Student Anti-Bullying

Policy and Procedure

Author:	Roland White	Reviewed:	October 2018
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Putting Students First

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1   Anti-bullying policy statement

The Isle of Wight College is committed to students' right to learn in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and bullying.

The Education Act 2002[1] places a duty on colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Safeguarding encompasses bullying and all principles of this policy are applicable to the entire student population of the college. The college's safeguarding policy can be viewed on its website.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires that every school must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. FE colleges are not subject to this Act; however, this policy has been developed in accordance with the spirit of the Act and following Department for Education (DfE) guidelines on Preventing and Tackling Bullying.

The Equality Act 2010 requires colleges to comply with Section 149 - the public sector equality duty (PSED) and specifically to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

This policy, and the college's equality and diversity policy, take those requirements into account.

Bullying is totally unacceptable. It can have a profound and damaging impact on the lives of victims. It can lead to those involved having low self-esteem, mental health issues such as depression or self-harming or it extreme cases it can result in people considering taking their own life. The college will challenge bullying in all its forms and take quick clear and decisive action to protect students. Where appropriate the college will take disciplinary action against those found to have bullied others.

The college is committed to creating an environment which supports staff and students to report and challenge bullying and which encourages positive intervention to prevent the occurrence of bullying. Student involvement is central to this document and the college's mission of:

- Putting students first
- Working with employers
- Supporting our community

The college's anti-bullying policy has been developed co-operatively with students through suggestions from the college's Student Voice group and by talking to students.

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[1] Referenced website links:
  http://www.Education Act 2002   http://www.Anti-Bullying Alliance.org.uk
  http://www.Equality Act 2010   http://www.Preventing and Tackling Bullying
  http://www.Education and Inspections Act 2006

2 Scope of the Policy

This policy is intended to address issues arising between students*.* Other accusations of bullying are dealt with as follows:

- Staff accused of bullying students are referred through the college complaints procedure.

- Staff accused of bullying staff are referred through the staff bullying and harassment policy.

- Students accused of bullying staff are referred through the student disciplinary procedure.

This policy applies when students are on college premises; on college organised transport; or on college related activities off site. The college will also take action where behaviour can be linked to the college, could bring the college in to disrepute and / or could endanger staff and students.

The anti-bullying policy is aimed at the whole college community, staff, students, parents, carers, employers, volunteers and partners.

Other related polices and procedures are available on the Colleges website:

- College Charter – You and Your College

- Student disciplinary policy

- Health and safety policy

- Substance misuse policy

- Safeguarding policy (incorporates E-Safety)

- Equality and diversity policy.

3 Responsibilities

Governors

The college governing body is the corporation board (the board) and this is responsible for establishing and implementing the anti-bullying policy and for ensuring that it is regularly monitored and reviewed.

Lead staff

The assistant principal for teaching and learning is responsible for safeguarding and leads on the implementation of the anti-bullying policy.

The head of safeguarding and student advocacy and the equality and diversity manager lead on the operational implementation of this policy and procedure in liaison with other managers and staff.

The head of HR is responsible for ensuring the provision of anti-bullying training for staff.

Heads of department, curriculum managers and section leaders have a responsibility to investigate allegations thoroughly and to seek to resolve conflict.

Student progress advisers, and nominated safeguarding staff have particular responsibility to support students through any investigation into an allegation of bullying and / or harassment.

All staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of the anti-bullying policy and the procedures for reporting bullying.
- Taking action in line with this policy should they witness acts of bullying or harassment; or are approached in confidence by students being bullied or harassed; or by students who have witnessed such actions.
- Treating all students with dignity and respect, ensuring their own conduct does not cause offence or misunderstanding; and challenging behaviour or the use of language which could cause offence.

Students

Students are required to:

- Follow the student charter
- Be aware of the anti-bullying policy
- Report incidents of bullying
- Understand that if proven, bullying will lead to disciplinary action.

Parents / carers

The college encourages parents and carers to contact the college if they know or suspect their son / daughter is being bullied or is bullying others. It is hoped that parents / carers will work with college staff to resolve conflicts between students.

4   Definition of bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time and where those being bullied are powerless.

Bullying can take many forms, can cause stress and have an emotional impact. Bullying can be:

- Direct – physical, verbal, non-verbal
- Indirect – cyber-bullying, e-bullying, texting.

Bullying often relates to differences, real or perceived (see Appendix 1). Specific areas of bullying can include:

- Age
- Race
- Religion / belief
- Appearance
- Culture
- Ability

- Disability

- Health

- Sexual Orientation / Gender Reassignment

- Family / Home Circumstances

- Sex

- Social Class

- Pregnancy/maternity

- Marriage/civil partnership.

