

Anti-Bullying Policy

Review

Formal Review Cycle	Three years (unless required earlier by legislative or regulatory changes)		
Latest Formal Review (date)	January 2025	Next Formal Review Due (date)	January 2028
Policy Owner	Director of Student Services		
Policy Author	Director of Student Services		

Approvals

Board of Corp Y/N	N	Committee	N	Date Board approved	
SLT Y/N	N	LEG date approved	15.01.25	Additional committee	

Publication

Website Y/N	Y	Intranet Y/N	Y	Student VLE Y/N	Y	Other	
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Change History

Version	Date Reviewed/ Revised	Description of Change	Reviewed by	Approved by

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This policy is the Anti Bullying Policy of City of Sunderland College trading as: Sunderland College, Hartlepool Sixth Form College and Northumberland College. These colleges will be referred to as “The College” throughout this document.
- 1.2 Bullying, in any form, is entirely contrary to the College values; all members of the College community have a right to learn and work in a secure and respectful environment. We all have a responsibility to contribute to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all students can learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.
- 1.3 The College takes all incidents of bullying and harassment seriously and will always act to ensure that any bullying incident is dealt with appropriately. The College is committed to keeping all students safe by providing an environment where there is a zero tolerance culture of bullying behaviours.
- 1.4 The College provides an environment free from discrimination and does not tolerate discriminatory, offensive, violent and inappropriate behaviour. All students are entitled to be treated with respect and understanding, and to participate in any activity free from intimidation. All staff are expected to listen actively to students and act appropriately on information received in order to ensure that a safe, secure, positive environment exists.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all students and apprentices at the College, irrespective of type or level of provision, age and whether or not a student/apprentice is in the care of the College when/if bullying behaviour occurs (e.g. if the bullying is taking place online outside of College day).
- 2.2. The policy applies to all students and apprentices and should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct, College Values, Child Protection and Safeguarding, Behaviour for Success and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies.
- 2.3. The policy applies to all college related activity both on and off campus including off site trips and visits, Halls of Residence, work placements and remote learning.

3 Aims of the Policy/Underpinning Principles

- 3.1 The policy aims to ensure that bullying is not tolerated in any form, by any member of the college community.
- 3.2 Our expectation of all members of the College community is that the welfare of students is the College’s primary concern. Bullying is a form of abuse which contravenes our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Any complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously and no form of bullying will be tolerated.

3.3 The College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement highlights the College's commitment. This policy aims to protect any member of the College who may be deemed vulnerable with respect to protected characteristics, particularly in relation to bullying. The College is committed to a culture which provides equal opportunities and is free from bullying.

3.4 Members of staff are expected to uphold our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The College ensures that all staff are fully updated on current safeguarding issues including bullying and child on child abuse. Staff are aware of the importance of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) in maintaining a vital safeguarding culture and are trained and encouraged to report all concerns regarding safeguarding or bullying to the safeguarding team via MyConcern. In all such circumstances, the safeguarding team should be informed and the informing member of staff has a duty to follow up the concern to ensure that it is being dealt with.

3.5 Students are introduced to our culture which promotes safeguarding and equal opportunities when they receive their induction. This awareness is reinforced through our Personal Development programmes. The Student Collective also has a role to play in promoting a culture which does not tolerate bullying. Students are encouraged to:

- Celebrate the effort and achievement of others
- Hold and promote a positive attitude
- Feel able to share or raise concerns
- Feel comfortable raising complaints
- Share with staff if they are worried about the welfare of another students

3.6 The College will:

- Work to create a welcoming and safe environment for all, including providing a safe space for LGBTQ+ students with a safe space for them to speak out or share concerns with a member of staff.
- Promote mutual respect and tolerance, in line with our College Values.
- Model fair and respectful behaviour through leadership
- Challenge all forms of prejudice and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Educate students about the impact of bullying
- Consult with students about bullying through our student voice process
- Ensure that students and parents/carers know the College's anti-bullying policy, our approach to dealing with concerns, how to report concerns and how they will be supported.
- Respond to bullying concerns in a timely way.
- Work to create change in the perpetrator of bullying behaviours, wherever possible.

3.7 Integral to the policy is the promotion of self-awareness, self-discipline, accountability, personal responsibility, and respect for self and others.

