

# **HIGHER EDUCATION ANTI-BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION POLICY**

**Version 2020**

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**Related Documents:** Access & Higher Education Student Terms and Conditions, Access & HE Student Tuition Fees & Refund Policy, Access & Higher Education Student Information & Consumer Protection Policy, Complaints Procedure for HE Students, HE Student Disciplinary Procedure

## **Policy Statement**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our staff and students so that teaching and learning can take place in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe in creating a society in which we all treat each other with dignity and respect.

Bullying, harassment or victimisation of any kind is unacceptable at our College, and we have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying, harassment or victimisation. If bullying, harassment or victimisation does occur, all staff and students should report it and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. No-one should have to 'suffer in silence'.

We recognise the negative impact that bullying, harassment or victimisation has on the educational experiences and wider development of the victims of bullying, harassment or victimisation. No member of the College deserves to suffer the pain and indignity that bullying, harassment or victimisation can cause.

**Bullying** is treating someone differently because of who they are, not because of anything they have done. It is the persecution of an individual by another person or group of people. Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else. Bullying involves dominance of one person by another, or group of others. The following are common examples of bullying, but not a complete list.

- Intimidation/threatening behavior
- Any form of physical abuse e.g. punching, kicking
- Verbal abuse – shouting at, insulting, "Putting down"
- Psychological abuse – isolating an individual, preventing them from becoming a part of a group or involved in certain activities
- Anonymous letters or spreading rumours that they are designed to upset
- Demanding money
- Demanding coursework to copy against a person's will
- Stealing, hiding or damaging belongings e.g. books, clothing bags
- Teasing people about their physical appearance
- Intimidating or threatening emails or text messages

**Harassment** is commonly understood as behaviour intended to disturb or upset and is perceived to violate the victim's dignity. It is behaviour, which is found to be threatening or disturbing, humiliating, or offensive. Examples can fall within any of the categories listed as for bullying above.

**Victimisation** is the act of targeting mistreatment towards an individual or individuals who may have submitted a complaint on the grounds of discrimination or harassment. This includes those individuals who are vulnerable and open to abuse because of their diminished ability to challenge such behaviour. Therefore, this includes victimisation of anyone that has supported someone else in making a complaint.

**Bullying, harassment or victimisation can be:**

- **Emotional** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- **Physical** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual** unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic** treating someone differently because they are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender
- **Verbal** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber** misuse of the internet, such as email and social networking sites; mobile threats by text messaging and calls misuse of associated technology, e.g. camera and video facilities

**Bullying, harassment or victimisation can also be related to:**

- Religion or religious conformity
- Culture
- Age
- Appearance or health conditions
- Special educational needs or disabilities
- Students who are new to the country e.g. asylum seekers, refugees
- Students who are in care
- Students who are designated family carers
- Socio and economic e.g. having less financial status

(These are examples – they are not exhaustive).

There is no 'hierarchy' of bullying, harassment or victimisation; all forms will be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

**Objectives of this Policy**

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students should have an understanding of what bullying, harassment or victimisation is, and be aware of what the College anti-bullying, harassment or victimisation policy and procedures are.
- All staff, students, parents and carers should know what to do if bullying, harassment or victimisation arises.
- As a college we take bullying, harassment and victimisation seriously. Staff, students, parents and carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying, harassment or victimisation is reported.

## **Possible signs and symptoms of being bullied, harassment or victimisation**

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying, harassment or victimisation will be considered a possibility and will be investigated when the student:

- is frightened of travelling to or from college
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to come to the College
- begins to avoid certain lessons
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- attempts or threatens suicide
- begins to do poorly in academic work
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other students
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- no longer wants to talk about 'the college day'
- avoids certain areas of the College
- feels they are prevented from participating in some College activities

## **Prevention of abuse**

Developing positive cultures and good practice with students:

- Wherever possible, abuse must be prevented. Creating "safe care" or support for students involves a holistic approach, which is centred upon the needs of the cared-for/supported person. It may be that the abused person is not immediately aware that they are being abused or bullied and others may need to speak for them
- Students and staff should be alert and feel confident about reporting suspected abuse
- All staff and students will be made aware of our policy and procedures
- In tutorials, awareness raising activities will take place and opportunities to discuss key issues will be provided. This will also be covered in staff training and inductions for new staff
- Anti-Bullying Week takes place every November and provides an opportunity to focus on key issues
- An anti-bullying, harassment and victimisation ethos will be embedded in the curriculum
- Staff and students will be involved in developing the *Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation Policy*, which will be reviewed regularly.

