



“Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures”

Student Support Policies and Procedures

Anti-bullying and harassment policy

Aim: To ensure that everyone in the college takes responsibility for the prevention of bullying and/or harassment and to ensure that appropriate and consistent action is taken and support offered where bullying and harassment is reported.

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1. Introduction

The college aims to maintain an environment that respects the dignity and rights of all students and where individuals have the opportunity to realise their full potential.

The college will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying. If a complaint is made it will be investigated promptly and appropriate action taken. Where a student is found to have committed acts of bullying and/or harassment, it will be dealt with under the positive behaviour and disciplinary policy, and could result in permanent exclusion.

A key provision in The Equality Act 2010 is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force on 5 April 2011 and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty requires the college to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students. It applies to bullying and/or harassment at college and also off the college premises such as public transport, outside local shops, in town/village centres and online, including social media. Where bullying outside college is reported to staff, disciplinary action may be taken if the bullying impacts on the learning of members of the college.

Allegations against members of staff or volunteers should be reported to the Deputy Principal, in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If there is an allegation that a student is bullying or harassing a member of the staff, the student will be managed in line with this policy and the member of staff will be supported in line with staff policies and procedures

3. Purpose

The college is committed to maintaining a positive, open culture that enables individuals to flourish and in which inappropriate behaviour in the form of bullying and/or harassment is challenged and appropriate action taken.

The purpose of having a policy and understood procedure is to:

- minimise the chance for bullying and/or harassment

- ensure appropriate and consistent action is taken and support offered where bullying and harassment is concerned
- ensure that everyone in the college takes responsibility for the prevention of bullying and/or harassment and the safeguarding of students.

4. Definitions

a) What is bullying?

Bullying, although not defined legally, is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, online-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a young person is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour.

b) What is harassment?

Harassment occurs when an individual is subject to unwanted conduct which has the purpose (intentional) or effect (unintentional) of:

- violating an individual's dignity; or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Harassment may be repetitive or an isolated occurrence against one or more individual. Harassment is unlawful on the grounds of sex, gender reassignment, race, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, age, religion/belief, or for a reason relating to a person's disability.

See appendix 1 for more information about different types of bullying.

5. Responsibilities

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

- treat everyone with respect, courtesy and fairness.
- recognise and respect the rights and beliefs of others.
- recognise and acknowledge other students' differences and varying needs.
- be tolerant of people's views and act without prejudice.
- choose not to engage in, or accept bullying, intimidation or harassment.
- behave with integrity and challenge prejudice, discrimination and harassment wherever it occurs.
- have high expectations in terms of standards of behaviour.
- make it clear that any violence or harassment is not acceptable and will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- not tolerate or dismiss any bullying or harassment as "banter"
- report any prejudice, discrimination or harassment.

Blackpool Sixth expects all staff, students and directors to:

- create a positive open culture that challenges inappropriate behaviour from any individual
- have an understanding of the nature of bullying, be aware of this policy and be prepared to act on it
- ensure all members of the college community are made aware of the Anti-bullying and harassment policy.
- take bullying seriously and assure all members of our community that they will be listened to and their concerns acted upon
- ensure all members of the college community understand that bullying and/or harassment will not be tolerated
- behave in a way that recognises the impact of bullying behaviour whilst safeguarding the dignity and respect of all involved
- encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own actions
- model behaviour that positively reinforces others' sense of self worth
- challenge all instances of inappropriate behaviour
- attend annual training on bullying and harassment as part of the safeguarding training
- take action, report and recording outcomes for all cases of bullying or harassment that you become aware of.

6. Prevention

- Appropriate training, development and guidance is provided to support staff and students understanding of the Anti -bullying and harassment policy.
- At application and enrolment students have the opportunity to disclose if they have been bullied. Any disclosures will be followed up by the safeguarding team and appropriate action put in place.
- At induction, students and parents/carers are made aware of expectations and policies/procedures in terms of bullying/harassment.
- On programme, a supportive pastoral curriculum which promotes and covers aspects such as bullying, harassment, stereotyping, prejudice and e-safety.
- Any groups particularly vulnerable to bullying and harassment such as students with special educational needs and or disabilities, children looked after and students undergoing gender reassignment are provided with additional pastoral and welfare support.

