



Anti-Bullying Policy

The College is committed to providing a learning environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all students are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect.

This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs at college and out of the college, such as on trips or at educational events or social functions.

What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.

It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include, for example:

- unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content;
- mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's voice, mannerisms or disability.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

What is bullying?

Bullying is defined as sustained, deliberate acts carried out by an individual or group over time, which are intended to physically or mentally hurt another person. It involves the use of power to create fear. It leaves the victim feeling powerless, afraid and isolated. It is usually, though not always, carried out on more than one occasion. The Police definition of bullying is 'acts that hurt, threaten or frightens, regularly.

This policy refers to bullying amongst pupils; if a member of staff is involved, the Principal should be informed, and the complaints procedure will be invoked. There are several types of bullying:

Physical – can include deliberate punching, kicking, shoving, pushing, scratching, biting, manhandling or restraining. It may also involve theft or damage to property, accompanied by the threat of violence. Theft/damage is bullying if the intention is to create fear and use power improperly.

Verbal – can include name-calling, threats, taunts, teasing, sarcasm, spreading rumours, and making derogatory remarks. It may also involve written messages, emails or mobile phone messages.

Emotional/Manipulative – can include being unfriendly or excluding another person from a peer or social group. It may also involve using social media to denigrate someone or spread malicious rumours.

Within these types, there are different categories of bullying. In the following cases, the bully deliberately chooses something about their victim which they see as 'different'.

- Racist bullying – based on a person's ethnicity, religion, culture or nationality
- Sexual bullying – based on a person's alleged sexual attractiveness or lack of it, or physical characteristics
- Gender-based bullying – based on a person's gender; e.g. making misogynistic (anti-female) comments or discriminating against someone on the grounds of their gender
- Homophobic bullying – based on a person's sexuality.
- Bullying because of disability/health conditions – based on a person's mental or physical disability.
- Bullying because of Special Educational Needs – based on a person's additional learning needs.
- Cyberbullying – the use of ICT to carry out bullying. This can include the use of a mobile phone, text, e-mail or social media sites to bully another person. (The most frequent cause of friction is due to the inappropriate use and comments made on social media. Parents are asked not to encourage their children to make use of these platforms and to adhere to the minimum age requirements).

If you are being harassed or bullied

If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to your teacher or pastoral care officer or the Principal, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. You can raise this concern online on our anonymous suggestions box, to bring it to our attention.

If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally in an email to the Principal.

We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint, where possible. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person accused during the investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, we will inform you of our decision. If we consider you have been harassed or bullied by an employee the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. If the harasser or bully is another student or a third party such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person concerned.

Procedure after an accusation of bullying

- The victim should be seen by their Teacher or the Pastoral support officer as soon as possible. The Principal should be alerted about the complaint. A written record of the incidents should be kept noting the date, time and frequency of incidents. Parents may be informed if necessary.
- The bully should be interviewed about the incidents and a record kept of their responses. The bully should be put on report and all his/her teachers informed.
- A meeting should be held with the victim and the bully to discuss the incidents and seek a resolution to the problem. If bullying is found to have occurred, the bully will be required to make a face-to-face apology to the victim. The bully will be given one or more lunchtime detentions (depending on the severity of the incident). A warning about the consequences of any further bullying will be given. A record of this meeting will be kept.
- Following the meeting, the victim will be seen separately to discuss/agree on coping strategies to avoid any future situations. The teacher will monitor the situation daily.
- A copy of the interview records will be placed on each pupil's personal file for future reference. The Principal should be informed of the outcome. Staff should be informed of any action at a staff briefing. • Parents should be informed of the sanctions placed on the bully.

Protection and support for those involved

Students who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

If the bullying continues

- The victim is to be seen immediately by the Principal. A record of the incidents is to be made.
- The bully is re-interviewed and a record of their responses is taken. Reference to previous incidents and the sanction used is made. The bully may be given an internal exclusion of up to five days. A final warning will be issued re. Suspension if bullying recurs.
- If the bullying is found to have re-occurred, the victim is to receive a written apology and be informed of the sanctions/warning.
- The victim is seen daily by their form teacher to offer support. Staff will be alerted of the recurrence.
- Parents will be invited to meet the Principal to discuss the incidents and strategies for correcting behaviour. Outside agencies may be consulted for advice. Parents to be warned of the consequences of any further incident.

Record-keeping

Information about a complaint by or about a student may be placed on the student's personal file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process

If there is a further occurrence

- The Principal will interview the victim and record incidents.
- The Principal will interview the bully and record responses.
- The bully will be required to apologise to the victim in the Principal's presence if the bullying is found to have occurred.
- The Principal will see parents to inform them of the continuing problem. The pupil will be suspended for up to five days.
- When the bully returns, suspension will be immediate if any further incident occurs.

Where serious violence has occurred, suspension will be used as a first option, following an apology to the victim. If there is any further incident, the pupil will be permanently excluded.

In extreme cases, the Principal may permanently exclude the bully at first intervention.