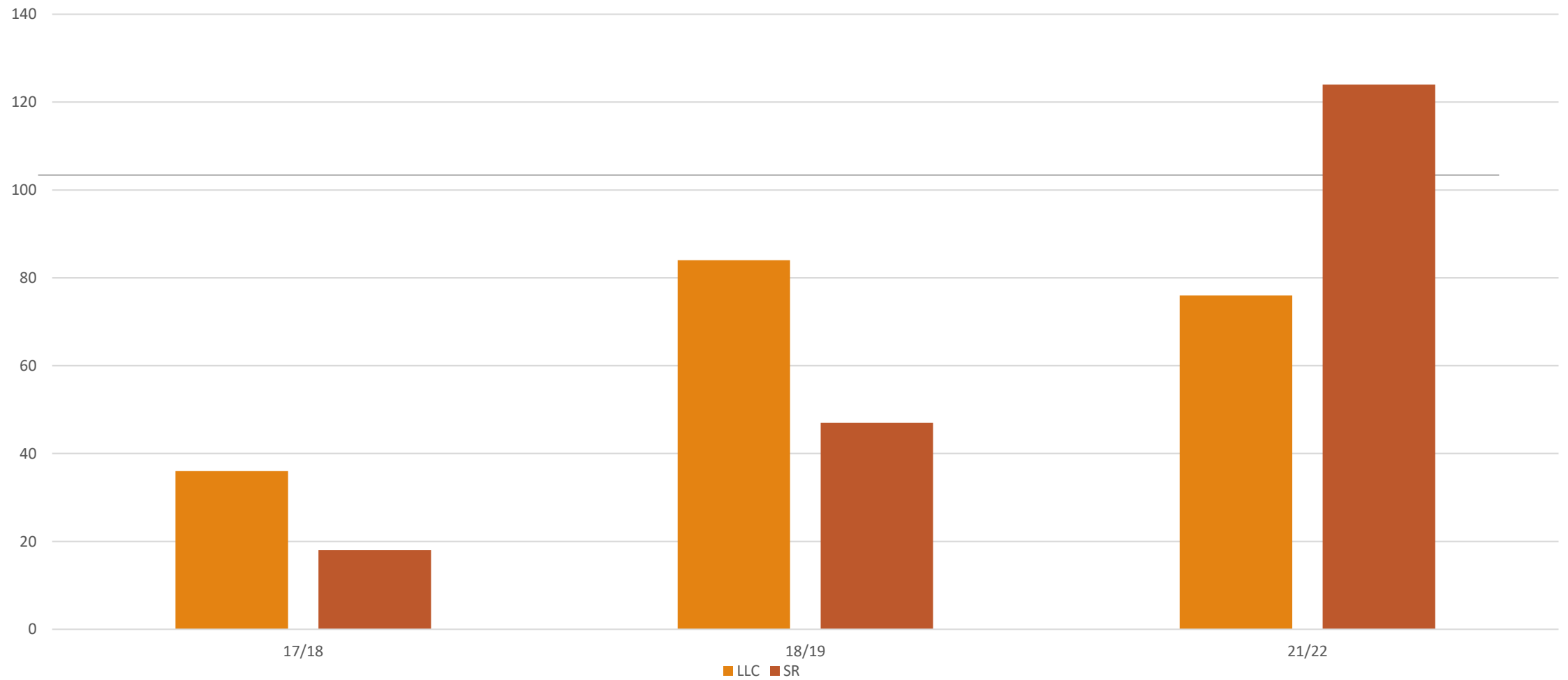
- Always being on time for work.
- Admitting any mistakes that you might have made.
- Meeting any deadlines that have been set.
- Being honest – about how you feel or when asked to do something which you may not agree with.
- Following College policies and the staff code of conduct.
- Leading by example, even when it might be hard to do so; this will encourage others to show integrity too.
- Respecting the opinions of your colleagues even if you don't agree with them. Listen and be curious about their ideas or standpoint.

What does responsibility look like in the workplace?

- Not blaming others when something has not gone quite to plan – taking time to look at the bigger picture
- When you feel you have more capacity, asking your HOD or line manager for some extra work/project
- Undertake some professional learning in order to further your understanding in a certain area
- Looking out for others who need help and offering to lend them a hand; speaking to someone else about your concerns for a colleague

Sharing data:





Removing “the Covid years”

What sort of LLCs and Self Reports?



SELF-REPORTS

Seeing students changing / not wearing any clothes

Purchasing something for a student (eg birthday cake, or a study guide)

Personal tuition in the holidays

Driving a student in their car – A+E, debating competition, home from a sports fixture

LOW LEVEL CONCERNS

Two staff members speaking inappropriately about a pupil – overheard by a colleague

Teacher shouting at students in a lesson

Wellbeing concerns over staff members

Driver of school minibus speeding and then going through a red traffic light

Case studies:

A concern expressed by “Alex” about a colleague “Mark” having conversations with female members of his tutor group which were “too friendly” (and some examples given). I spoke to Mark.

- Coaching
- Ongoing help and advice
- SEND diagnosis – professional help

Three separate student concerns about Barry – Head of Psychology:

1. Asking inappropriate questions
2. Overly familiar manner
3. Sharing other student’s marks

Two concerns from staff:

1. Cut and pasting of reports
2. “Silo working” – “doing his own thing”

Discussion with Head

Discussion with LADO

Risk assessment and PIP

Obstacles and barriers:

- Cynics
- “Delyth’s snitches”
- Entrenched normalisation
- One-sided story telling
- The “rub” with HR

What can others learn from our experience?

- Plan
- Accept it will take TIME
- Foundations – right people, right structure
- Training
- A fresh look at everything – holistic approach
- Lots of examples – “what does it look like in practice”
- All staff
- Reflect, revisit, evaluate
- Parents
- Gratitude

