



# **ANTI-BULLYING**

# **POLICY**

**September 2012**

## 1. Anti-bullying Statements

At Blackpool Sixth we believe that:

- a) All bullying is unacceptable irrespective of how it is delivered and what excuses are given to attempt to justify it.
- b) No one deserves to be a victim of bullying.
- c) Everyone has the right to be treated with respect.
- d) Victims of bullying are likely to have reduced self-worth and are more likely to experience health problems.
- e) Bullying promotes poor models of behaviour for young people to imitate and thereby reduces the potential for all individuals to contribute positively.
- f) Organisations that tolerate bullying are likely to be less effective.
- g) All members of college should act as helpful bystanders, challenging and reporting bullying whenever it is encountered.

## 2. Responsibilities

Blackpool Sixth expects all staff, students and governors to:

- a) Have an understanding of the nature of bullying, be aware of this policy and be prepared to act on it
- b) Take bullying seriously and assure all members of our community that they will be listened to and their concerns acted upon
- c) Behave in a way that recognises the impact of bullying behaviour whilst safeguarding the dignity and respect of all involved
- d) Encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own actions
- e) Model behaviour that positively reinforces others' sense of self worth

## 3. Definition of Bullying

There are a number of definitions of bullying but all definitions include the following characteristics, although this is not an exhaustive list:

- There is a deliberate intention to undermine, patronise, humiliate, intimidate or demean the recipient
- It tends to be repetitive or recurrent\*
- It often involves an imbalance of power

Occasionally, the distress bullying causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are responsible.

\*An incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent if it fulfills all other descriptions of bullying.

**Direct Discrimination** occurs when a person treats another less favourably than they would a person from a different group. **Indirect Discrimination** occurs when procedures have a different effect on people from a particular group.

#### 4. What forms does bullying take?

- **Emotional** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
- **Physical** pushing, kicking, hitting, spitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Verbal** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing. Inappropriate jokes, ill-considered remarks or language choice (even when used without malicious intent).
- **Cyber** all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Social networks. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.
- **Racist** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- **Religious** unwanted behaviour based on religious beliefs, practices or customs.
- **Gender** unwanted harassment because of gender expression; masculinity or femininity.
- **Homophobic** based on known or presumed sexual orientation.
- **Disability** unwanted behaviour based on disability, impairment or additional need. Also includes individuals with progressive conditions such as HIV or individuals with a disfigurement.
- **Sexual** unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments including sexual slurs, belittling, suggestive, lewd or abusive remarks, explicit 'jokes' or compromising invitations.
- **Socio-economic background** based on individuals living in poverty, in care, homeless, from affluent backgrounds or having a criminal record/involvement in criminal proceedings

Specific examples of bullying include the following (this is not an exhaustive list).

- Verbal or written threats or humiliating an individual in front of others
- Using sarcasm or aggression against an individual
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Blaming one person for something which others get away with
- Unwanted physical contact such as touching or groping
- Ill-considered comments or jokes about a person's religion (or lack of it), physical appearance, weight, disability, family, lifestyle choice, dress, friendship choices, intelligence or other issues
- Excluding an individual from activities or conversation unnecessarily
- Putting pressure on an individual to fit in with others
- Using stereotypes to demean or ridicule people
- Students bullying staff for better grades or any other reason

It is important to understand that bullying is not the **odd occasion** of falling out with friends, name-calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. People sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is bullying if the unwanted behaviour is repeated with the intention to cause harm.

## 5. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet to cause harm or upset to someone else. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, but it differs from other forms of bullying in significant ways:

- It can be 24/7 - invading the home and personal space.
- It may be perceived as anonymous, the actual identity of the perpetrator can be hidden.
- Participants can be unconscious perpetrators without understanding the consequences.
- The circulation of electronic messages is difficult to control.
- The size of the potential audience can be huge.

### Types of cyberbullying

- By mobile phone, email, comments on websites, social networking sites or message boards.
- Serious threats - can be sent to both staff and pupils.
- Repeated, prolonged, unwanted texting; online stalking, constant monitoring online activity.
- Posting upsetting or defamatory remarks online or by text.
- Sending menacing or upsetting responses to people when they are in a web based chat room.
- Harassment and victimisation conducted via social networking sites - often used to post photographs or offensive / threatening comments about an individual or group.
- Sending messages by mobile phone or email of sexist, homophobic racist nature, or attacking a physical or mental disability, cultural/religious background, appearance or socio-economic position.
- Accessing someone else's account by finding out or guessing their username and password, unauthorised access to email accounts; sending Instant Messages or emails, using someone else's mobile phone.
- Accessing, copying someone's information, e.g. emails or pictures, in order to harass or humiliate, by posting them on public sites, emailing or forwarding them or printing and circulating copies.
- Deleting someone's information for example electronically submitted or stored documents or important emails.
- Impersonating someone pretending to be the person whose account has been hacked, in order to post abusive comments and bad language.