## **Procedures for students to report bullying or harassment**

The procedure given below will not necessarily be followed in this order, as it is recognised that some incidents are so serious that they will lead to an immediate formal report of the incident. However, the following points provide guidance on the procedure you may follow if you feel you are being harassed or bullied; In the first instance ask the person to stop (do not retaliate). If you do not feel you can do this, ask a member of staff to do it. This will make it clear to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable.

- Keep a log. Make a note of the times, places and nature of unwelcome behaviours you are experiencing. Keep any evidence such as text messages or e-mails.
- Tell somebody about the incident(s) and speak to a teacher or your tutor. The incident(s) should be reported to a member of staff to ensure it is dealt with. If you feel you cannot tell a member of staff, in the first instance, you should tell a friend or a member of your family who can talk to a member of staff on your behalf.
- To ensure the incident is fully investigated. You will need to make a written statement: Students can be offered support from Student Services throughout this process.

## **Cases of bullying, harassment or victimisation or suspected instances**

Students who feel that they are being bullied, harassed or victimised should report it to a member of staff.

Students who witness or hear about an incident of bullying, harassment or victimisation should also report it to a member of staff.

The VP (Behaviour and Students) should be informed as soon as possible and s/he will then appoint a Case officer to carry out an investigation.

If bullying, harassment or victimisation has taken place then the Director or Pastoral Leader responsible for the perpetrator(s) will follow the College's *HE Student Disciplinary Policy*. Sanctions will reflect the seriousness of each particular case. They will be applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably and will take account of any special educational needs or disabilities.

Details of the incident will be recorded by the VP(s) and stored by the VP.

## **Outcomes**

Some forms of harassment are illegal – The Equality Act came into operation on 01 October 2010 and was followed by additional legislation specifically related to public sector organisations in April 2011. The Equality Act provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity

for all. The Equality Act provides a unified discrimination law, which protects individuals from unfair treatment.

Following an investigation into the bullying or harassment of a learner, the person initiating the bullying or harassment may have disciplinary action against them. Student and staff disciplinary procedures are available on the College website.

If a student is unhappy with the College response they can appeal. The request for an appeal must be submitted within ten working days of the College response, setting out clearly the basis of dissatisfaction with the findings of the formal investigation. This request should be addressed to the Principal.

After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, the VP will monitor each case with the relevant Director to ensure that repeated bullying does not take place.

### **Likely Actions by the College**

Attempts will be made to change the behaviour of the bully and support will be arranged for the victim. If at all possible and with no prejudice to the victim the College will seek to reconcile the students involved.

In serious cases suspension or even exclusion from College may be necessary. The matter may also be referred to external agencies such as the police. See *HE Student Disciplinary Policy* for more information.

This policy links to the *College Student Behaviour Policy* and the *college Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy*.

Staff and students will be involved in developing the *Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation Policy*, which will be reviewed regularly.

Appendix 1

Bullying Incident Report Form			
Person reporting incident:			
Nature of incident:			
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Cyber	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Location/Context:			
Details:			
Date incident occurred:			
Date incident discovered/reported:			
Students involved in bullying:			
Student victim of bullying			

Other Staff involved

Actions taken to support the victim: (for example, referral to Pastoral Manager, mediation, counselling, contact parents, separated from other students)

Actions taken to support the perpetrators: (for example, referral to Pastoral Manager, mediation, counselling, contact parents, working in isolation, exclusion, stage report)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_