



**Buckinghamshire
College Group**

Anti-Bullying Policy 2021-23

Responsible Officer:	Head of Student Services
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Policy available:	Intranet, Website and Cloud
Policy approved by:	Executive and Quality & Curriculum Committee

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

This policy deals with safety and well-being of all students in maintaining a learning environment that is safe, secure and free from any form of bullying or harassment.

2. Strategic Aims & Values

Buckinghamshire College Group is committed to providing an inclusive and respectful learning environment for all students.

3. Scope

This policy relates to all students involved in courses or activities which come under the responsibility of Buckinghamshire College Group.

4. Statement of Policy

- Buckinghamshire College Group holds as its highest priority the health, safety and welfare of all its students and will take reasonable steps to ensure their safety
- Respect and inclusion are fundamental values of Buckinghamshire College Group and bullying behaviour is not acceptable
- Buckinghamshire College Group will review, implement and monitor its anti-bullying practice to ensure that every student feels safe to learn and socialise and be safe from victimisation and discrimination at the College
- Buckinghamshire College Group will work with students in the development and implementation of Anti-Bullying Policies and practice
- Buckinghamshire College Group will provide training to staff in prevention and response to bullying to ensure a clear, consistent approach
- Buckinghamshire College Group will support students to develop resilience and strategies for preventing bullying and how to report bullying and concerns
- Buckinghamshire College Group will work with partners and agencies to prevent and respond to bullying including: parents, schools, the Local Authority and the Community and Diversity Officer
- Buckinghamshire College Group will monitor and report on the incidents of bullying and actions taken to address concerns

5. Recognising Bullying

Forms of bullying

Bullying is unwanted, harmful behaviour (physical and/or emotional) that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying can be deliberate or unintentional, on the part of the bully. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of students. Bullying differs from 'friendship fall-out', or other aggressive behaviour (usually one-off incidents).

Bullying can take the form of: name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, punching, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate touch, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours, always excluding someone from a group, pressurising someone to act against their will.

Bullying can take the form of harassment including sexual. This is defined as unwanted conduct which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

Bullies may pick on someone for no apparent reason, seizing on some aspect of the victim's appearance or personality as an excuse to bully them. This may be seen as 'harmless fun' by the perpetrator but not by the victim.

For vulnerable students in the College community (SEN), who may experience bullying, the repetition may be the repeat of the act by several individuals or groups. In these examples, victims may not be aware of being bullied.

5.1 Cyber bullying

Increasingly bullying is happening through new technology; for example, sending inappropriate or hurtful texts messages, emails, photos, posting malicious, offensive or degrading material on-line and can happen anytime, anywhere.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines cyberbullying as 'when a person or group of people uses things like the internet and mobile phones to threaten, tease or upset someone else'.

Threats and intimidation

Mobile phone, email, comments on websites, social networking sites or message boards

Harassment or stalking

Repeated, prolonged, unwanted texting of any nature, on-line stalking, constant monitoring of on-line activity. For example: can be a continuation of off-line harassment or lead to physical harassment and can include silent calls. Harassment can be of a sexual, racist or homophobic kind too.

Vilification/defamation

Posting upsetting or defamatory remarks on-line, or name-calling by mobile phone. For example: sending messages by mobile phone or email of sexist, homophobic or racist nature, or attacking a physical or mental disability, cultural/religious background, appearance or socio-economic position.

Ostracising/peer rejection/exclusion

Using popular social websites such as Facebook, Twitter, What's App, Snap Chat to exclude.

Identity Theft / Unauthorised Access and Impersonation

'Hacking': accessing someone else's account by finding out or guessing their username and password, unauthorised access to email accounts/the Virtual Learning Environment: sending instant messages or emails, or using someone else's mobile phone. For example; accessing someone's information to harass or humiliate by posting on public websites, emailing, circulating copies, deleting someone's information.

Manipulation

Exerting undue pressure by email, on-line messaging or by mobile phone, for example: putting pressure on someone to reveal personal information or overtly encouraging a person to act or talk in a provocative way.

5.2 Prejudice-Based Bullying

Bullying may also take the form of singling out a person because they belong to a particular group.

Racist and Religious Bullying

Racist bullying can be defined as 'a range of hurtful behaviours, both physical and psychological, that make a person feel unwelcomed, marginalised, excluded, powerless, or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status' (*Safe from Bullying, DCSF, 2009*).

