



Anti-bullying Policy

Introduction

Bullying can be a barrier to learning and progression and can have serious consequences for mental health. The College is required to respond to all incidents. For example, as part of the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Duties requires Colleges to ‘eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation’. In addition, where bullying results in significant harm, the situation should be addressed as a Child Protection concern. (Children’s Act 1989). Some forms of bullying e.g. cyber bullying, are a criminal offence, e.g. Malicious Communications Act 1988. Considerations for safeguarding support relating to bullying are also included in KCSiE 2022 under the “Child on Child Abuse” section which states that “All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children at any age (often referred to as child-on-child abuse) ... that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online.”



instruments and articles associated with the Governing Body.

If the complaint of bullying or harassment is received from staff against students, the informal stages of the procedures associated with this policy may apply. However, if a formal complaint about bullying or harassment by students is received from staff, this will be dealt with using the Student Disciplinary policy and procedures, as appropriate. The first step is to contact their Line Manager and to institute proceeding under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

Procedures

In order to create an inclusive environment where difference is embraced and exploration of issues occur without fear of bullying and discrimination, this policy should be clearly understood by staff, students and parents. It is therefore required that the following is in place in each Department:

- Relevant staff should explore with students, issues that might provoke conflict within the curriculum or within a tutorial programme (e.g. prejudice, difference, use of language/IT and impact of bullying behaviour)
- Staff should adhere to their Code of Conduct and assist students in adhering to the Student Charter by role modelling appropriate behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour
- Parents of students between 16 and 18 years old, are involved at the earliest opportunity should any action be taken which may lead to disciplinary action
- Ownership of the policy by students is facilitated through the Student Union and the class representative system. This includes developing student friendly versions of this policy using accessible language, ensuring that barriers perceived by vulnerable students are addressed.
- Rigorous, structured and reporting of disciplinary action provides evidence that bullying is taking place and is responded to appropriately
- Effective staff training is provided to ensure that incidents are dealt with confidently, sensitively and in a timely fashion.
- Relationships are established with internal departments and external agencies to agree and understand approaches to serious incidents e.g. Police, local authorities, CAMHS teams
- Support is provided for both staff and students dealing with bullying
- IT departments ensure that all measures are taken to support the rules associated with the use of IT including taking into account developments in technology
- Low level disruption and inappropriate use of language is dealt with early intervention, even if it doesn't have a significant impact on its target. This prevents harmful behaviours escalating
- Bullying off-site and online is unacceptable and after investigation, will be dealt through the disciplinary procedures and other interventions as appropriate
- Any investigation should be as independent as possible and conducted as outlined in the College Disciplinary Policy.

Whenever an incident is reported the following needs to be considered:

1. For the victim:

- a) The Safeguarding Team should be informed of all incidents of safeguarding even if it dealt with through the Disciplinary Policy
- b) Staff must establish the immediate physical safety of the student involved
- c) Staff must be relied on to:
 - Challenge the behaviour (confidentially)
 - Identify changes required
 - Explain to perpetrators the consequences of not complying
 - Ensure referral to ongoing support, particularly for vulnerable students:
Informal, e.g. Student Union, Chaplaincy



Formal, e.g. The Safeguarding Team

External Agencies e.g. specialist organisations, Police (via the Safeguarding Team)

2. With the perpetrator:

- a) Curriculum Staff, Tutors or the Safeguarding Team will offer support
- b) The need for Disciplinary Action (if the complaint is/becomes formal)
- c) Offer of restorative justice or mediation in negotiation with the victim
- d) Removal from the College - see Disciplinary Policy
- e) Referral to external agencies as appropriate (via the Safeguarding Team).

Making a complaint about bullying

If an individual feels they have been bullied or harassed, every effort should be made to take prompt informal action in the first instance. At this stage when action is taken (e.g. asking for a meeting) it must be made clear that the individual is taking an informal approach to the matter.

At no stage does an individual need to act alone. In both formal and informal approaches, support can be sought from a friend or colleague, the Safeguarding Team, a representative (e.g. Students Union representative), Study Coach, Chaplain or other member of staff. A first step for a victim might be to contact the perpetrator by meeting, mobile or by letter assisted by any of these members of staff or friend or colleague.

If the situation is not resolved, formal action can be taken. If this happens it is important to keep a record of any incidents including dates, times, location, names of individuals involved, (including witnesses),



complaints department in the first instance. As mentioned above, individuals can seek support in writing a complaint. Receipt of a written complaint is acknowledged within two working days and passed to the relevant College Manager who will investigate. The first stage of the investigation should be negotiation with the victim on the required outcome of the investigation. At the outset, confidentiality should be agreed with all parties, as GDPR guidelines suggest the college may not be able to share with the victim details of actions taken by the Investigating Officer/Manager.

Once the investigation is concluded, the College Manager will ensure appropriate disciplinary action is taken if necessary and confirm that the matter is closed to the Complaints Department, who will correspond with the Victim and their supporters as required. Outcomes can be appealed as per the complaints policy e.g. if the situation continues to cause concern, by contacting the Complaints Department. Please see the college Complaints Policy and Procedures for details including sanctions and timeframes.

Definitions

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment is defined as a situation in which, on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, health status, disability, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs, a person engages in unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the other person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that other. The reasonable perception of the other person of behaviour constituting harassment shall be taken into account. Harassment can be 'one off' incidents or continuous behaviour.

Examples could include:

- Verbal behaviour -jokes, suggestive or racist comments, unwanted demands for sex, name-calling or malicious gossip
- Non-verbal behaviour - non-co-operation, suggestive or aggressive looks, gestures or invasion of personal space
- Regular use either consciously or unconsciously, of offensive or discriminatory language, spreading rumours, exclusion from social groups and physical assault because of actual or perceived protected characteristics
- Visual behaviour - display or transmission of pictures, graffiti or literature
- Physical contact - unwanted touching or assault
- Sexual Misconduct
- Offensive postings (name calling, racism, name-calling, malicious gossip, unwanted demands for sex) online e.g. social network sites such as Facebook, email, or discussion boards
- Inappropriate mobile phone texting (name calling, racism, name-calling, malicious gossip, unwanted demands for sex).



- Using text threats or humiliation.

Signs of bullying include;

- Unexplained injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics or jewellery
- Frequent illnesses or suspected faked illnesses leading to increased rates of absenteeism
- Changes in eating habits and overtime loss of weight
- Reports of difficulty sleeping and frequent nightmares
- Loss of interest in College work and reduction in performance
- Sudden loss of friends and perceived social isolation
- Self-harming
- Decreased self-esteem, feelings of helplessness and in extreme cases expressing suicidal thoughts.

Management and Evaluation

The College will collect data and information regarding incidents of Bullying and will report on these on a regular basis to the Senior Leadership Team and on an annual basis to the governing body. Part of this evaluation will be investigating the impact of this policy on the expectations of students who have complained.

Linked Policies

College Charter
Staff Code of Conduct
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Safeguarding Policy
Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
Compliments, Suggestions and Complaints Policy
Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy (staff)
Use of IT Policy

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Head of Safeguarding.

Incidents associated with this policy will be reported to the College SLT via the College Disciplinary Policy or through the Safeguarding Policy as appropriate.

Review frequency: Annually

Lead Officer: Head of Safeguarding

Executive Lead: Vice Principal of Curriculum

Last reviewed: July 2022

C&Q Committee November 2022