Signs of and effects of bullying are covered in Appendix 2.

The college aims to promote a common understanding of what constitutes bullying through positive promotion in the student handbook, posters, activities in the curriculum, tutorial sessions, staff training and via the college website.

5   Prevention

The college is committed to establishing a culture of tolerance and positive engagement so that bullying is prevented. To establish this ethos, the college has developed a number of strategies aimed at prevention (examples are listed in Appendix 3). Underpinning these strategies are the college's core values of respect, appropriate work-place behaviour and inclusivity.

6   Intervention procedures: how the college responds to bullying

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and addressed as quickly as possible. The priority is to support those being bullied. The college determines the nature and extent of the bullying and takes actions appropriate to the circumstance.

In summary, once a report of bullying is received a member of staff, usually a student progress adviser will meet with the individual/s being bullied to discuss the circumstances and severity of the bullying and how the college intends to proceed (see Appendix 4). It may be appropriate to involve parents / carers at this stage. Anonymity cannot always be guaranteed as the college has a duty to act to protect and safeguard students, but every effort will be made to deal sensitively with the issues and, wherever possible maintain anonymity.

A record of accusations of bullying behaviour and actions taken are recorded confidentially as a 'note' on eTrackr for monitoring purposes.

When the college believes that bullying has occurred it will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the student disciplinary process.

Lists of possible sanctions / outcomes are contained in Appendix 4.

The disciplinary process takes into account the needs of vulnerable students including those responsible for bullying.

Students with a learning difficulty and / or a disability

Some students with a learning difficulty and / or disability may be especially vulnerable to bullying or have difficulties in communicating problems. The college has an extensive team of specialist additional learning support (ALS) staff who work closely with students to identify needs, support and advocate for students so they have the best possible chance of success on their course. The staff are skilled, experienced and often, because they work closely with students are able to identify early signs of concern. Any report of a student with a learning difficulty and / or disability being bullied will involve a member of the ALS teams, unless it is inappropriate.

Lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and gender reassignment students

Some students may be especially vulnerable to bullying or have difficulties in communicating the problems they are facing due to their sexual orientation or gender preference. The college has a firm commitment to equality and diversity and will not tolerate the harassment or bullying of one member of its community by another or others. The purpose of this policy is to promote the development of a working and learning environment in which harassment and bullying are known to be unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to complain about harassment and bullying, should they arise, in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with sensitively, appropriately and fairly. We aim to ensure that **ALL** learners irrespective of the protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation) as defined by the Equality Act 2010 have the opportunities to learn and achieve in a safe and open environment.

If the person making the allegation is dissatisfied about how it has been dealt with, he / she has the right to appeal through the college's complaints procedure.

The college works with and supports those responsible for bullying to help them to understand the impact of their behaviour.

7   Monitoring, reviews and evaluation

The anti-bullying policy is reviewed annually by:

- the senior management team
- the Corporation board.

The effectiveness of the policy is reviewed via:

- the annual student satisfaction survey
- records of bullying incidents as monitored by the equality and diversity working group
- governors receiving information on bullying.

8   Anti-Bullying Help lines and organisation web sites

Helplines: Childline (tel: 0800 1111)   NSPCC (tel: 0808 800 5000)

Organisations / websites:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/

- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) http://www.nspcc.org.uk/

- ChildLine http://www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx

- Beatbullying http://www.beatbullying.org/

- Family Lives http://familylives.org.uk/

- Transforming Conflict http://www.transformingconflict.org/content/restorative-approaches-and-bullying-3

- Stonewall http://www.stonewall.org.uk/

- Bullying Intervention Group https://www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/

- Beaumont Society http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk/

- The Gender Trust http://gendertrust.org.uk/

- The Angels (UK) https://www.theangels.co.uk

9 Appendices:

Types of bullying

Bullying includes: a wide range of repetitive behaviours with the intent to cause harm - for example: name calling, offensive comments, hitting, pushing, theft or damage to belongings, graffiti, coercion, spreading of harmful messages through gossip, sending or spreading messages and images through mobile phones and the internet, deliberate exclusion.

Bullying is not: teasing and banter between friends without intention to cause harm, falling out between friends after a disagreement, behaviour that all parties consented to.

Bullying linked to prejudice and discrimination: bullying can also be linked to prejudicial behaviour or targeting of certain individuals or groups – for example homophobic bullying, bullying associated with disability, bullying related to health conditions and allergies, bullying related to race and religion, bullying of students who care for their parents or their siblings (young carers), and gender based bullying (e.g. transphobic, sexual and sexist bullying).