3.8 College expectations will only be achieved by all students and all staff if this policy is implemented consistently.

4 Responsibilities

4.1: **Governors.** It is the responsibility of Governors to:

- receive and consider the bi-annual Safeguarding Report of how the College and its staff have complied with the principles of the policy.
- fulfil their statutory duties and understand how these duties have been discharged through the cycle of business and relevant sub-committees.
- have in place a designated Governor who is responsible for liaising with the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding over matters regarding safeguarding, including bullying.

4.2: Leadership. It is the responsibility of all members of the leadership team to:

- promote the policy, procedure and practices.
- ensure that all staff know and follow the policy.
- ensure that regular checks are undertaken to ensure compliance with the Policy.

4.3: Director of Student Services. It is the responsibility of Director of Student Services to:

- promote the policy to all staff
- review and apply the requirements of this Policy
- monitor and assess the impact of the policy.
- provide advice and support to other staff on aspects of the policy.
- promote positive processes with Student Services and wider college teams in relation to anti bullying

4.4 Director of Learning Support . It is the responsibility of Director of Learning Support to:

- oversee the support for those students with an identified learning difficulty or disability, including transition.
- promote positive processes with Inclusive Learning and wider college teams in relation to students with identified learning support needs involved in a bullying concern.
- provide advice and support to other staff on aspects of the policy in relation to SEND and attend hearings where appropriate.

4.5 Designated Safeguarding Leads . It is the responsibility of Designated Safeguarding Leads to:

- take part in strategy discussions and inter agency meetings and ensure strategies and policies are agreed, implemented and effectively delivered.
- be available to provide advice and support to other staff on related issues.
- be available to listen to children, young people and adults studying at any site across the College.
- receive information from any staff, volunteers, children, parents and/or carers who have concerns and record it.

4.6 Designated Safeguarding Officer (Anti-Bullying Team) It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officers to:

- promote procedures and practices so that all of our students feel safe.
- provide a level of support to staff which ensures consistency in the implementation of the policy.
- act as a key point of referral for students and staff so that the College can respond swiftly and appropriately to all bullying concerns raised.
- to equip Curriculum Teams to carry out their responsibilities regarding bullying effectively.
- receive and triage bullying concerns, working with the relevant Curriculum Managers.

4.5 Associate Principals and Faculty Directors. It is the responsibility of Associate Principals and Faculty Directors to:

- ensure managers and teams are overseeing and monitoring behaviour of students within their faculty/area and staff are implementing appropriate strategies and reporting bullying concerns.
- ensure that behaviour for success and positive strategies are promoted and implemented by all staff.
- ensure curriculum teams follow the policy and related procedures.

4.8 Student Progress and Development Tutors/Trainer Assessor It is the responsibility of Student Progress and Development Tutors Trainer Assessors to:

- ensure that all students are aware of the policy and processes as part of the induction process.
- liaise with curriculum, support services and parent/carers regarding the behaviour of students and monitor interventions in place following any bullying concerns.
- facilitate activities which challenge bullying, educate on the impact and promote positive behaviours.
- support students to report any bullying concerns.

4.9: Curriculum Teams. It is the responsibility of all curriculum staff, including managers to:

- be familiar with and follow the policy and associated processes, ensuring the policy is followed fairly and concerns are reported.
- ensure that unacceptable behaviour and bullying is challenged and positive behaviour is recognised.
- ensure that a non-bullying culture is promoted in all learning environments, where students treat each other with respect and all students feel safe

4.10: Parents/Carers. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to:

- be aware of the Student Code of Conduct and encourage their child to follow college expectations.
- encourage their child to report and bullying concerns and as parents/carers report any concerns they have to the College.
- keep appropriate members of staff informed of any factors which may impact upon their child's behaviour in College.
- engage with and attend meetings to support interventions and events following any bullying concerns.

4.11: Students. It is the responsibility of students to:

- be aware of this policy and their responsibilities and the College expectations.
- report any bullying concerns to a member of staff or via the Stay Safe button.
- follow the Student Code of Conduct
- keep appropriate members of staff informed of any concerns and ensure any bullying issues regarding themselves or others are reported.
- engage with any activities to raise awareness of bullying and related topics.
- follow support/interventions in place in the event of any bullying concerns.

4.12 College Workforce. It is the responsibility of all college employees, including managers to:

- promote positive behaviours and practices so that all of our students feel safe.
- take immediate action if bullying is reported or suspected – logging all cases on MyConcern,
- monitor conduct and language to eliminate bullying behaviour and practices and actively challenge such behaviours.

