

CCOAS Bullying and Harassment Policy

This policy applies to all students and staff at the College irrespective of their age and whether or not a student is in the care of the College when/if bullying behaviour occurs. While this policy focuses mainly on the bullying of students by other students, it is recognised that other forms of bullying may occur.

Through the operation of this policy we aim to maintain and drive a positive and supportive culture among all students and staff throughout the College; and to deter bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs, and deal with it by counselling and/or disciplinary sanctions and, if necessary, by expulsion.

BULLYING AND/OR INCIVILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Instances of bullying and/or incivility in the workplace should be reported to the College as soon as possible

Whilst the student should follow internal workplace reporting protocols, they must also inform the College so action can be taken at the earliest opportunity to support the student and ensure that the workplace acts promptly to deal with the situation.

Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the College because:

- it is harmful to the person who is bullied, to those who engage in bullying behaviour and those who support them, and can in some cases lead to lasting psychological damage including suicide;
- it interferes with a student's right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure time free from intimidation; and it is contrary to all our aims and values, our internal culture and the reputation of the College.

The Definition of Bullying:

According to the Advisory, Conciliation and Advice Service (ACAS), Bullying is defined as ***offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting behaviour and/or an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates or denigrates***. This type of behaviour can be seen in those in senior positions abusing their authority as well as those in junior positions behaving poorly towards other people. Bullying is a form of abusive behaviour, psychological or physical, which hurts or causes distress by taking unfair advantage of another person in some way, making the victim feel uncomfortable or threatened.

Examples of behaviour which is likely to constitute bullying are:

- psychological intimidation, humiliation, excessive and/or unreasonable criticism or fault-finding of any colleague, peer or student
- asserting a position of superiority in an aggressive, abusive or offensive manner, including via electronic media
- preventing access to resources
- unfair allocation of work and responsibilities or setting unreasonable goals or targets in work
- abuse of power or behaviour that causes fear or distress for others
- acting unreasonably by failing and refusing to listen, reflect and take appropriate account of the position or needs of other
- treating staff and students in an unprofessional manner, or refusing to follow agreed and fair procedures
- physical – hitting, kicking, pushing people around, spitting; or taking, damaging or hiding possessions;
- verbal – name-calling, taunting, teasing, insulting or demanding money;

- exclusionary – intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group;
- general unkindness – spreading rumours or writing unkind notes, phone texts or emails;
or

Bullying may also be:

- sexist – related to a person's gender;
- racist, or regarding someone's religion or culture;
- related to a person's sexual orientation (homophobic);
- related to a person's home circumstances;
- related to a person's disability, health or appearance;
- sexual – talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way.

Cyberbullying is the use of the internet, mobile phones, social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, email messaging, etc) to deliberately upset someone else with offensive and/or humiliating material or comments.

NOT ALL BULLYING IS DELIBERATE OR INTENDED TO HURT

Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as 'teasing' or 'a game' or 'for the good of' the other person. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may not be malicious and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions.

A bully who does not respond appropriately to advice or sanctions would ultimately have to leave the College.

The Responsibility:

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure, whatever the circumstances, that no-one becomes a victim of bullying. A person may be vulnerable to bullying because of his/her age, physical appearance, nationality, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture or disability, or because s/he is new in the College, appears to be uncertain or has no friends. S/he may also become a target because of an irrational decision by a bully.

As a matter of safeguarding concern, all incidents of bullying must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). As a matter of behaviour and discipline, all incidents of bullying must also be referred to the Head of Learning who will treat it as a disciplinary offence. As with all safeguarding concerns, the DSL will be responsible for dealing with both victim and perpetrator and developing ongoing programmes of monitoring and support as well as recording and reviewing all relevant notes, including interviews, witness statements and reports from professionals such as social workers or psychologists as appropriate.

The Legal aspects:

A person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence and also a civil wrong known as a 'tort' for which there can be legal consequences outside the College. Bullying behaviour may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment which can be either a criminal offence or a civil wrong.

Anti-bullying culture

Our expectation of all members of the College community is that the welfare of students (and staff) is the College's primary concern. Bullying is a form of abuse which contravenes our Safeguarding Policy and should be dealt with in accordance with this policy. Any complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously and no form of bullying will be tolerated.

The Equal opportunities: CCOAS Equal Opportunities Policy provides full details of the College's commitment. This policy aims to protect any member of the College who may be deemed vulnerable with respect to a disability, sexual orientation, race or religion, particularly in relation

to bullying. The College is committed to a culture which provides equal opportunities and is free from bullying.

The Staff:

Members of staff are expected to uphold our Safeguarding Policy. CCOAS extends itself to ensure that all staff are fully briefed on current safeguarding issues including bullying, from induction upon joining the CCOAS Team to set training days during the course of each academic year.

Safeguarding is part of every staff meeting. Staff are also made aware of the importance of basic interviewing techniques should they be the first to know of a bullying incident through a meeting with the victim(s).

Staff are aware of the importance of the DSL in maintaining a vital safeguarding culture and are trained and encouraged to relay all concerns regarding safeguarding or bullying to the DSL in person or through a secured/encrypted electronic format.

They are also aware of their duty in extreme cases of bullying, for example, to inform the local Children's Social Services (CSC) or the police as appropriate. In all such circumstances the DSL must always be informed and the informing member of staff has a duty to follow up the concern to ensure that it is being dealt with.

Members of staff are vigilant at all times but particularly:

- before lessons;
- at break times;
- during lessons; and
- in the student common areas.

