



“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.

Policy Authorisation:	Management: Senior Leadership Team
Date of Policy Update:	November 2021
Date of Policy Review:	November 2024
Policy Author	College Lead for Safeguarding and Student Standards

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Scope	3
3. Purpose	4
4. Definitions	4
a) What is bullying?	4
b) What is harassment?	5
5. Responsibilities	6
a) All members of the college	6
b) All staff and directors	6
c) Zero tolerance approach	7
6. Prevention	8
7. Managing allegations of bullying or harassment against students	8
a) Reporting initial allegations	8
b) Investigating allegations and interventions	9
c) Supporting the victim(s) of bullying	11
During the investigation and subsequent interventions it is important to:	11
d) Working with and supporting the alleged perpetrator	11
e) Recording and reporting	12
8. Other related policies	12
Appendix 1: Types of bullying	13

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, harassment and other forms of peer-on-peer abuse 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 Assistant Principal (Student Support), 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.

Young people who are victims of bullying, harassment or other forms of peer-on-peer abuse, will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment.

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.

Bullying can take a number of different forms including sexual violence and harassment; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent; physical abuse such as hitting, biting or causing physical harm through any other means; sexting (sharing of nude and semi-nude images); upskirting; initiating/hazing type violence and rituals (used as a way of initiating a person into a group).

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 individuals. 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.

Sexual Harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. This policy refers to peer-on-peer sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a young person's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, spreading rumours, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes/appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
- sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- physical behaviour, such as: unwanted physical contact, deliberately brushing against someone or interfering with someone's clothes.
- displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.

Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:

- Non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos.
- Sexualised online bullying.
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media.
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

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

5. Responsibilities

a) All members of the college

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 people's 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" or "just a joke"
- report any prejudice, discrimination or harassment.

b) All staff and directors

Blackpool Sixth expects all staff and directors to:

- create a positive open culture that challenges inappropriate behaviour from any individual.
- recognise that children and young people are capable of abusing their peers.
- recognise that bullying or peer-on-peer abuse can happen both inside and outside of college and online. In many cases, abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and face to face in daily life.
- have a mindset that it could happen here.
- understand that even if there are no reported cases of a particular type of peer-on-peer abuse, this doesn't mean it's not happening within the college.
- recognise and respond to the signs when a young person may be facing bullying, harassment or abuse. Understanding that young people may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally.
- understand that bullying, harassment and other peer-on-peer abuse can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the college, such as everyday stereotypes and everyday sexist or discriminatory language.

- have an understanding of the nature of bullying, be aware of this policy and be prepared to act on it.
- have appropriate knowledge of part 5 (Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment) of the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.
- 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, reporting and recording all cases of bullying, harassment that you become aware of using MyConcern as soon as possible.

c) Zero tolerance approach

There is a zero-tolerance approach to peer-on-peer abuse. It is essential that all staff challenge inappropriate behaviours between peers. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and young people and, in worst-case scenarios, lead to a culture that normalises abuse leading to children and young people accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

6. Prevention

- Appropriate training, development and guidance is provided to support the staff and students' understanding of the Anti-bullying and harassment policy.
- At application and during 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, healthy and respectful relationships, body confidence and self-esteem, consent, sexting, risky behaviour, e-safety and how to report.
- Any groups particularly vulnerable to bullying and harassment (for instance, girls are more likely to become victims of sexual harassment, students with special educational needs and or disabilities, children looked after, young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transexual (LGBT) or those who are perceived by their peers to be LGBT, and those undergoing gender reassignment) are provided with additional pastoral and welfare support.

7. Managing allegations of bullying or harassment against students

a) Reporting initial allegations

Allegations of bullying, harassment or other peer-on-peer abuse 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 is being taken seriously, the student will be supported and kept safe and the matter will be dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible. A victim should never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- never promising confidentiality as it is extremely likely that a concern of bullying, harassment or abuse will have to be shared further.
- listening to the student/parent/carer and any bystanders to find out exactly what has happened.
- keeping notes of these conversations, 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, harassment or other peer-on-peer abuse outside college is reported to staff, it will be investigated and acted on. Disciplinary action may be taken if the bullying impacts the health, safety and/or 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. They will:

- make an immediate risk assessment and an assessment of need to consider the victim, especially their protection and support, and take any immediate actions that are appropriate to protect them.
- make sure the alleged victim is safe and take immediate steps to prevent any harm or further harm from occurring.
- take immediate steps to stop the bullying or harassment.
- make it clear that bullying or harassment is unacceptable.
- support the victim(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s), as required.
- be aware that incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with contextual factors outside the college.
- be aware that the young people involved in bullying or harassment could be at risk of multiple harms including (but not limited to), sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines.
- consider the proportionality of the response. The support and response will be tailored on a case-by-case basis. In 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.
- coordinate discussions with the alleged perpetrator(s), the victim(s) and witnesses.
- inform parents/carers of all parties involved in the allegation (unless this would put the victim at greater risk).

- be aware that it is likely that some people will “take sides”, therefore the allocated member of the safeguarding team will do all they can to ensure both the victim(s), alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not being subject to any further bullying or harassment.
- record all discussions, actions, decisions and reasons for decisions on MyConcern

ii) The wishes of the victim are always given high priority in terms of how they want to proceed and any support provided. Victims are given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions. Although, ultimately, we have to balance the victim’s wishes against our duty to protect the victim and other children. If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it to protect children from harm and to promote the welfare of children.

iii) Where a report is going to be made to children’s social care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, a member of the safeguarding team will discuss the next steps with the agency to agree on how the alleged perpetrator will be informed of the allegations or concern.

iv) The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to children’s social care.

v) If any allegation appears to involve illegal activity, for example, a report of rape or sexual assault then the starting point will be a referral to the police.

vi) Following any investigation, the allocated member of the safeguarding team 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.

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

viii) If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the designated member of the safeguarding team will consider whether the young person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children’s social care may be appropriate.

If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the designated member of the safeguarding team will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per the Positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures.

c) Supporting the victim(s) of bullying

During the investigation and subsequent interventions it is important to:

- avoid humiliating the victim by taking actions which may make them seem weaker or powerless.
- 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.
- help the victim become more resilient, for example by building up their self-confidence, emphasising their strengths and helping them to develop protective friendships.
- offer support within college.
- offer a safe place during directed study times or breaks.
- work together with partner organisations to ensure that victims of bullying or harassment have easy access to wider support services, as required.
- keep the victim informed of all developments during the investigation.
- follow up, discreetly, with the victim to make certain the bullying has stopped, and that they feel safe. It may be necessary for schools and colleges to maintain arrangements to protect and support the victim for a long time.

d) Working with and supporting the alleged perpetrator

Along with providing support to victims, the college will provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with appropriate education and safeguarding support, as appropriate together with implementing any disciplinary sanctions. Taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support, can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.

The aim will be to help the alleged perpetrator(s) 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

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.

Specific types of bullying, harassment and other peer-on-peer abuse

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.

Socio-economic background based on individuals living in poverty, in care, homeless, from affluent backgrounds or having a criminal record/involvement in criminal proceedings.

Sexual harassment means 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of peer-on-peer sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a person's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes
- Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
 - Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.
 - Sexting - sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet. Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s, including selfies, is illegal.
 - Upskirting typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Since April 2019 Upskirting has been a criminal offence

Sexual Violence Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 sexual violence is describes As;

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.