## **6. Anti-bullying ethos**

Blackpool Sixth's core values play a key role in creating an inclusive, respectful environment in which bullying is not tolerated. To create this culture we expect all members of college to:

- a) Treat everyone with respect, courtesy and fairness.
- b) Recognise and respect the rights and beliefs of others.
- c) Recognise and acknowledge other students' differences and varying needs.
- d) Be tolerant of people's views, where they do not conflict with the college's core values, and act without prejudice.
- e) Choose not to engage in, or accept bullying, intimidation or harassment.
- f) Behave with integrity and challenge prejudice, discrimination and harassment wherever it occurs.
- g) Report any prejudice, discrimination or harassment.

## **7. Increasing awareness of anti-bullying**

All students, staff, volunteers and governors need to be aware of this policy and the college's approach to bullying and harassment. Blackpool Sixth will endeavour to address this through:

- a) Appropriate information and regular training for staff, volunteers and governors.
- b) Information for students in the tutorial programme, on FirstClass, induction booklets.
- c) Messages in the weekly notices and newsletters.
- d) Annual events to coincide with National Anti-bullying Week in November each year.

## **8. Allegations of bullying or harassment against students**

Allegations of bullying should be reported to any member of staff.

All allegations of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and investigated. When a student or parent/carer reports an allegation of bullying to a member of staff, the member of staff will deal with the matter as quickly as possible by:

- a) Staying calm and reassuring the student/parent/carer that the matter will be dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible.
- b) Listening to the student/parent/carer to find out exactly what has happened.
- c) Keeping notes of this conversation, recording when (dates/times), where (places) and who (names of the bully/bullies) - students/parents/carers are not always keen to give this information as they are concerned about the repercussions if the bully/bullies find out. However, we cannot deal with specific cases of bullying if we do not have this information.
- d) Referring the case on to the Head of Student Services for further investigation when there is evidence that bullying has taken place.

Where bullying outside college is reported to staff, it will be investigated and acted on. Disciplinary action may be taken if the bullying impacts on the learning of members of the college. If the behaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, then the police will be informed.

## **9. Allegations against members of staff or volunteers**

The college will follow procedures in line with the Safeguarding Policy and if any allegation is made against a member of staff. The Deputy Principal will investigate any allegations promptly and will engage the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate. The Deputy Principal may suspend the member of staff whilst an investigation is taking place.

## **10. Investigating allegations and interventions**

- a) The Head of Student Services will investigate all bullying allegations. The aims of the investigation and any interventions will be:
  - To make sure the alleged victim is safe.
  - To stop the bullying.
  - To make it clear that bullying is unacceptable.
  - To support the victim and to change the bully's behaviour.
- b) The Head of Student Services will act immediately to prevent, as far as reasonably possible, any harm or further harm occurring.
- c) If any allegation appears to involve illegal activity then the incident will be reported to the Police.
- d) The alleged perpetrator and victim will be interviewed and statements taken
- e) Parents of all parties involved will be informed of the allegation.

- f) Following any investigation, the college will review what has happened and decide on the most appropriate and proportionate course of action. Sanctions may be put in place and external agencies may be involved depending on the seriousness of the incident.
- g) Serious or persistent incidents of bullying will be dealt with through normal behaviour / disciplinary procedures.

## **11. Supporting the victim of bullying**

During the investigation and subsequent interventions it is important to:

- a) Avoid humiliating the victim by taking actions which may make them seem weaker or powerless.
- b) Help the victim become more resilient, for example by building up their self-confidence, emphasising their strengths and helping them to develop protective friendships.
- c) Offer the support of the Welfare Officer, Counsellor or a Mentor as a source of further help.
- d) Offer a safe place during DSTs or breaks.
- e) Work together with partner organisations to ensure that victims of bullying have easy access to wider support services, as required.
- f) Keep the victim informed of all developments during the investigation.
- g) Follow up, discreetly, with the victim to make certain the bullying has stopped, and that they feel safe.

## **12. Working with the alleged bully**

The aim will be to help the alleged bully understand their behaviour and its effects on others. The overall goal is to ensure the bullying stops and the bully's behaviour changes. Informal warnings, mediation and formal disciplinary action will be used as appropriate. The alleged bully may also be offered the support of the Welfare Officer, Counsellor or a Mentor as a source of further help.

## **13. Reporting, monitoring and review**

- a) The details of all allegations, interventions and sanctions will be recorded by the Head of Student Services
- b) The Senior Management Team and Governing Body will receive a report each term, as part of the Safeguarding Report, including a summary of bullying incidents.
- c) The policy will be reviewed bi-annually.