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Student Anti Bullying and

Harassment Policy

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| **Owner/ Author** | Last Review | Next Review |
| **Deputy Principal** | July 2022 | July 2023 |
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| **DSL** | July 2024 | July 2025 |

*Statement of Intent*

*The Trustees, Governors and staff of Communication Specialist College Doncaster are committed to providing a compassionate, receptive and non-threatening environment in which every student has the opportunity to learn, to be happy and to develop their skills for work and for life. This policy is to be used with incidents of bullying and harassment of students in the College and local community.*

*Bullying and harassment are deemed completely unacceptable within the College community. If bullying or harassment occurs, we aim to assure students and their families and supporters that all instances will be addressed thoroughly and effectively without delay.*

*The College expects that anyone – whether student, staff, family member or any other party who witnesses or has knowledge of an incident, will report the incident to a member of the staff immediately.*

*Please read this policy alongside;*

*Keeping Children Safe in education 2024*

*Trust under 18s Safeguarding policy (child protection and safeguarding policy)*

*Safeguarding adults' policy*

*Positive behaviour policy*

Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone working within the College has a responsibility for promoting the welfare and safety of our students. Personal tutors, pastoral staff and support staff are most likely to be the ones to deal with reports and incidents. It is envisaged that staff will use a range of suggested actions for dealing with incidents however, in certain cases of persistent bullying or in serious cases; the matter should be reported to a member of management via CPOMs.

Policy Objectives

* All staff, students and parents should have a full understanding of what bullying, and harassment is and what they encompass.
* All staff should be thoroughly familiar with the anti-bullying and harassment policy and should follow it accordingly when bullying is reported or observed.
* All students and parents should be familiar with the anti-bullying policy and should know the steps to take when bullying occurs.
* Students and parents should be reassured that the College takes bullying very seriously and will support victims and their families when alleged bullying is reported.
* Bullying will not be excused, permitted or tolerated under any circumstances.

Defining Bullying

Bullying is any act or omission which deliberately causes another person to feel physical or emotional pain and distress. Bullying can come in several different forms, although there is often a cross‐over between different types of bullying. Bullying is usually aimed at an individual who is perceived as being weaker or different in some way. Bullying behaviour can be carried out by an individual or more typically by a group through physical intimidation, verbal insults and threats, extortion and exclusion.

The main types of bullying are:

**Emotional Bullying:** Being unfriendly; deliberately excluding someone from an activity; hiding things or behaving in a tormenting way.

**Physical Bullying:** Any use of physical force or violence.

**Verbal Bullying:** The use of name calling; sarcasm; teasing; spreading rumours.

**Racist Bullying:** Treating someone differently because of their ethnic background; may include racist taunts; gestures and careless use of inappropriate language.

**Sexual Bullying:** May include unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

**Homophobic Bullying**: Bullying behaviours based on sexuality and prejudice about this.

**Cyber Bullying:** is any form of bullying which takes place online or through smartphones and tablets. [Social networking sites](http://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/what-to-do-if-you-re-being-bullied-on-a-social-network/), messaging apps, gaming sites and chat rooms such as Facebook, XBox Live, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat.

**Types of cyberbullying**

There are many ways of bullying someone online and for some it can take shape in more ways than one. Some of the types of cyber bullying are:

**Harassment** - This is the act of sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages and being abusive. Nasty or humiliating comments on posts, photos and in chat rooms. Being explicitly offensive on gaming sites.

**Denigration –**This is when someone may send information about another person that is fake, damaging and untrue. Sharing photos of someone for the purpose to ridicule, spreading fake rumours and gossip. This can be on any site online or on apps. We even hear about people altering photos of others and posting in online for the purpose of bullying.

**Flaming** – This is when someone is purposely using really extreme and offensive language and getting into online arguments and fights. They do this to cause reactions and enjoy the fact it causes someone to get distressed.

**Impersonation** – This is when someone will hack into someone’s email or social networking account and use the person's online identity to send or post vicious or embarrassing material to/about others. The making up of fake profiles on social network sites, apps and online are common place and it can be really difficult to get them closed down.

**Outing and Trickery** – This is when someone may share personal information about another or trick someone into revealing secrets and forward it to others. They may also do this with private images and videos too.

**Cyber Stalking**– This is the act of repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm, harassment, intimidating messages, or engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for his or her safety. The actions may be illegal too depending on what they are doing.

**Exclusion**– This is when others intentionally leave someone out of a group such as group messages, online apps, gaming sites and other online engagement. This is also a form of social bullying and a very common.

**Threatening behaviour**

Anyone who makes threats on the internet could be committing a criminal offence. It's against the law in the UK to use the phone system, which includes the internet, to cause alarm or distress. It could also be against the [1997 Harassment Act](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/40/contents). If threats are made against the student then it's essential that they can make a complaint to the police. If you can't print out the threats use the "print screen" button or snipping tool to take a snapshot of the computer screen and then save that somewhere safe. Or if you have a phone or tablet, use the screenshot function and keep these images safe.

