

**WORCESTER SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**



**ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**Updated October 2024**

## **Purpose**

Worcester Sixth Form College fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding students. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Worcester Sixth Form College welcomes diversity and believes that every student has a right to work and study in an environment which encourages harmonious relationships. The College is committed to preventing bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment, and its commitment to equal opportunity is enshrined in its Equality policy and in the College's mission statement. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, the Student Conduct policy and the Child-on-Child Abuse policy.

## **Policy**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our College and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a member of the College staff. This could be their Tutor, Head of Year, the Safeguarding Officer, a subject teacher, College Counsellor or Mental Health & Wellbeing Mentor. Students can also use the 'Report a Concern' button on the website in the safeguarding tab or scanning the QR code on the posters located around the college.

- The Principal, governors, senior and middle leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents will have an understanding of what bullying is.
- The Principal, governors, senior and middle leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff will know what the College policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students will know what the College policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

## **Defining bullying**

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten, frighten, upset or embarrass another person. It may involve physical and/or verbal intimidation. It can also arise from silence, gestures, comments or images on social websites, or from taking, or damaging, another person's property. It can cause distress and pain.

Bullying can be, but is not exclusively:

- Emotional; being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. threatening gestures, interfering with personal possessions).
- Physical; pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist; racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual; unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic; because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality.
- Gender-phobic; because of, or focussing on the issue of gender identity.
- Verbal; name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Cyber; All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging & calls Misuse of associated technology and Apps, i.e. camera & video facilities.

## **Information/Advice to staff**

As adults, we are clearly role models for students. The way we treat young people affects the way they treat each other. Aggression of any kind or undermining comments have a definite influence in promoting bullying.

All adults should be sympathetic to the anxiety and insecurity of the bullied. Victims are often cautious, sensitive and quiet, with a smaller group of friends, a group which is often considered less

influential with the peer group. To tell a student being bullied to 'get on with it' or 'stop complaining' ignores very real feelings of anxiety, fear and of being undermined. The College will ensure that any student raising a genuine concern under this policy is not victimised as a result.

All members of staff must be vigilant within lessons, tutorial time and around College. 'Put-down' comments should be discouraged as unacceptable.

All accusations of bullying will be considered seriously and dealt with in the strictest confidence, consistent with and subject to safeguarding considerations.

Bullying will be recognised as a serious breach of the College conduct and offenders dealt with accordingly.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated very seriously by the College and could result in disciplinary action being taken against the perpetrator.

All curriculum areas have an important role in conveying positive messages about acceptable behaviour. Anti-bullying and tolerance and acceptance messages are conveyed through the tutorial programme. Student voice within learning walks, student surveys and other opportunities will be used to keep check on the effective implementation of the policy.

## **Implementation**

It is the responsibility of all teachers, tutors, and support staff to recognise that a young person may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied.

All college staff should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a young person:

- Is frightened of walking to or from College
- Doesn't want to go on the usual mode of transport and asks/begs to be driven to College
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to College
- Begins to have a poor attendance record
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Has difficulty sleeping, cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in College work
- Has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other students or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Is unwilling to share the content of cyber messages with a trusted adult.

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

## **Information/Advice to students**

Any accusation of bullying that is made will be treated in the strictest confidence, consistent with and subject to safeguarding considerations. Any student who feels that they are the subject of harassment, either by a fellow student, a member of staff or anyone else with whom they come into contact in the course of their time at the College, may wish to make a note of incidents, dates, times and any witnesses, for future reference. Any student who considers themselves to have been the subject of harassment has the right to be listened to and to be given informed advice on how the matter may be resolved. There are usually a number of options. Any incident should be reported in any of these ways;

- 1) To the student's tutor/subject teacher/Head of Year. In addition students can arrange to speak to the College Counsellor or Mental Health & Wellbeing Mentor.
- 2) To the DSL (Graham Williams) by e-mail or in person in room G5 or Safeguarding Officer (Heather Anderson-Stevens) in room G37
- 3) Report an incident using the 'Report a Concern' button on our website in the safeguarding tab or by scanning the QR code on the posters located around the college. This is a service that can be accessed 24-hours a day and is e-mailed to the DSL. This method is suitable for students who lack the confidence to initially approach staff in person or would like to report an issue from home.

Any member of staff who is approached by a student wishing to discuss a potential issue should:

- Find a quiet place to discuss the issue confidentially and without interruption
- Listen carefully to what they are being told and ensure that they understand the full facts
- Reassure the student
- Make brief notes as a summary and pass on to the relevant Head of Year or DSL.

Students should avoid the temptation to retaliate as this can make it harder to resolve any dispute that may have arisen.

Any action proposed will only be undertaken with the full knowledge and consent of the person being bullied, subject to safeguarding considerations.

## **What students should do if they see someone being bullied**

Students must recognise that bullying is a serious offence and that concern for the individual being bullied should override any other allegiances.

Students need to be encouraged to report incidents of bullying they witness as there is a danger that their silence may make it appear that they are on the side of the perpetrator.

Should harassment occur in a group situation, the person in authority within the group has the responsibility to recognise harassment when it occurs and to take speedy action to stop it. It is important that it is made clear to the perpetrator that such behaviour is unacceptable to the College and will not be tolerated. Silence or inaction can be seen as collusion and endorsement of such behaviour. If the person in authority is the harasser, others within the group should support the individual being harassed in taking action to report the harassment.

## **What will happen to students who become involved in bullying**

Having heard about the incident and the context of the action or behaviour, the decision between the student who has experienced the bullying and their Head of Year, could be that conciliatory action should be taken. In this case there are a number of options available to facilitate resolution of the matter.

For example:

- The Head of Year could talk to the alleged perpetrator to try and resolve the conflict.

- The student who has experienced bullying may wish to talk to the alleged perpetrator on their own or with a friend, who should be a member of the College, accompanying them. The purpose of the conversation would be to make the perpetrator aware of the way their behaviour has been perceived and ask them not to repeat it
- the Head of Year could facilitate a meeting between both parties to give the student the opportunity to talk to the alleged perpetrator and explain their view of the offending behaviour.

The action outlined above will be appropriate in many cases and will often be sufficient to resolve the matter. Students will be expected to alleviate the harm done through recognition of the situation, apology and appropriate behaviour thereafter.

If, however, a conciliatory approach does not achieve satisfactory results, or the nature of the incident(s) prompts the person who feels harassed to take a more formal approach, the incident will be formally investigated. In this case, we will follow the strategies, procedures and sanctions in our Student Conduct policy.

In all cases, a copy of the incident will be held on the record of the students concerned and is logged centrally by the Head of Year or DSL.

In the most serious of cases it may be necessary to inform the police in order for criminal procedures to be put in place.

#### **Further information, help and guidance**

- [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)
- [www.digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org)
- [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)
- Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) - 020 7354 8321
- Children's Legal Centre - 0845 345 4345
- KIDSCAPE Help with bullying [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- Childline 080011111
- CEOP - If someone has acted inappropriately online towards you, or someone you know, you can report directly to the [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre](https://www.ceop.police.uk/) (CEOP).

**Senior Lead for Safeguarding & Pastoral Support**  
**October 2024**