5 Implementation

5.1 Definitions

5.1.1: Bullying “Bullying 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 cyber-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 the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children or perceived differences.” (DfE) Bullying generally involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve

perpetrators having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in different ways, whether physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying can be :

- Emotional/Psychological – being unfriendly, tormenting, threatening language, excluding, persistent teasing or harassment.
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of physical violence.
- Racist or Religious – hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community or national status.
- Sexual – includes any behaviour, whether physical or non-physical, where sexuality is used as a weapon. It includes unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Transphobic – bullying because someone is or is thought to be transgender.
- Homophobic – targets someone because of their sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation).
- Intersectional Discrimination – where two or multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage compound to a barrier or cause a person to be discriminated/bullied.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Cyber – all areas of internet, including social networking, email and chatroom misuse. Threats/abuse by text messaging or calls from any mobile device, doxing or deepfaking. Misuse of associated technology e.g. phones, tablet, camera, video.

5.1.2 :Child on Child Abuse

All staff should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they can identify children who may be in need of help or protection. The College recognises that students, irrespective of age, are capable of abusing their peers. Child on child abuse can take many forms and some types can be gender specific. It can include bullying (including cyberbullying), gender based violence, assault and sexting. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

5.1.3 Banter

Banter is defined as ‘the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks is seen as a form of humour’. Banter can become a bullying activity when it is directed at an individual, is persistent and offensive to them. 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.

5.2 Responding to bullying

When bullying does occur, a clear and consistent approach is essential. The College has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to all issues of bullying. Bullying hurts and has long term consequences for the victim and the bully. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Students who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving. The aims of our response to bullying should be:

- Make the victim/alleged victim safe
- Stop the bullying immediately
- Change bullying behaviours in individuals and groups
- Make clear to every student that bullying is unacceptable.
- Reinforce the anti-bullying message through curriculum activities, events and campaigns. This includes induction sessions which ensure that students understand behaviour that may constitute harassment and/or sexual misconduct.

5.3 Signs of bullying

All College staff should be aware and alert to the possible signs which could include an individual :

- Being frightened of walking to or from college
- Not wanting to go on their usual mode of transport
- Changing their usual routine
- Being unwilling to go home
- Unwilling to attend college, having poor attendance or showing changes to a usual good attendance record
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Self-harming behaviours
- Talking about feeling suicidal or attempting suicide
- Running away/going missing
- Showing signs that their college work is suffering
- Having personal possessions damaged or being taken/going missing
- Having unexplained physical injuries
- Becoming aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Bullying other students
- Showing changes in their eating habits
- Being frightened to say what's wrong
- Giving improbable excuses for any of the above
- Being afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Being nervous or jumpy when a cyber/digital message is received

These signs could indicate other safeguarding concerns, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

5.4 Sexual violence and Sexual Harassment

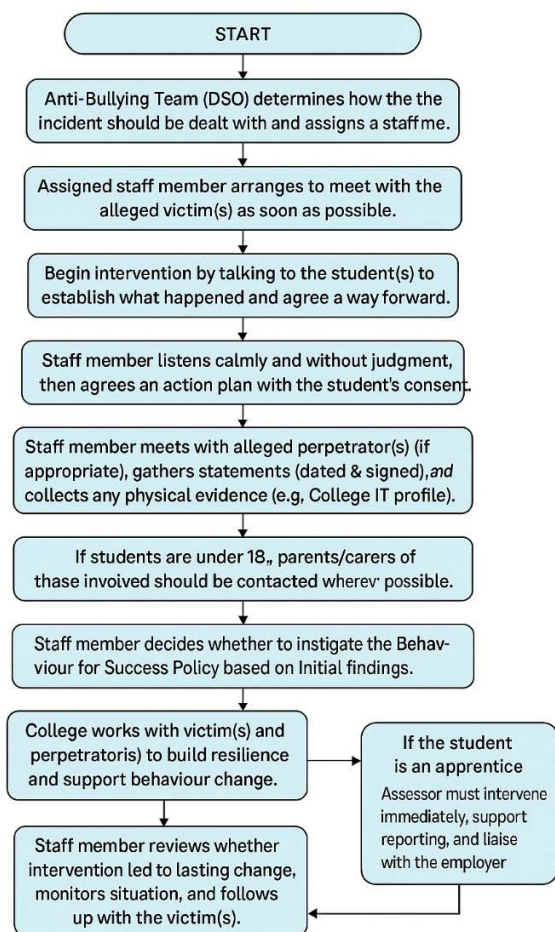
Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two people of any age and sex. Sections 458 and 459 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 outline Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment. Harassment is outlined in section 26 of the Equality Act 2010 and section 1 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. It can also occur through a group of people sexually assaulting or sexually harassing an individual or group of people. People who are victims of sexual violence or harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, may breach a student's rights, as set out in the Human Rights Act. Sexual harassment can include sexual comments, sexual jokes or taunting, physical behaviour, displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature, upskirting (this is a criminal offence) or online sexual harassment, including sexualised online bullying.