**Blackmail and grooming**

Young people that make new "friends" online have tried to pressure them into taking their clothes off and filming or taking images of themselves. Threats have been made that their parent will be told embarrassing things if they don't take part, or they will send the images to everyone they know if they do not do it.

This is an offence called "grooming" in the UK and people who have been found guilty of "grooming" have been jailed.

Young people in relationships may try to make their boyfriend or girlfriend send [sexting](http://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/online/sexting/) images of themselves to prove they love them or want to be with them. It is against the law for anyone under the age of 18 to take, send or redistribute pictures of anyone under the age of 18.

CEOP is [The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre](https://www.ceop.police.uk/) and they investigate cases of sexual abuse and grooming on the internet. You can report incidents by clicking the [red button](https://www.ceop.police.uk/Ceop-Report/) on the top right-hand corner of the CEOP website. Although the police can get information from the computer's hard drive, it is helpful if you don't delete anything until the police have decided whether they need it as evidence.

**When comments get abusive**

There are quite a few instant messaging apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Secret, Whisper and Instagram.  Students may share things for fun. But if things turn nasty, they need to be advised to block people from seeing them online, they can save abusive conversations or print them out as evidence.

Students may be tempted to have a go back if someone makes a rude posting on their online space, social network or app. This is called flaming. Abusive comments are very upsetting but the best way to deal with them is to get them removed by the website.

**Inappropriate images**

It's easy to save any pictures of anyone on any site and upload them to the internet. Students should be encouraged to make sure that they have the person's permission to take a picture and that they're happy for thousands of people to see it on the internet. Be wary of tagging and hashtags as this will send the picture out to a wider audience then they may have originally intended.

**Innocent bystander**

There is no such thing as an innocent bystander and if the student has seen someone being bullied online, you can report it to the online site or app with them. Ignoring it may feel like the easiest thing to do but the person who is being subjected to that bullying may need your help and support to get it stopped. Most sites now have a report button which is something you can do and this will send the bullying comments to the site to investigate.

It should be noted that here is a fine line between friendship disputes and bullying, with many reported bullying incidents stemming from broken friendships. These incidents will be followed up in the same way as other bullying incidents. In line with the Equalities Act 2010, we are fundamentally committed to securing equality for all and will not tolerate bullying based upon prejudice or discrimination.

In the educational environment where many young people live together, bullying can manifest in individuals orchestrating groups to intimidate and exclude other individuals in order to build up their own status, self-esteem and sense of power over others.

It is difficult within a large educational and training environment to distinguish between planned intimidation and the constant arguments, insults, provocation and occasional fights that characterises the general behaviour of young people experiencing a myriad of social and emotional pressures.

It is unrealistic to believe that bullying can be totally eradicated, what we can do with some degree of certainty is to control, manage and take action when bullying and harassment is discovered. Our aim is to instil within our students the principle of thoughtfulness and respect for the rights of others. We aim to make clear to all students that the College will act swiftly and decisively when cases of alleged bullying and harassment are reported.

Bullying and harassment can only be controlled and managed when Staff and others within the organisation have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour. To develop effective strategies for dealing with incidents staff and managers must seek to understand the motivation of the bully, where bullying is likely to take place and how to identify potential victims.

Warning Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

In some cases, victims of bullying will not have the confidence or will be too frightened to seek help. In some cases, victims will hold the view that to report incidents would only serve to increase or worsen the situation and imply weakness on their part. Unfortunately, there may be victims who have little or no confidence in the reporting systems or the staff that operate them. It is vitally important however to try to encourage individuals to report all incidents alleging bullying and harassment.

In the event that the individual is not willing to report incidents there may be signs or symptoms that indicate bullying. Staff should be aware of these and should instigate investigations immediately.

The following list is neither definitive nor exhaustive;

The individual may be suffering bullying if he or she;

* Is noticeably frightened or evasive when asked “what’s wrong”;
* Suddenly loses appetite;
* Begins to bully others or shows unusual aggression with friends or others;
* Is unusually short of money;
* Loses money or possessions repeatedly;
* Has unexplained cuts, bruises or injuries;
* Begins to perform poorly in classes or workshops;
* Repeatedly complains of being ill
* Begins to have nightmares or is unable to sleep;
* Attempts to self-harm;
* Attempts to run away
* Seems withdrawn or anxious;
* Requests a change in programme or class.
* Makes significant changes to personal routines;
* Gives implausible/unconvincing excuses for the above behaviours.

The above signs may indicate problems other than bullying.

Dealing with Incidents

All dealings with students should emphasise the importance of respecting the feelings and the rights of others. Those who demonstrate aggressive tendencies should be made aware of consequences through the guidance and tutorial system operating within the residence and across college.

The main approach to dealing with alleged bullying and harassment should be threefold.