Bullying related to appearance: we also know that students can be subjected to bullying related to their physical appearance (e.g. weight, height, disfigurements, hair, teeth, skin conditions, and clothes).

Sexual bullying: sexual bullying is any behaviour with a sexual element that is harmful, non-consensual and repeated. This could include sexual comments and name-calling, spreading of sexual rumours, use of technology and social networking sites to spread sexual gossip, comments or images, non-consensual touch (e.g. touching body parts, pulling bra straps).

Cyber-bullying: the development of internet and mobile phone technology has provided different tools and methods for bullying others known as 'cyber-bullying'. However, fundamentally it is driven by the same behaviour and motivation as any form of bullying. One off incidents, such as sending an image which is then forwarded to a group, can quickly become repetitive. Cyber-bullying can include sending or posting of harmful messages, comments and images online or through mobile phones, exclusion from social networking and impersonating of others to cause harm. The college safeguarding policy, which is available on the college website, includes more information on eSafety.

Bullying and crime: There are times that bullying behaviour becomes criminal - but not all bullying behaviour is criminal. Some examples of bullying behaviour that could be considered criminal include threatening or actual physical assault, threatening or actual sexual assault, the use of technology to bully and harm, coercing others to commit a crime, hate crime (e.g. racism). If we think a crime has been committed, the police will be contacted for advice.

Signs of bullying

Bullying involves an imbalance of power; the person on the receiving end feels like they can't defend themselves. When students are bullied their lives are made miserable, they may suffer injury and will certainly lose confidence and self-esteem. In extreme cases they may even contemplate suicide. A student's change of behaviour or appearance may be an indicator that they are being bullied.

Attendance: a student may become frightened of walking to College, unwilling to use public transport, there may be increased absence, changes to their usual routine, improbable excuses given for absence.

Changes in character: being bullied can cause a student to become withdrawn, anxious, aggressive, disruptive, unreasonable, nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message has been received. They may start bullying siblings, stop using the internet or mobile phone, cry for no apparent reason or become tearful, lose things, ask for more money than usual and steal.

Changes in appearance: young people often change their appearance. However sometimes this is a sign of being bullied especially if the student seems to be covering up cuts or bruises. Sometimes there is rapid weight loss, or weight gain, or the person stops eating. More obvious signs are torn clothes.

Often bullying goes unreported as victims may feel they are either somehow to blame or that the repercussions will make matters worse. It is important therefore for all staff, students and parents/ carers to work together to ensure students feel able to report bullying and to be supported when they do so.
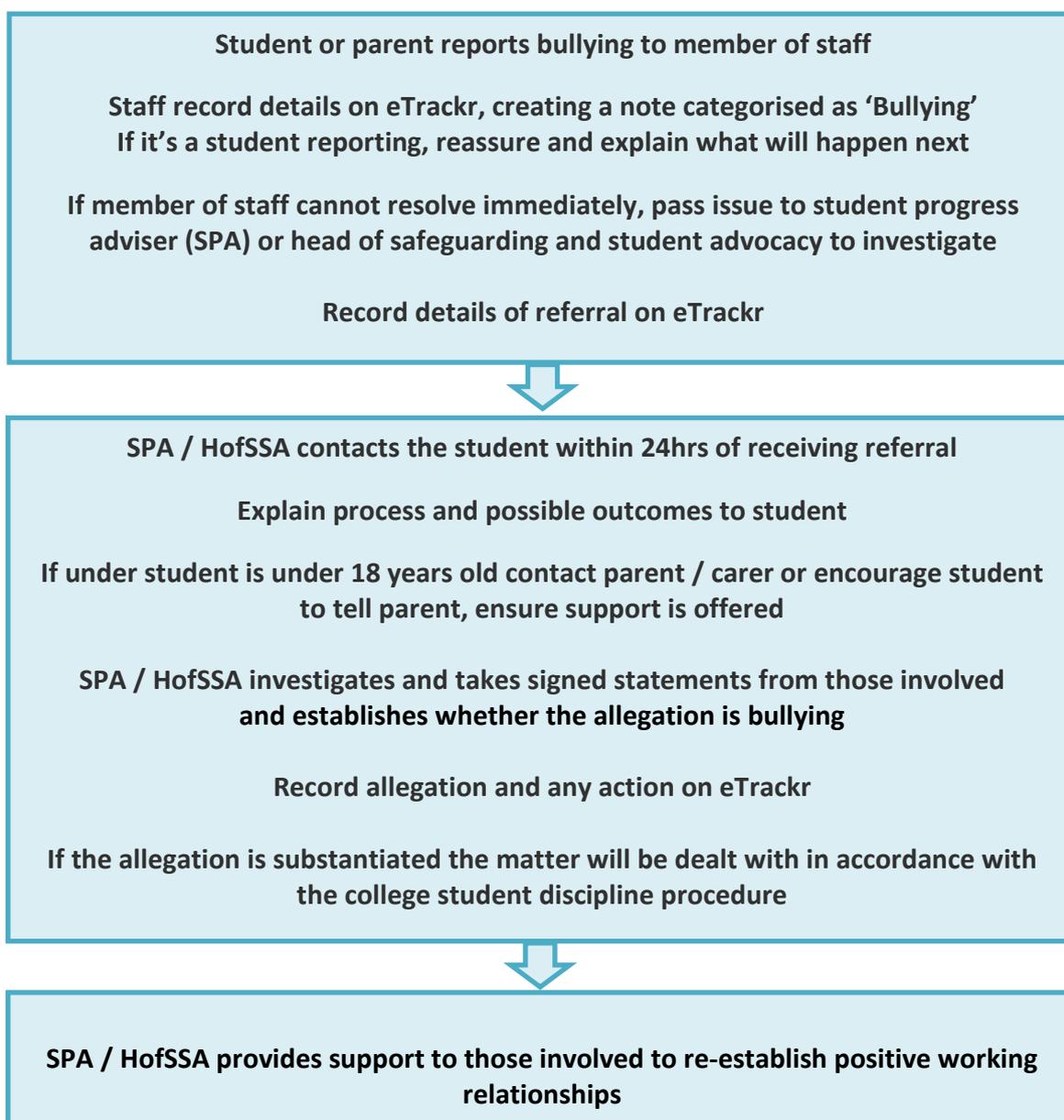
Preventing bullying