The College ensures that:

- We make clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- We do not tolerate or dismiss sexual violence or sexual harassment as 'banter' 'part of growing up' 'just having a laugh' or 'boys being boys'.
- We challenge behaviour (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia and flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- Understanding that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the College, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexual language and challenging these wider factors through our Self, Society and Skills/Personal Development Programme. Consideration must always be given when

investigating bullying concerns around sexual violence and sexual harassment. Any allegation or concern must be taken seriously and reported to the Safeguarding Team through MyConcern.

6. Procedures



6.1 The pro All students and apprentices should be

All incidents must be reported via MyConcern.

6.2 A member of the Anti-bullying Team (DSOs) will determine how the incident should be dealt with and which staff would be involved.

6.3 The member of staff assigned to investigate the bullying incident should arrange to meet with the alleged victim/s as soon as possible to understand the nature of the concern.

6.4 The starting point for any intervention should be to talk to the student/s who has alleged they have been bullied in order to establish what has happened and agree a way forward.

6.5 The member of staff must make time to listen calmly to the alleged victim without making personal judgments and then agree an action plan with the student's consent.

6.6 The member of staff who is asked to investigate should also arrange where appropriate to meet with the alleged perpetrator/s to discuss the nature of the concern. Any statements/notes obtained should be dated and signed by the individual. The member of staff may also gather physical evidence to help the investigation. This may include , but is not limited to, requesting access to a student's College IT profile.

6.7 For those under the age of 18, parents/carers of students involved should be contacted, wherever possible.

6.8 Following initial information gathering/investigation, the investigating officer will determine if the Behaviour for Success Policy will need to be instigated.

6.9 The College will always work with the victim/s and perpetrator/s to build resilience and to identify where behaviours may need to be changed.

6.10 The member of staff investigating should always consider whether intervention has secured lasting change and regularly review the actions put in place. They should always continue to monitor the situation and follow up with the victim/s to ensure that the bullying has stopped and that they feel safe.

6.11 If the individual is an apprentice and bullying is taking place in the workplace, then the Assessor must intervene immediately to safeguard the apprentice and support them to report the concerns, liaising with the employer appropriately.

6. Associated Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following college policies/documents:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Diversity, Equality, and Belonging Framework
- Behaviour for Success Policy
- Student Code of Conduct

7. Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is informally reviewed regularly by the author to ensure continued compliance with legislation, regulation or guidance.

Monthly: The Strategic Lead for Safeguarding will receive a report on Safeguarding incidents.

Termly: The Senior Leadership Team and Safeguarding Committee will receive a report on Safeguarding incidents.

Bi-Annually: The Designated Leads for Safeguarding will produce a report that will be presented to the Board of Governors by the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding.

Annually: The Designated Leads for Safeguarding and College's Safeguarding Committee will review the policy and associated procedure

8. Equality Impact Assessment

(Consider whether the policy or procedures may disproportionately impact any group.)

Have you sought consultation on this policy? Details:		Safeguarding Group Student Focus Group		
Could a particular group be affected (negatively or positively)?	Impact Y/N	Description of Impact	Evidence	Mitigation/Justification
Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010				
Age	N			
Disability	N			
Gender Reassignment	N			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	N			
Pregnancy and maternity	N			
Race	N			
Religion or belief	N			
Sex	N			
Sexual Orientation	N			
Additional characteristics to consider				
Young Persons in Care & Care Leavers	N			
Young Carers & Care Givers	N			
Young Parents	N			
Youth Offenders	N			
Those Receiving Free School Meals	N			
If there is no impact, please explain:	The policy encompasses fairness and equality for all groups of staff and students. The aim of the policy is to ensure that all students are protected from bullying.			