

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 We believe that everyone has the right to be in college without being physically, verbally or psychologically abused by others.
- 1.2 The successful implementation of an anti-bullying policy requires the active involvement of all those within the college community
 - *students
 - *parents
 - *teaching & non-teaching staff
 - *governors
- 1.3 An anti-bullying policy has links to other systems within the College e.g. the Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions Policy, Teaching and learning styles, classroom management, reporting etc
- 1.4 The College recognises that bullying can cause long term psychological damage and even suicide and any incidents of bullying will be swiftly responded to accordingly.
- 1.5 Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, in serious situations criminal laws can apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.
- 1.6 There are three members of staff nominated to coordinate the anti-bullying policy: the Head of Student Welfare, the Vice Principal and the Principal.

2.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 This policy supports the college aims:
 - to provide an atmosphere which is welcoming to people of all faiths, nationalities and backgrounds
 - to foster international understanding
 - to promote an adult-focussed environment to prepare students for higher education
 - to encourage good behaviour and respect for others and to prevent all forms of bullying
- 2.2 The policy seeks to support each student as an individual
- 2.3 The College will do everything possible to help both bullies and victims cope in difficult situations
- 2.4 The College will take strong positive measures against persistent bullies (including exclusion in cases of severe and / or persistent bullying)

3.0 WHAT IS BULLYING?

- 3.1 Bullying can be defined as:

“the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone” (Tattum and Herbert 1990)

Most instances will fall into one or more of the following categories:

Physical: hitting, pushing, unwanted physical attention, sexual or otherwise

Exclusion: sending a victim to Coventry, excluding him/her

Gestures: threatening or rude body language including facial signals

Stealing: Food, money, equipment or personal possessions

Extortion: Forcing someone to take action on someone else’s behalf

Cyber-bullying: sending unpleasant, abusive or threatening e-mails, including via chat-room websites; sending abusive or threatening messages via mobile phone – e.g. text and picture messages, voicemail messages (this form of bullying is also referred to in our Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Policy)

Verbal: name calling, teasing, taunting, threatening, spreading gossip

(There is a great deal of evidence that bullying is fuelled by prejudice against an individual who may be different in some way. Any of the above actions of a racial, cultural, religious, sexist/sexual, against disability, or homophobic nature are considered to be bullying)

3.2 It is important to remember that bullies exert their power through SECRECY THREATS AND FEAR and that we as a staff will only be aware of a very small proportion of the instances of bullying in the College

3.3 Bullying can take place between students, students and staff or between staff either by individuals or groups. It is important that the College maintains a whole school approach to anti-bullying by continually raising awareness, ongoing staff training and promoting a clear anti-bullying ethos.

4.0 **RECOGNISING THE VICTIMS OF BULLYING**

4.1 There are no hard and fast rules that can be applied in trying to recognise the victims of bullying. Many of the symptoms below can be shown at some time by students who are not being bullied:

- absence – there may be a pattern of absence linked to particular days or lessons
- arriving at college very early and/or a fear of leaving on time
- a reluctance to leave specific rooms at break times
- changes in behaviour: victims may become more aggressive or more withdrawn
- decreased academic performance
- always staying back after lessons to talk to the tutor – with no apparent reason
- unexplained injuries e.g. scratches or bruises
- always 'losing' equipment or bags

4.2 Tutors should never ignore 'minor' incidents (e.g. name calling or students having pens taken). Repeated in all the student's lessons, these 'minor' incidents could have a significant cumulative effect.

5.0 **AN ANTI-BULLYING CULTURE**

- 5.1 Staff are powerful role models for acceptable behaviour and attitudes towards bullying behaviour. Staff ought never to be perceived by students as condoning bullying behaviour eg
 “they must learn to look after themselves....boys will be boys....sticks and stones....there is nothing I can do It’s all part of growing up”
- 5.2 In dealing with instances of bullying, staff must avoid ‘bullying the bullies’ as this can give credibility to their behaviour
- 5.3 Some teacher/student interactions in the classroom can be seen as support for bullying behaviour, particularly the use of sarcasm, nicknames, unkind jokes at a student’s expense or any teacher action that can be seen to be demeaning to a student
- 5.4 As with all unacceptable behaviour, staff should make it clear that it is the BEHAVIOUR that they dislike, NOT the individual

6.0 STAFF GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

- 6.1 Any instance of bullying should be dealt with, either by the member of staff who encounters it or by another staff member. Others who might be consulted and who ought to be informed include: Personal Tutor, Head of Student Welfare, Vice Principal, Principal
- 6.2 It is sometimes difficult to establish whether a particular incident was bullying or not. This checklist may help.

THE BULLY SAYS

- “It was only a joke”
- “We were only playing”
- “It was an accident”
- “I found it”
- “I was only borrowing it”

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Was everyone laughing? If the victim wasn’t, it wasn’t a joke.
- Is this an excuse for hurting others?
- Were you invited to play?
- Did you say sorry? Did you help the victim?
- Why did you keep it?
- What was the victim’s name? Address?
- Do you always borrow from strangers?

- 6.3 Bullying should be recorded in student records and all documentation copied to Tricia Brown for the Incident File/ Record of Bullying Incidents Log Book as appropriate
- 6.4 After consultation with the Personal Tutor and Head of Student Welfare the parents of both bully and victim will be informed by the Principal or Vice-Principal
- 6.5 A staff supervision rota ensures students are monitored and staff can be placed at key areas if necessary to reduce the risk of bullying in certain places
- 6.6 CCTV is also located at various points around the college buildings

7.0 VICTIMS AND BULLIES

- 7.1 Victims of bullying often feel that they are at fault in some way for what they have suffered; the way that staff support victims is very important. Some or all of the following steps may be taken depending upon the individual circumstances:
- separate the victim and bully
 - reassure the victim that they are not the only ones to have been bullied and that it is right for them to tell the whole story (if there is a story to tell)
 - Tell the victim that no one deserves to be bullied and that you will take what you are told seriously (but remember that there are often two sides to each story)
 - Make sure that the victim (and bully) knows that the incident will be recorded on file
- 7.2 Dealing with bullies can be more difficult:
- establish the reason for the bullying if possible
 - talk of the feelings of the victim
 - ensure that your disapproval of the bullying behaviour is clearly stated; make it clear that this must stop

8.0 EDUCATING STUDENTS TO COUNTER BULLYING

- 8.1 The college recognises the need to educate its students to counter bullying. This is achieved through a variety of means, including:
- The PSHE programme
 - The inclusion of an anti-bullying policy in the student's day-to-day diary
 - Ensuring that students and staff are aware of what constitutes bullying and the consequences for those involved
 - Ensuring that both staff and students are aware of whom to approach with a concern and their rights to confidentiality in this context
 - Displaying literature around the college that promotes anti-bullying and also gives advice on what constitutes bullying and the support the college offers

9.0 EVALUATING THE POLICY

- 9.1 The effectiveness of this policy will be subject to the normal college self-evaluation policies and procedures and reviewed annually
- 9.2 This policy has been updated in line with ISI guidance and has regard for the DCSF publication - Safe To Learn : Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools – copies of which are kept in the Welfare Department and in the Health & Welfare information file located in the staffroom
- 9.3 This policy also incorporates the views of the current student committee in consultation as part of Anti Bullying week November 2009