

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures

Version No	Purpose/Change	Lead	Review Date
Earlier versions are available.			
8.0	Reviewed and updated	BW	September 2023
-	Reviewed – no changes	SDE	September 2025

1. Policy

1.1 How does Wilberforce Sixth Form College view bullying?

Any form of bullying is totally unacceptable at Wilberforce Sixth Form College; this behaviour runs counter to the ethos of the College, underpinned by our Core Values, which include: 'We value individuals and promote self-esteem'; and 'We conduct ourselves with integrity and respect for all'. Bullying is inconsistent with our commitment to equality and diversity.

We have a safeguarding duty to ensure that all our students can learn and reach their potential in a safe environment. Bullying has a significant detrimental effect on the well-being of young people and can be a serious obstacle to student achievement.

1.2 What can be done to combat bullying?

Bullying can only be stopped through a combination of prevention and response. Preventative work is ongoing and sustained. When an incident occurs, a response is required to deal with the bullying behaviour and support the victim.

Preventing bullying is the responsibility of all members of staff. The College ethos will play a key role in creating an inclusive environment in which bullying is not tolerated. All staff should model our Core Values of respect and integrity with their associated behaviours to students on a day-to-day basis and also those of the Fundamental British Values.

Student Services gather information from schools each year on new students. This information is used by the Student Support Manager and Student Support Officers to prevent past histories of bullying re-occurring in College.

All staff have the responsibility to respond to any form of bullying. This response should seek to address and change the behaviour of the bully and to support the victim. All members of the College community should work together to challenge all forms of prejudice. Notes should be entered on the college's internal information systems, outlining the nature of the incident and what has been done, and indicating any future actions to be taken. The staff member should report the behaviour to a member of Student Services Team, who may then refer to the Student Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy and take any relevant action including, if necessary reporting the incident to external agencies.

In the case of serious and/or recurring bullying, the Student Services Manager should be informed along with the Designated Senior Person (DSP) for Safeguarding who will investigate the matter, check for wider issues and may consult with appropriate external agencies. Student Services staff may respond accordingly, using restorative strategies to address and

change the bullying behaviour and to reach an outcome which best supports both the victim and the perpetrator, however, a decision may be made to withdraw the students place.

This policy should also be applied in conjunction with the *Student Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy* and *Exclusion Policy* and the systems and procedures already in place to deal with serious and persistent misconduct.

The College fully understands that Children and young people are capable of abusing their peers and can be classed as bullying and take place inside and outside of College. This is known as child-on-child abuse. Staff undergo annual training, which highlights this and students are also informed of Child on Child abuse as part of the tutorial programme and are made aware of who they can report concerns to. Allegations of Child on Child abuse will be investigated and dealt with by the DSP and/or the Lead Person for Child Protection, liaising with appropriate external agencies and where appropriate utilising the Student Conduct and Behaviour Management Policy and Exclusion Policy. All staff must be aware that; abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up". Victims of Child on Child abuse will be supported through the Colleges Student Services and liaison with appropriate external agencies.

Child on child abuse may include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

The College has very specific ICT policies, protocols and guidance (Acceptable Use Policy, eSafety and eSafety guidance for students and Prevent) in place to prevent and respond to forms of *cyberbullying*. Our managed systems limit access to websites that are considered as a risk and also monitor behavior, with highlighted concerns reported to the Student Services Manager and the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding.

It is essential that students are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, for example peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes harm, for example making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying); and
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If anyone believes a student is at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

Online safety is a running and interrelated theme implemented through our policies and procedures. We ensure students are educated on the risks associated with online use, including the use of mobile technology, through the tutorial programme and who they can report concerns to. We utilise opportunities to share information/advice and educate our students throughout the curriculum and also through our internal communications channels.

2. Informal Procedures

Anyone who feels they are being bullied or harassed should report their concerns to a member of staff as soon as possible. Student Services must be informed by staff members of any incident or allegation and the details of the incident recorded on Cedar (and CPOMs if appropriate). The Student Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy may be invoked following a report of bullying or harassment.

THE ALLEGED BULLY IS A STUDENT

i) Challenge the behaviour

All staff and students have a duty to challenge, report and record any bullying as follows:

- Make sure that bullying is or was taking place, not merely horseplay in which the recipient is happy to take part.
- Make it clear to the alleged bully that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and explain why.
- Encourage and support the recipient.
- Inform DSP, Deputy DSP or a Child Protection Officer no later than the end of the working day and a note recorded on CPOMs.

When the alleged bully has been challenged and told that his / her behaviour is unacceptable, that may be enough to stop it. S/he may have been unaware that their behaviour is offensive or unwanted. If this does not stop the bullying, then the recipient may wish to seek a resolution via the informal or formal procedures.

ii) Mediation

If harassment or bullying has occurred the student should talk the situation through with a member of staff who will then report the matter to a member of Student Services Staff. This can sometimes give the student the confidence to deal with the situation themselves.