Sexual, sexist and transphobic bullying

Sexist bullying includes behaviour either physical or psychological because the victim is female or male, based on singling out something specifically gender related. Transphobic bullying refers to bullying where someone is, or is thought to be transgender.

Research shows that young people express an acceptance of sexual/sexist or transphobic insults because they are widely used, but these insults are often used to bully someone. Inappropriate touching can be a form of bullying. 'Jokes' about sexual assault or rape, if unchallenged can create an atmosphere where this behaviour is seen as more acceptable.

Sexual harassment can lead to sexual violence.

Homophobic Bullying

Homophobic bullying refers to bullying of someone because of their sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation). This can be difficult for a young person to report and is often directed at them in a sensitive phase of their lives when identity is being developed.

The term 'gay' as an insult is unacceptable and should always be challenged as such use can lead to a person feeling denigrated and even hounded. The term 'gay' is sometimes used as a proxy for racist or disablist bullying as people believe this will go unchallenged.

Disablist Bullying

This is targeted at people with disabilities and takes similar forms as other types of bullying. Additional forms may include:

Manipulative bullying - the perpetrator tries to get the victim to act in a certain way, doing something that they should not do and may not be able to recognise the wrongdoing.

Bullying that exploits a particular aspect of a condition, for example sensitivity to sensory stimuli, light or sound.

Conditional friendship where the victim is 'allowed' to be in the friendship group only on certain conditions.

Persistent, low level bullying where eventually the victim 'snaps'. This is often seen in people on the Autistic Spectrum. They can become uncontrollably angry when this occurs.

There can be a hierarchy of skills between people with disabilities. Bullying can occur within this hierarchy, for example the sighted may bully the unsighted.

There are typically high levels of bullying between people with emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as bullying of them by others.

6. Recording and Monitoring

All reports of bullying and investigations with outcomes and actions must be recorded in writing and monitored through the Student Disciplinary/Behaviour Policy.

The Course Leader should follow up discreetly with the victim to make sure the bullying has actually stopped and they feel safe, passing on any concerns to the Curriculum Manager or Safeguarding and Prevent Officer where appropriate.

A summary copy of investigations and student disciplinary relating to bullying should be forwarded to the Head of Student Services who will monitor the overall incidents of bullying and provide regular reports to Executive and the Safeguarding and Prevent Committee.

Reported incidents of prejudice-based bullying will be reported to Thames Valley Police for each campus by the Head of Student Services.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

As a framework for ensuring that all students are safe, secure and free from any forms of harassment and bullying, there is a need for every member of staff to be clear about their role in furthering the objectives of this policy.

7.1 The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Creating and promoting a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, secure and free from bullying and harassment
- Ensuring that the College has effective policies and procedures in place in accordance with legislation and safeguarding and health and safety guidance
- Modelling fair and respectful behaviours and leadership
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Supporting the allocation of resources associated with this policy

7.2 Executive is responsible for:

- Creating and promoting a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, secure and free from bullying and harassment
- Modelling fair and respectful behaviours and leadership
- Approving and systematically monitoring the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Challenging all forms of prejudice and promoting equality
- Providing a senior manager lead for the co-ordination of anti-bullying activities
- Ensuring all staff and students understand their responsibilities with regard to prevention and response to bullying and harassment
- Reviewing and allocating resources to support this policy

- Working with external agencies and partners

7.3 Head of Student Services:

- Represent the College externally in regards to anti-bullying matters eg. attending panels or committees formed by the local authority
- Co-ordination of an annual programme of anti-bullying activities, including specific activities or programmes for those who have been recognised as perpetrators of bullying.
- Maintaining and implementing the Anti-Bullying Policy, guidelines and procedures, planning and arranging training for staff in relation to this policy
- Produce an annual report of incidents and outcomes, analysing the data to identify patterns related to age, gender, ethnicity or any other protected characteristic
- Modelling fair and respectful behaviours and leadership
- Challenging all forms of prejudice and promoting equality

7.4 Safeguarding Officer is responsible for:

- Providing support, advice and guidance to students who report incidents of bullying
- Maintaining and implementing the Anti-Bullying Policy, guidelines and procedures, planning and arranging training for staff in relation to this policy
- Liaison with external agencies and partners, for example Bucks County Council
- Working with the Head of Student Services to report incidents of prejudice-based bullying/harassment to the police
- Provide guidance to other staff as needed in handling and support students where allegations are made
- Modelling fair and respectful behaviours and leadership
- Challenging all forms of prejudice and promoting equality