* To build an ethos of non-confrontation.
* To develop mediation as the main process for solving difficulty between the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.
* To operate effective guidance and counselling services.

Talking to the Complainant

The person alleging bullying or harassment should be given the time and the opportunity to relate their feelings or worries. The member of staff should allow the person time to offload but should lead the conversation towards talking about their feelings. The conclusion of the meeting should be an assurance that the alleged perpetrator will be seen and that a further meeting will be held with the complainant to supply details of progress or outcomes.

Talking to the Alleged Perpetrator

The member of staff should then see the alleged perpetrator. Allowing some time to elapse between the incident and the interview may allow the person to be less defensive. It is important that the conversation is not tied down with investigating the facts. The conversation should centre on finding out the reasons behind the need of the person to intimidate others. It may be useful to talk about the alleged perpetrators relationship with other students, staff or other adults rather than the complainant.

If the conversation progresses well and moves away from “he asked for it”, staff should try to get the alleged perpetrator to try to think about how the complainant must be feeling. The meeting should conclude with an agreement on how the student should behave in relation to the complainant and others in general.

Talking to a Group

If the bullying or harassment involves a group; staff may be tempted to talk to them individually based on a divide and rule form of control. Staff are encouraged to talk to whole groups concentrating on feelings rather than establishing the facts of the case.

In most cases, this sort of meeting should not involve the complainant unless it is felt that the alleged perpetrators are genuinely feeling remorse and that the anger or fear within the complainant has subsided.

The meeting should conclude with an agreement of how the group or individuals within it are going to behave towards the complainant. They should be encouraged to suggest ideas about how the situation can be rectified. This may start by a simple apology.

Follow up Meeting

It is essential that the victim and the alleged perpetrator/perpetrators be interviewed later to assess whether or not issues have settled down. If there has been a continuation of the problem, then the dialogue needs to be restarted concentrating on the areas of feelings and the reasons behind the alleged bullying.

Documentation

All reports and incidences of alleged bullying and harassment should be recorded using CPOMs (See Flow Chart 1 and 2, Page 7and 8)

Referral

In cases where alleged bullying or harassment is persistent and attempts to address the problem have failed, the matter should be referred to a manager. Managers may resort to a range of sanctions. Where persistent bullying is proven, individual managers may consider recommending the permanent exclusion of the individual from the College.



NO

YES

YES

Refer to Actions, Strategy and Sanctions

NO

Complete Incident Log on CPOMS

Learner

Bully/Bullies

Witness

Staff

YES

NO

Seek Medical Attention

Staff undertake investigation

Learner Bullying Incident Report complete on CPOMS

Record Action on CPOMS

Follow Up Meeting within 10 days

Bullied Learner is supported



Bullying Stopped?

Bullying taken place?

Medical Attention Required?

Seek Medical Attention

YES

NO

CPOMS signed off by Pastoral Manager

YES

NO

Completed CPOMS

Follow Up Meeting within 10 days

Refer to Actions, Strategy and Sanctions

Bullied Learner is supported

Bullying is seen or witnessed

Bullying Incident reported on CPOMS



Bullying Stopped?

Medical Attention Required?

Based on the evidence and the circumstances of the case a range of different actions, strategies and sanctions will be applied.

Tutor

College Manager

Deputy Principal

Support staff

* Is the victim fully supported?
* Is it Safeguarding?
* Do Police need to be involved?
* Under 18 Parents informed?
* Relevant Conciliation, mediation. Bullying Awareness Session for Bully/Bullies.
* Friendship contract.
* Appropriate College based consequence.
* Behaviour Support Plan completed and shared with all staff.
* Support from College Police Liaison
* Referral to other agencies/professionals.
* Temporary Exclusion
* Fixed Term Exclusion
* Permanent Exclusion
* On-going support for victim.
* On-going support for Bully
* CPOMS completed.

Additional Guidance

1. Ensure that action taken contributes to the development of a College ethos that promotes non-bullying behaviour and takes the stance that bullying and harassment is unacceptable.
2. Ensure that arrangements exist to publicise the policy to students and parents, enlisting their support where possible.
3. Promote an environment whereby students will themselves actively discourage bullying and harassment, viewing the reporting of incidents as responsible behaviour rather than the telling of tales.
4. Ensure that students are not regularly left unattended in classrooms/workshops.
5. Ensure that relationships between students and staff are based on mutual respect and trust so that all feel able to report instances of alleged bullying or harassment.
6. Ensure that staff in all areas have access to the policy and are familiar with its content.
7. Ensure that supervision and cover arrangements are in place at times and places when bullying is likely to take place. Operate a system of spot checks.
8. Ensure that curriculum and training programmes encourage non-academic as well as academic achievement, co-operative as well as competitive learning.
9. Ensure that bullying as a subject is raised in teaching and social learning programmes.
10. Ensure that induction training for new staff incorporates familiarisation with the policy.
11. Ensure that students their parents and families understand the intention of the policy.