If the student still feels intimidated, they may want to ask for the support from a member of staff, to mediate: either to accompany them when they speak to the other person, or to speak on their behalf. It may be appropriate to organise a meeting between the parties, mediated by an impartial third party (e.g. Student Services Manager), especially if the alleged bully is making a counter-complaint. It is important to identify the cause of the conflict and to agree a solution. The College will usually try to encourage a solution via mediation before moving to the formal procedures.

Advice and support is available for as long as the recipient needs it. Counselling is available both for the recipient and for the person whose behaviour is alleged to be unacceptable. This can be organised via the College counsellors.

All notes (Cedar) must be updated to include information of discussions/meetings with all concerned and, if appropriate, a note entered on to CPOMs.

iii) Mediation is not wanted by the recipient, refused by the bully or ineffective

If the recipient does not wish to take part in mediation, then the matter will be dealt with immediately under the normal *Student Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy*.

If the alleged bully refuses to participate in mediation, or having met, refuses to modify their behaviour (or if having agreed, fails to do so), or if retaliation or victimisation occur, then the matter will be dealt with immediately under the normal *Student Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy*.

THE ALLEGED BULLY IS A MEMBER OF STAFF

If the alleged bully is a member of staff, the student should seek assistance from an appropriate (other) member of staff. After an initial discussion with the recipient, that (other) member of staff should inform the college Principal. If the alleged incident is sufficiently serious, the Principal may refer the matter to a member of SLT in line with the *Staff Disciplinary Procedure* and other relevant policies.

All options should remain available to the student and member of staff including the use of mediation, unless the alleged incident is deemed too serious.

3. Formal Procedures

The alleged bully is another student:

Bullying can be a form of child-on-child abuse as stated above and incidents for example cannot be passed off as 'it's only banter', 'I was just having a laugh' or 'its part of growing up' – abuse is abuse and any incidents must be reported in line with the college's Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and protocols.

Students are encouraged to report any concerns regarding themselves or of another student to a member of staff and are made aware of key support staff, including the Child Protection Officers during their induction process.

All students are informed of the college's expectations regarding behavior and conduct, this is communicated to all students during the enrolment process, through the tutorial program and also talks led by the SLT. All teachers reinforce the expectations within their first lesson at the start of the academic year. The college reserves the right to invoke the *Student Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy* if it is deemed appropriate and reasonable to do so, if an incident of bullying has occurred.

The alleged bully is a member of staff:

Details of procedures can be found in the *Staff Disciplinary Procedure*.

After the formal procedure has been concluded:

Where a complaint is upheld, it is the responsibility of the bully's Teachers or other relevant staff, liaising with the Student Services Manager, where appropriate, to check that no further bullying takes place and that there is no subsequent victimisation, either by the bully, or the bully's friends.

Counselling can be arranged via the College counsellors for both or either parties of the complaint, irrespective of the outcome.

5. Associated Policies / Procedures

- Child Protection Policy
- eSafety Policy
- eSafety Guidance for Students
- Prevent Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure (Staff)
- Grievance Procedure (Staff)
- Single Equality Scheme
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy

Please note: that whilst every effort will be made to follow this policy, circumstances may not always allow this or may render certain parts of the policy inappropriate. Individuals will be treated fairly and in line with legislation in all instances.

Guidelines on Bullying

1.1 What is bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

How does bullying differ from banter?

- When the victim perceives the action to be bullying and not banter.
- There may also be a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate, and/or a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- It is usually (though not always) persistent.

1.2 What form does bullying take?

Bullying may include but not limited to: child-on-child abuse as stated above, name calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; inappropriate touching; producing offensive graffiti; spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours; or always leaving someone out of groups. It is also bullying when a young person is pressured to act against their will by others.

1.3 What is Cyberbullying?

Increasingly, bullying is happening through new technology. This can involve sending inappropriate, or hurtful messages, e-mails, instant messages, or posting malicious material online (e.g. on social networking websites), or sending or posting offensive, sexualised or degrading images and videos.

1.4 Who are the victims?

Bullies may pick on someone for no apparent reason. Bullying may also take the form of singling out a young person because they belong to a particular group. Examples may include but not limited to:

Racist and religious bullying – singling out people because of their background, culture or religion.

Sexual, sexist and transphobic bullying – where sexuality is used as a weapon by boys or girls. Insults that are often seen as acceptable by some can be used to victimise others. Inappropriate touching can also be seen as a form of bullying and harassment, and may escalate into abuse. Similarly, 'jokes' about sexual assault, or rape, if unchallenged, can create an atmosphere in which this behaviour is seen as more acceptable.

Homophobic bullying – targets someone because of their sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation). The term 'gay' as an insult is unacceptable and should always be challenged.

Disablist bullying – used against someone with a disability. This may take the form of manipulative bullying where the victim is coerced to act in a certain way and 'conditional' bullying where the victim is 'allowed' to be in a friendship group only on certain conditions.