7.5 Faculty Directors and Curriculum Managers are responsible for:

- Creating and promoting a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, secure and free from bullying and harassment
- Modelling fair and respectful behaviours and leadership
- Challenging all forms of prejudice and promoting equality
- The consistent implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities with regard to prevention and response to bullying and harassment

- Investigating, monitoring, recording and reporting incidents of bullying and harassment
- Raising student awareness of prevention and response through curriculum and course representatives, induction and tutorial programme
- Consulting regularly with students about bullying and whether they feel safe and take practical steps to address concerns

7.6 Duty Managers are responsible for:

- Creating and promoting a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, secure and free from bullying and harassment
- Modelling fair and respectful behaviours and leadership
- Challenging all forms of prejudice and promoting equality
- Ensuring full understanding of the Anti-Bullying Policy, guidelines and procedures and their roles and responsibilities in consistently applying the policy
- Recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with Duty Managers' protocols

7.7 Teaching Teams are responsible for:

- Creating and promoting a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, secure and free from bullying and harassment
- Modelling fair and respectful behaviours and leadership
- Challenging all forms of prejudice and promoting equality
- Ensuring full understanding of the Anti-Bullying Policy, guidelines and procedures and their roles and responsibilities in consistently applying the policy
- Supporting the capacity of students to respond to bullying themselves in developing resilience and strategies for preventing bullying through induction and the tutorial programme
- Reporting and recording incidents of bullying to the Curriculum Manager for investigation and follow up

7.8 Business Support Staff are responsible for:

- Creating and promoting a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, secure and free from bullying and harassment
- Modelling fair and respectful behaviours and leadership
- Challenging all forms of prejudice and promoting equality
- Ensuring full understanding of the Anti-Bullying Policy, guidelines and procedures and their roles and responsibilities in consistently applying the policy

7.9 Students are responsible for:

- Creating and promoting a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, secure and free from bullying and harassment
- Modelling fair and respectful behaviours to their peers, staff, visitors and the College environment
- Challenging all forms of prejudice (eg: racism, sexism, homophobia or discrimination about disability) and promoting equality
- Ensuring their behaviour does not intentionally hurt or humiliate another individual or group physically or emotionally
- Not colluding or reinforcing bullying by being a bystander– students should walk away and get help or include the victim in a group for safety
- Understanding strategies to prevent bullying and know to whom to report concerns
- Reporting all concerns and worries about themselves or someone else to a member of staff at an early stage

8. Response to cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying The College will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
 - Looking at use of College Systems
 - Identifying and interviewing possible witnesses
 - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary
- Work with individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation
- Support reports to service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content
- Requesting the deletion of locally held content and content posted online
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; The College will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed
- Provide information to staff and students regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online.

9. Bullying outside College Premises

This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off The College premises, such as public transport, local shops or in a town.

Where bullying outside The College is reported and the behaviour has a significant impact on the safety and well-being of students in The College it will be investigated, in conjunction with parents/carers and other outside agencies (where appropriate) and acted on. The College will

consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or other services however is the misbehaviour is criminal or poses a serious threat the police will always be informed.

10. Further Reading and Guidance

This policy has been written from the guidance 'Safe from Bullying: in Further Education Colleges' (DCSF)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following College procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidelines
- Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- Student Disciplinary/Behaviour Policy and Procedures
- E-Safety Policy
- PREVENT Strategy

Other Reading and Websites:

- Safe from Bullying: in further education college (DCSF, 2009)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in Colleges Guide May 2018
- Stay safe in cyberspace (anti-bullying alliance – www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk)
- Safe to Learn: Cyberbullying (DCSF)
- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- CEOP (The Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre) www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia) www.eachaction.org
- Stonewall www.stonewall.org.uk
- MENCAP www.mencap.org.uk/dontstickit.
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719902/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf

Anti-Bullying Policy Procedures

Framework

Bullying can only be stopped through a combination of **Prevention** and **Response**. This next section outlines the framework to prevent bullying at Buckinghamshire College Group and the response required to deal with bullying behaviour when an incident occurs.

1. Preventing Bullying

We will ensure that:

There is a designated Safeguarding Officer on each BGC campus who will deliver anti-bullying activities; provide support and advice to students who report incidents of bullying, monitor bullying incidents, ensuring records are kept, reporting and linking with external agencies and partners.