7. Managing allegations of bullying or harassment against students

a) Reporting allegations

Allegations of bullying should be reported to any member of staff. The member of staff will deal with the matter as quickly as possible by:

- staying calm and reassuring the student/parent/carer that the matter will be dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible.
- listening to the student/parent/carer to find out exactly what has happened.
- keeping notes of this conversation, recording when (dates/times), where (places) and who (names of the alleged perpetrator(s)) - students/parents/carers are not always keen to give this information as they are concerned about the repercussions if the alleged perpetrator(s) find out. Please note, we cannot deal with specific cases of bullying if we do not have this information.
- referring the case to the safeguarding team using the college's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

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.

b) Investigating allegations and interventions

i) A Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead allocates a member of the safeguarding team to lead the investigation. This allocated member of the safeguarding team will investigate the allegation and assess the risks. The member of the safeguarding team will consider the proportionality of the response. The support and response will be tailored on a case-by-case basis. Some cases, for instance a one-off incident of name-calling is likely to be vastly different from that for a report of repeated sexual harassment. The aims of the investigation and any interventions will be:

- o to make sure the alleged victim is safe and take immediate steps to prevent any harm or further harm occurring.
- o to stop the bullying.
- o to make it clear that bullying is unacceptable.
- o to support the victim and to change the alleged perpetrators behaviour.

ii) If any allegation appears to involve illegal activity then the incident will be reported to the police.

iii) The alleged perpetrator(s), victim(s) and witnesses will be interviewed and statements taken.

iv) Parents/carers of all parties involved will be informed of the allegation.

v) 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.

vi) Serious or persistent incidents of bullying will be dealt with under the positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures and may result in exclusion.

c) Supporting the victim of bullying

During the investigation and subsequent interventions it is important to:

(i) avoid humiliating the victim by taking actions which may make them seem weaker or powerless.

(ii) take the wishes of the victim into consideration in terms of how they want to proceed. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered.

(ii) help the victim become more resilient, for example by building up their self-confidence, emphasising their strengths and helping them to develop protective friendships.

(iii) offer support within college

- (iv) offer a safe place during directed study times or breaks.
- (v) work together with partner organisations to ensure that victims of bullying have easy access to wider support services, as required.
- (vi) keep the victim informed of all developments during the investigation.
- (vii) follow up, discreetly, with the victim to make certain the bullying has stopped, and that they feel safe.

d) Working with the alleged perpetrator

The aim will be to help the alleged perpetrator understand their behaviour and its effects on others. The overall goal is to ensure the bullying stops and the alleged perpetrators behaviour changes. Informal warnings, mediation and formal disciplinary action will be used as appropriate. The alleged perpetrator will also be offered the appropriate support within college and through partner organisations, where relevant.

There is a difficult balancing act to consider. On the one hand to safeguard the victim (and the wider student body) and on the other hand providing the alleged perpetrator with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implementing any disciplinary sanctions.

It is important to consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. An alleged perpetrator may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other students.

e) Recording and reporting

The details of all allegations, interventions and sanctions will be recorded online using MyConcern, the college's system for recording and managing all safeguarding concerns. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Board of Directors will receive an annual report, as part of the safeguarding report.

8. Other related policies

- Blackpool Sixth Expects
- Equality and diversity (E&D) policy
- Online safety policy
- Pastoral support policy
- Positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Special educational needs and disability policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Staff grievance policy
- Use of reasonable force policy

Appendix 1: Types of bullying

- **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).
- **Online** all areas of internet, such as email, social media and internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. 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/transphobic/biphobic** based on those known or presumed to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.
- **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

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.