
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." And also that "It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports". KCSiE 2022 also states that "All staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse."

Bullying is a behaviour by individuals or groups repeated over time. It can be verbal, physical or online and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups or differences or perceived differences between individuals. Bullying is often a manifestation of an imbalance of power between individuals or groups and victims can become afraid of the threat of violence or isolation.

Policy

City of Bristol College is committed to ensuring that:

- everyone is equally valued and treated with respect
- all forms of bullying are unacceptable
- all incidents of bullying are responded to fairly, consistently and reasonably
- individuals who report bullying are supported effectively and sensitively
- students displaying bullying behaviour are encouraged to change their behaviour and are dealt with appropriately
- support is provided to both the victim and perpetrator of bullying
- confidentiality is maintained appropriately at all times
- all incidents are reported on an annual basis to Senior Management and Governing Body.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all students of all ages, studying all levels of qualification, including Higher Education and visitors to City of Bristol College. It concerns incidents between students and/or visitors.

If the complaint of bullying or harassment is received from students against staff or Governors, the informal stages of the procedure associated with this policy may apply. However, if a formal complaint about bullying or harassment is received from students, this will be dealt with using the employee disciplinary policy and procedures.

The student's first step would be to make a formal complaint and the complaints department will contact the Line Manager of the member of staff concerned, the Chair of Governors or the college HR Department as appropriate, to lead the investigation. If the complaint concerns the Principal, the Chair of Governors will be informed to lead the investigation. If a complaint is received regarding the Chair of Governors, the Clerk to the Corporation will institute formal investigative proceeding as outlined in the

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), action taken and ways in which an individual has been affected by the situation.

Receiving a complaint about bullying

All concerns regarding bullying should be addressed, and no matter how trivial the complaint seems it should be taken seriously and every effort made to resolve it. Help and support can be sought from the same people as those listed above. It is advised that there should be a positive response to a request from the complainant to meet or speak about the complaint and to seeking an amicable and mutually acceptable solution. This informal stage may solve the problem. If it does not, the formal stage of the procedure may begin.

Third party or 'witness' complaints

Students may witness behaviour that is perceived to be inappropriate. They should consult with their tutor/study coach or the Safeguarding Team to discuss if action needs to be taken. If a member of staff witnesses behaviour perceived to be inappropriate they should consult with their line manager. If following this consultation, it is concluded the behaviour should be investigated further, the informal or formal stages of this procedure should be followed.

Counter-complaints

If an alleged perpetrator, following a complaint, makes a counter-complaint the two complaints may be investigated separately or simultaneously. A College manager undertaking the investigation will make a judgement about the appropriate course of action after collection of relevant evidence.

Formal complaints

If an informal approach is not possible, or is inappropriate, a formal complaint in writing is made to

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).

In addition to harassment, bullying can involve the misuse of power or position through on-going and persistent attacks - either verbal, psychological, emotional or physical - on an individual. The purpose of these attacks is to humiliate and undermine an individual's ability until he or she loses confidence and self-esteem, including:

- Isolation or exclusion from activities
- Refusal to give credit for work undertaken
- Refusal to allow cooperation in work tasks
- Public humiliation
- Using online facilities (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, email or discussion boards) to humiliate or victimise

- 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

Approved: C&Q Committee November 2022