The Anti-Bullying Policy provides clear guidance so that everyone understands what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and how bullying will be dealt with.

The Anti-Bullying Policy covers different kinds of bullying, for example: prejudice-based bullying and cyberbullying. This will be reviewed annually in consultation with students and approved by the Executive group.

The Acceptable Use of IT Policy and E-Safety Policy are implemented, publicised and regularly monitored through the ILT strategy group.

All staff, students and parents/carers are informed of the Policy and how to put it into practice, which will be publicised through the College website, CLOUD, Student Council, and the Tutorial programme.

We include a section on bullying in promotional materials and welcome packs for students, including the student handbook, making it clear that bullying and harassment are unacceptable.

There is regular training for all staff on the Anti-Bullying Policy and their role in prevention and response.

All new staff receive training and information on the Anti-Bullying Policy as part of their induction including their responsibilities, and signposting to further help.

We provide additional training for staff where there are specific training needs, for example support with addressing transgender bullying, or cyberbullying.

We work with students to develop resilience and strategies to respond to bullying and develop positive relationships and choose not to discriminate or bully through the tutorial and induction programme.

We provide and publicise a confidential helpline for students to report their concerns.

We work with the Student Council to implement Anti-Bullying practice.

We consult with students about bullying and feeling safe and take practical steps in response to their feedback.

We provide systems for grievances and conflict to be resolved.

We work in partnership with students, parents, schools, community policing and other local partner agencies to prevent and respond to bullying.

2. Response to Bullying

When bullying does occur, a clear consistent response is vital. The goals of intervention should always be the same:

- To make the victim safe
- To stop the bullying and change the bully's behaviour
- To make clear to every student that bullying is unacceptable
- To learn lessons from the experience that can be applied in future

Reporting and Investigating Bullying

All bullying incidents should be reported to the Curriculum Manager or Duty Manager and an incident form completed. This will be investigated under the relevant section of the Student Disciplinary & Behaviour Policy which in cases of serious misconduct deals with the procedures for suspension and exclusion of a student.

The investigation should be carried out sensitively and in a timely fashion to establish what has happened and agree a way forward. This should avoid humiliating the victim by taking actions which make them seem weaker, powerless or a 'grass'.

Supporting the Victim

In order to make the victim feel safe he or she may need further support while the bullying is being dealt with, or after it has stopped. The Safeguarding Officer will help the victim to develop and monitor support strategies, refer to other support services and liaise with the appropriate staff member in the follow up.

Changing the Environment

In some instances there may be prejudice exhibited by a whole group. This will need to be addressed by the Curriculum Manager through investigation and working with the group to discourage and address collusion of bullying and bystander behaviour, further training and the development of positive relationships and the effects of bullying on others.

Working with the Bullying Person

We will offer opportunities to the bullying young person to ensure the bullying stops and the bullying behaviour changes outlined by the following principles:

- Focus on the behaviour and not the student
- Explore how bullying makes them feel and why the need to bully
- Find alternative ways to feel recognised and manage their emotions
- Identify and deal with triggers
- Victim empathy and making amends
- Professional help and counselling

Reviewing After the Event

We will regularly review our anti-bullying processes for effectiveness. We will also review situations across College where lessons may be learned as a result of reported incidents of bullying.

Equality Impact Statement

We have a duty to consider the impact of changes on groups with Protected Characteristics (race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership).

What are the overall aims of the change? Why are you proposing it?	The aim of this policy is to provide a framework to ensure that the guidelines are in place to support all stakeholders
Given the aims of your proposal, what issues does your data/information highlight?	Everybody is included within this policy, and all groups are given parity in regards to their needs and provisions
How could the proposed change affect positively/negatively on groups with protected characteristics?	This has a positive impact on all groups with protected characteristics, as they are ensured equal treatment and provision based on their needs. Risk assessments may be carried out to ensure that this is the case and provisions maybe altered to accommodate specific needs
What actions will you take to mitigate any negative impact?	No negative impact to having this policy
Is there any potential negative impact justified in light of wider benefits of the proposal?	No negative impact to having this policy
Recording final decision	This policy requires Executive and Quality and Curriculum Committee approval
Has the policy taken into consideration the requirements of GDPR regulations? Are there any actions that need addressing, e.g.; data sharing agreement; has data consent been considered; data retention timescales?	GDPR regulations have been considered and actions comply with data protection requirements.