The college aims to prevent bullying before it happens. Listed below are examples of the strategies which we use:

- Through their study programme full-time students learn about the value and importance of respect and tolerance, the negative consequences of bullying, fundamental British values, citizenship and equality and diversity. Students benefit from participating in activities to develop skills in areas such as team work, developing appropriate positive relationships, communication, empathy and resilience.

- The college identifies students who are vulnerable and / or at risk of disengagement or underachievement. These students are monitored closely so early interventions can be put in place to prevent issues from escalating.

- Students are encouraged to self-disclose sexual orientation, religion or belief so staff are aware of the potential for bullying. Staff will then watch out for any issues developing which could provoke a conflict.

- Anti-bullying posters are displayed throughout the college to raise awareness and signpost support.

- The college works closely with external support agencies.

- All student progress advisers receive the extended safeguarding training which covers in depth aspects such as cyber-bullying.

- Anti-bullying week and stay safe month are an established part of the college year

- The college works closely with local community police to gather intelligence of situations or incidents outside the college which may have a potential for conflict between students in the college.

- Student progress advisers use a 'restorative approach' to resolve conflict and to build good relationships between students.

- Support staff work with specific vulnerable groups to develop resilience, communication skills and coping strategies.

- Students are introduced to the college's expectations during induction. All full-time students attend a welcome from the principal during which she sets out the college's three main rules, including a zero tolerance on bullying. This is then followed by a workshop lead by an external guest speaker who reinforces these expectations. In 2018/19 these sessions were delivered by Trevor Gordon, a national expert on equality and diversity.

- Working in partnership with students to seek their views and to help students share their experiences.

- Signposting victims of bullying to counselling services where this would be felt helpful

- Providing students with a named member of staff who they can contact with any concerns they may have about bullying.

- Making students aware that the college has a CCTV system that it uses to support investigations into claims of bullying.

Procedure for reporting bullying

Student or parent reports bullying to member of staff

Staff record details on eTrackr, creating a note categorised as 'Bullying'
If it's a student reporting, reassure and explain what will happen next

If member of staff cannot resolve immediately, pass issue to student progress adviser (SPA) or head of safeguarding and student advocacy to investigate

Record details of referral on eTrackr

SPA / HofSSA contacts the student within 24hrs of receiving referral

Explain process and possible outcomes to student

If under student is under 18 years old contact parent / carer or encourage student to tell parent, ensure support is offered

SPA / HofSSA investigates and takes signed statements from those involved and establishes whether the allegation is bullying

Record allegation and any action on eTrackr

If the allegation is substantiated the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the college student discipline procedure

SPA / HofSSA provides support to those involved to re-establish positive working relationships

If bullying is confirmed, it is dealt with as a student disciplinary matter.

Possible outcomes / sanctions include:
- Conflict resolution using restorative approach or mediation
- Moved to another group
- Restricted timetable
- Restrictions on the use of computers
- Intervention from student services
- Final written warning / written warning
- Referral to additional support
- Exclusion