ANIT-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Author's Name and Job Title:	Laura Howe-Haysom,		
Department:	Student Services		
Policy Version Number:	9		
Approved by:	CLT		
Date approved:	01/08/25		
Next review date:	01/08/27		
Specific groups to whom this policy directly applies:	☒	Staff	
	☒	Students	
	☒	Governors	
	☒	Senior Post Holders	
	☒	Workers (including Casuals, Agency, Contractors etc.)	
	☐	Other (Please specify): Click or tap here to enter text.	
People/Groups consulted:	Click or tap here to enter text.		
Policies and procedures of the college are non-contractual and does not form part of Terms and Conditions of Employment.			
Note: This document is electronically controlled. This policy can only be considered valid when viewed via Click or tap here to enter text. If this is a printed hard copy or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches the one on the webpage.			

Contents   **Page Number**

Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

1.   Background

1.1   This Policy is written with the following aims and objectives:

- To help to create a safe and inclusive environment for all members of the St Brendan's community

- To raise awareness amongst staff, students and all other stakeholders of the nature of bullying and harassment and its harmful effect.

- To establish anti-bullying work as an integral part of the College's curriculum

- To establish a clear and consistent procedure for the reporting and follow up of all student bullying and harassment incidents

- To ensure that all students are aware of the reporting procedures, what they should expect in terms of follow up action, and their entitlement to support

- To establish a monitoring procedure for student bullying and harassment incidents, which will inform any future review of the Policy

1.2   The College recognises and endorses the following principles:

- All forms of bullying and harassment are always unacceptable.

- Every member of our community has the right to be safe and happy, to be protected if feeling vulnerable, and to be treated with respect.

- It is the responsibility of all students and staff to create a safe learning environment free from bullying and harassment.

- All student complaints about harassment and bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly with respect for all people involved. This may include the use of the student disciplinary procedure and/or the student complaints procedure.

- Students who experience bullying or harassment should feel able to approach an appropriate member of the College staff confidentially to raise concerns without fear of reprisal or victimisation.

- Appropriate support will be put in place for the student during, and after, the investigation process

- Both the reporting process and the support mechanisms should accessible to all students

- The number and nature of incidents will be monitored and reported to the College Leadership Team and Governors as part of the safeguarding reporting processes

2.   Policy

2.1   In- keeping with the College Mission statement, we are committed to ensuring that everyone, (students, staff and other members of our community) is equally valued and treated with respect, and that no-one is subjected to any form of bullying or harassment. The College has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and will not tolerate bullying in any form. By zero tolerance, we mean that all reports of bullying will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

2.2   Where a member of staff is alleged to have bullied or harassed a student then it will be initially investigated under the College's complaints procedure and then may progress to the formal Disciplinary Procedure.

2.3   Under the Children Act 2004, a bullying incident should be addressed as a safeguarding concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Any such situation should be dealt with under the College Safeguarding Policy and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

2.4   Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence. Hate Crimes, in all forms, are unlawful. These must be referred to the Police through the Designated Safeguarding Lead, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or another member of the College Safeguarding Team.

2.5   Principals have a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the College premises, which can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the College premises, e.g. on college or public transport, outside the local shops or in city centres. *(Section 89 (5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).*

2.6   The College also recognises the particular requirements of the Equality Act to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to the protected characteristics of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, religion and belief and sexual orientation. Schools and colleges are also required to take preventive action and to promote good relations between different groups.

2.7 The Act also makes it unlawful for the College to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of student access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.

3. Definitions

The College uses the following definitions:

3.1 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 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." 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' DfE July 2017.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be 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.

3.2 How does bullying differ from banter?

Bullying: There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate. There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves. It is usually persistent. Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent –if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of sexual, sexist, racist, transphobic or homophobic bullying and when young people with disabilities are involved. If the victim might be in danger then intervention is urgently required.

Banter: Is defined as 'the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks is seen as a form of bonding and humour.' However, 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.

3.3 **Bullying can be:**

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding or isolating someone, tormenting (e.g. threatening gestures, interfering with personal possessions), threatening language, persistent teasing or harassment.

- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, spitting, punching or any use of physical violence or intimidation.

- Racist and Religious: Racist and Religious bullying can be defined as 'a range of 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, national origin or national status'

- Sexual: Sexual bullying includes any behaviour, whether physical or non-physical, where sexuality is used as a weapon. It includes unwanted physical contact or messages, sexually abusive or threatening comments, unwanted pressure or advances.

- Transphobic: Transphobic bullying refers to bullying because someone is, or is thought to be transgender or non-binary.

- Homophobic: Homophobic bullying targets someone because of their sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation).

- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and gossip, belittling comments or derogatory remarks about appearance or personality.

- Cyber: all areas of internet, such as social media platforms and email misuse. Threats/abuse by messaging or calls from any mobile device. Misuse of associated technology i.e. phones, tablet, camera, video.

- Disablist: involving young people with disabilities employs many of the same forms as other types of bullying, with name calling and pushing and shoving being common.

This is not an exhaustive list but represents some key aspects of types of bullying.

4. **Responding to Bullying:**

When bullying does occur, a clear consistent response is essential. The goals of any intervention should always be the same, no matter who is dealing with the incident.

The aims should be to:

- Make the victim/alleged victim safe
- Stop the bullying immediately
- Change bullying behaviours in individuals and groups
- Make clear to every learner that bullying is unacceptable
- Reinforce the anti-bullying message through curriculum, activities, events and campaigns

4.1 Signs that Bullying may be/is taking place:

All college staff should be aware and alert to 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 to home
- unwilling to attend college
- having poor attendance or a sudden drop in attendance
- becoming withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- self-harming behaviours
- talking about feeling suicidal or attempting suicide
- having difficulty sleeping or changes in eating habits
- running away/going missing
- having personal possessions damaged or go missing
- showing signs that their college work is suffering
- having unexplained physical injuries
- becoming aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- bullying other students
- being nervous or jumpy when a message is received

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

4.2 Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between young people

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two young people of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of young people sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child/young person or group of children/young people.

Children/young people who are victims of sexual violence and sexual 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. The College is aware of the importance of:

- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"
- Challenging 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 sexist language.

Consideration must always be given when investigating bullying concerns around sexual violence and harassment. Any allegation or concern must be taken seriously and reported to the Safeguarding Team through MyConcern immediately where it will be checked, recorded and dealt with appropriately. This may include reporting to the Police and referrals to Social Care.

5.   Procedures:

5.1   All incidents of bullying should be reported to any member of staff the student feels comfortable talking to.

5.2   With the alleged victim, the member of staff dealing with the incident/concern should take notes and report this as a concern on Myconcern, being careful to include all students involved.

5.3   The concern will be reviewed by the DSL or DDSL. This will normally be via the Progress Tutor with support if needed from the DSL, DDSL or a member of the Safeguarding team as required.

5.4   The member of staff who is asked to investigate the bullying incident should arrange to meet with the alleged victim/s as soon as possible so as to understand the nature of the concern.

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

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

5.7   The member of staff who is asked to investigate the bullying incident should also arrange where appropriate to meet with the alleged perpetrator/s, to discuss the nature of the concern.

5.8   The member of staff investigating the incident may also need to gather physical evidence to help the investigation. This may include but is not limited to requesting access to a student's College IT profile.

5.9   Wherever possible and appropriate, parent/guardians of students involved should be informed that an incident has occurred.

5.10   In serious cases of bullying the 'Gross Misconduct' procedure may need to be implemented from the Positive Behaviour Management Policy. The member of staff who was asked to investigate the incident should consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in this case. This is because the learner may be suspended if felt appropriate.

5.11   The College will always try to work with the victim/s and with those who cause harm to build resilience and to identify where behaviours may need to be changed.

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

5.13   Where the student is on roll at another provision then it is imperative that information is passed on to their safeguarding lead where there are concerns about a student causing harm or being bullied.

5.14 Once the investigation is complete and actions have been communicated to all parties, the MyConcern case must be updated and evidence and outcomes recorded clearly.

6.   Preventing Bullying and Harassment

The College will take a range of steps to try and prevent bullying and harassment. This will include:

- The inclusion of issues on bullying and harassment , (including specific guidance on keeping safe from cyber bullying) in the student induction and tutorial programme

- The inclusion of issues about bullying and harassment in Student Union activities

- Continuing Professional Development and briefings for staff on all aspects of bullying and harassment

- Clear and accessible reporting procedures for staff and students

- A regular focus on student bullying and harassment in College Leadership Meetings

7.   Monitoring the Policy

The College Leadership Team has responsibility for monitoring this Policy using information provided through a range of methods including:

- Metrics from Bullying and Harassment Reporting Concerns

- Feedback from staff, in particular the Progress Tutors in relation to students

- Feedback from students through the Student Union and Student Forums

- Feedback from student consultation processes such as student surveys

- Other external benchmarking processes

8.   This policy should be read in conjunction with the following College policies which apply to our students:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- IT Acceptable Use Policy

- Positive Behaviour Management Policy

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- Health and Safety Policy

Useful links and resources:

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2025:
[KCSIE 2025](#)

Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk

CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection): hosts the Young people's online charter and is responsible for safety on the internet http://www.ceop.gov.uk