The Students:

Students are introduced to our culture which promotes safeguarding and equal opportunities when they receive their yearly induction at the start of each academic year.

Students are encouraged:

- to celebrate the effort and achievements of others;
- to hold and promote a positive attitude;
- to feel able to share problems with staff;
- to turn to someone they trust if they have a problem;
- not to feel guilty about airing complaints.

Education:

Measures are taken throughout each year to educate students about bullying and this policy. These measures include:

- During the induction sessions at the start of each academic year
- During tutorials
- During Personal and Professional Development sessions taking place twice a term

Anti-Bullying posters are also placed in the College rooms.

Staff training:

Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged to ensure that all staff have the necessary professional skills, which include awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying, and know how to deal with cases.

Staff are trained to ensure that:

- there is an adequate presence of staff;
- staff are actively involved with students in all areas of the year group;

- there is no crowding in the student common areas; and
- good behaviour and discipline is maintained.

Students' responsibilities:

We emphasise with senior students the role which is expected of them in setting a good example and being helpful to younger students and each other.

Record keeping and monitoring:

Student concerns are reported to the DSL who will maintain the confidential records and are only accessible on a need-to-know basis

Why incidents might not be reported

The Victim: There are many reasons why a student who has suffered bullying may be reluctant to report it. The victim may become demoralised and may say, for example:

- it is telling tales. They won't believe me because the person I am complaining about is popular or a member of staff;
- it might go back to my employer and I will lose my job/placement
- the things they are saying and doing are too embarrassing to discuss with someone else
- it is all my fault anyway for being overweight/too studious etc;
- there are too many of them; there is nothing the staff can do;
- it will get back to my parents and they will think less of me;
- I will just try and toughen up and grow a thicker skin; or

The Witnesses: There are also reasons why a student who has witnessed or learned of bullying behaviour may not want to make a report. The student may say:

- it is 'grassing' and I will become unpopular;
- it is not my concern anyway; or
- if I get involved, I might lose my job/placement
- I don't like the victim and I would find it embarrassing to be associated with him/her.

The Culture: Any of these responses would be contrary to our culture at the College. When we drive and implement this policy, we encourage every student to understand that:

- every complaint of bullying will be taken seriously;
- members of staff will deal with a complaint correctly and effectively in accordance with their experience and the training they have received;
- there is a solution to nearly every problem of bullying;
- a student who complains will receive support and advice on a no-names basis; and the primary aim will be for the bullying to cease, not the punishment of the bully unless this is necessary.

THE REPORTING OF BULLYING COMPLAINTS

The following procedures are a guideline except where expressed in the terms 'should' or 'must'. The best guide is the experience and training of the staff.

The Students: A student who is being bullied, or who is worried about another student being bullied, should report it without delay and can do so in several ways. The student may:

- tell their College tutor or another member of staff;
- contact the Head of Learning Karen Lee
- contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead Sol Indurain
- contact the College HR Manager

The Staff:

This policy focuses mainly on the bullying of students by students although it is recognised that a staff member could be a victim and, on occasion, may be perceived to be guilty of bullying. All concerns about staff behaviour should be handled in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy which deals with allegations against staff members. Students may deal with any complaint against tutors or other staff through our Complaints Policy.

The Initial complaint:

This should be referred to the DSL.

The Assessment:

The DSL will contact the victim and (unless the case is very serious) any witnesses without delay, and form an initial view of the allegation.

The assessment will consider:

- the nature of the incident(s) – physical, verbal, exclusionary etc
- if it is a 'one-off' incident involving an individual or a group
- if it is part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group
- whether physical injury been caused; who should be informed: Head of Learning, parents, Social Services or the Police, for example
- if the alleged bully can be seen on a no-names basis
- what is the likely outcome if the complaint proves to be correct.

At this stage, the possible outcomes for an incident which is not too serious include:

- there has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim with advice to the alleged bully;
- or the complaint is justified in whole or in part, and further action will be required.

Any Serious incident:

If the DSL believes the incident to be serious or the incident has occurred after warnings have been given to the 'bully' the DSL must inform the Principal who will then deal with this matter.

Range of actions:

The range of responses will include one or more of the following:

- advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the victim;
- advice and support to the bully in trying to change his/her behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning;
- a supervised meeting between the bully and the victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict;
- a disciplinary sanction against the bully, such as detention or withdrawal of privileges. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a student may, after a fair hearing, be required to leave the College permanently in accordance with the College's Student Disciplinary policy.

Behaviour and Exclusions Procedure:

- action to break up a 'power base';
- moving either the bully or victim to another class (if possible and subject to availability) after consultation with the student, his/her parents and relevant staff;

- involving Social Services or the Police;
- notifying the parents of one or both students about the case and the action which has been taken;
- such other action as may appear to the Principal to be appropriate;
- recording the incident and proceedings and noting the outcome in the safeguarding database.

Monitoring

The position should be monitored for as long as necessary thereafter.

Action may include:

- sharing information with some or all colleagues and with students so that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain students closely;
- ongoing counselling and support;
- vigilance;
- mentioning the incident at meetings of staff;
- reviewing vulnerable individuals and areas of the College;
- liaison between Head of Learning /Personal Tutors, the outcome being recorded in the Student Databases.

A Formal complaint:

If the victim or his/her parents are not satisfied with the action taken, they should be advised to make a formal complaint, according to the complaints procedure outlined in the College's Complaints Policy.

Authorised by	Sol Indurain 	Role	Head of Quality and Improvement
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