

Bullying & Harassment Policy

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Aim:

The purpose of this policy is to explain the College's approach to dealing with any cases of bullying and harassment experienced by students and staff, and to outline procedures for resolving situations promptly and effectively. The College is not directly responsible for bullying or harassment that takes place outside the College premises but will take appropriate action if activities out of College have an impact on student and staff safety and wellbeing at College.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The College is committed to providing a safe, friendly, supportive environment so that students and staff can learn and work in an adult and secure atmosphere and get the most out of their College experience, supporting the principles of respect and equal opportunities, opposing all forms of unlawful discrimination.
- 1.2 All employees and students at the College have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. All employees and students at the College are required to behave in a way that does not cause offence to others, in accordance with the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 1.3 This policy applies not only to interaction whilst in the College, but extends to time spent travelling whilst on business, on training courses, conferences and work-related social events with colleagues and on college trips. It also applies to contact individuals have through social networking sites.
- 1.4 All employees and students must ensure that the College's Bullying and Harassment Policy is adhered to at all times. Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee or student who acts in breach of this Policy.
- 1.5 Employees, students, clients, individuals working within the College or other people in connection with the College's activities are assured that they will not be victimised for bringing a complaint. It is recognised that harassment and bullying can occur at any level within the organisation.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 "Bullying" is not defined in UK employment law. ACAS defines workplace bullying as "offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the person being bullied". The Health and Safety Executive stresses that bullying is a pattern of behaviour rather than isolated instances, and states that it "involves negative behaviour being targeted at an individual, or individuals, repeatedly and persistently over time".
- 2.2 In a workplace context, "harassment" is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Harassment in the workplace can also occur where a person reasonably considers conduct to have that effect, even if the effect is unintended.
- 2.3 The following types of behaviour may amount to harassment or bullying. The list below gives examples only and is not exhaustive:
 - Suggestive or offensive language, comments, gossip or jokes;
 - Unwanted physical contact, whether or not of a sexual nature (the College has zero tolerance towards any form of sexual harassment);
 - Suggestive or offensive gestures;
 - Isolation or ostracism;

- Insults, ridicule or teasing, including what may be referred to as “banter”;
 - Humiliating, demeaning, threatening or persistently criticising an individual directly or indirectly;
 - Unfair allocation of work or responsibilities;
 - Spreading malicious rumours;
 - Electronic harassment, e.g., text messaging, sexting, e-mails, chat rooms, chat lines, social media such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and Twitter etc.
 - Making unfounded threats or comments about job security.
- 2.4 In determining whether harassment or bullying has occurred, an investigation shall take due account of whether the alleged actions or behaviour are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable.
- 2.5 Legitimate, constructive, and fair criticism of a student’s or an employee’s performance or behaviour at college is not bullying/harassment. An occasional raised voice or argument is not bullying/harassment.
- 2.6 A student who reports bullying outside the College premises must be supported and action taken, as far as is possible, to safeguard the student from the bullying. For instance, if other College students are involved, this must be investigated and appropriate action taken, even though the bullying did not take place during College time or on our premises. If the bullies are not members of the College, the student should receive advice and support from the guidance support tutor and other agencies as appropriate. In some cases, it is appropriate to involve the police.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of all employees and students to comply with this policy and to treat all others with respect and dignity.
- 3.2 Anyone found to have committed bullying or harassment will be dealt with under the College’s disciplinary procedures and in some cases this may result in summary dismissal or exclusion as appropriate.

4. Procedures

- 4.1 We will try to act in accordance with the wishes of the alleged victim unless we strongly believe that there are overwhelming reasons for us to do otherwise.
- 4.2 **Staff Procedures**
If you believe you are or another member of staff is being harassed or bullied, it is important that it is not tolerated. If possible try to resolve the matter informally yourself. If you believe that it cannot be resolved satisfactorily between the parties involved, refer the situation to your line manager or a more senior colleague if your concern is about a line manager. They will usually try to resolve the situation informally but if it is sufficiently serious, they or a member of the College Management Team and HR will decide to employ the Grievance or Disciplinary procedures.

4.3 Student Procedures

If you believe you are or another student is being harassed or bullied, it is important that it is not tolerated. If possible try to resolve the matter informally yourself. If you believe that it cannot be resolved satisfactorily between the parties involved, refer the situation to a Guidance Support Tutor or other member of staff. They will usually try to resolve the situation informally but if it is sufficiently serious, you may decide to make a complaint or they may decide to employ the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

5. Flow Chart

What to do if you believe you are being harassed or bullied

