

Procedures Manual

04.31.01

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

PURPOSE

To ensure all students are protected from bullying and harassment behaviour

SCOPE

All students enrolled at College

RESPONSIBILITY

Student Welfare Team, Personal Support Tutor Team and Academic Staff

Anti Bullying and Harassment (hereafter known as “Bullying”) Policy

1.0 Scope and Purpose

This policy is intended to support West Suffolk College in promoting harmonious relations between students. The policy is intended to cover all students. The College is committed to the elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation particularly on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and marriage or civil partnership.

2.0 The College’s Commitment

West Suffolk College values the contribution of all its students. It recognises that such a contribution is most effective in conditions where students are able to work in an atmosphere in which the College values them as individuals. Such an atmosphere can only thrive where a culture of dignity and mutual respect is upheld.

The College believes that any form of harassment, bullying, victimisation or intimidation is unacceptable, undermines the dignity of an individual, is morally wrong and has a detrimental effect on the provision and delivery of services.

Students who suffer from bullying will be treated seriously and sensitively. Students will be protected against victimisation for making or being involved in a complaint.

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3.0 Definition

Bullying can be defined as **persistent**, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious and/or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair sanctions which make the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable resulting in the confidence of the individual being undermined and giving rise to unacceptable levels of stress.

- Repeatedly shouting or swearing at students both in public and in private
- Spontaneous rages, often over trivial matters
- Public humiliation
- Personal insults and name calling
- Persistent unjustified criticism
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Freezing out, ignoring or excluding
- Persecution through threats and instilling fear
- Constantly undervaluing effort
- Never listening to another's point of view
- Physical attacks
- Humiliating text messages, e-mails, images or graffiti.

Some examples of **less obvious bullying**:

- Deliberately sabotaging or impeding learning performance
- Withholding learning related information or supplying incorrect information
- Knowingly destroying a relationship between other people.

All forms of bullying can have an adverse effect on learning performance, morale and health. It is not necessarily the action, but how the recipient feels about the action that is the important thing to consider.

All bullying is regarded by the College as a serious matter and the College will investigate any allegations made.

All complaints will be treated seriously, confidentially and within reasonable timescales. Disciplinary action will be taken if appropriate ([Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure 04.26.01](#)).

4.0 Legal Context

Bullying is psychological harassment. It can take many forms from inappropriate comments and manipulative behaviour to more explicit forms of intimidation and abuse, including threats and violence.

While there are no specific laws that deal explicitly with "bullying" per se, it may be unlawful if it involves either:

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- Criminal assault or intimidation
- Discrimination
- A course of harassment

Bullying is contrary to the duty of care to provide a safe environment for students and may breach health and safety legislation.

5.0 Complaints

Bullying is viewed by the College as a very serious offence, which if proved may in certain circumstances lead to the dismissal of a member of staff, or, if a student is bullied by another student, and if we have evidence of this, the exclusion of that bullying student.

The College will seek to provide a supportive environment for students who make claims of bullying and will treat any such complaint in confidence.

5.1 *Informal Complaint*

Students who feel they are being bullied by other students should raise the matter in the first instance informally. This will normally be with the student's personal support tutor or Head of School. Records should be kept on Intuition. In the majority of cases the best resolution to a situation can be arrived at informally especially where the incident is an isolated one, fairly minor or maybe unintentional. If agreement can be reached, which is mutually acceptable, the situation should be resolved and the complaint ends at this point.

5.2 *Formal Complaint*

If however, it is not possible to resolve the situation informally then the complainant should use the formal College complaints procedure. Any complaint registered under the College Student Disciplinary Procedure 04.26.01 will be investigated and if the accusation is upheld will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence. Both the complainant and the accused will have the right to be accompanied at any investigatory meeting and disciplinary hearing.

5.3 *Student Behaviour*

Any behaviour directed against staff or other students by students will be dealt with under the [Student Conduct and Disciplinary Policy 04.26.01](#).

6.0 Division of Responsibility

In introducing this policy the College recognises it has a duty and responsibility to prevent as far as possible, or deal with, any form of bullying in

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the learning environment. However, every student also carries the responsibility for their own behaviour, actions and inactions.

This policy will be communicated through induction, information and publicity, and in-house communications including the Website and Staffnet and Studentnet.

6.1 College Responsibilities:

In relation to countering harassment and bullying, the College has the responsibility to:

- Provide a safe learning environment for students
- Create an environment where students can say "no" to unacceptable behaviour and where they can complain about such behaviour to their tutors, without being blamed/victimised for alleged deficiencies in their own learning performance.
- Inform staff, students and parents of relevant legislation
- Develop and publish relevant policy and procedures
- Educate staff, students and parents about rights and responsibilities
- Respond promptly and appropriately to all complaints
- Provide appropriate procedures and facilities to deal with complaints.

6.2 Student Responsibilities:

Students have a responsibility to:

- Engage in appropriate behaviour in accordance with the College's stated expectations, policy and procedures
- Respect the rights of their fellow students.

7.0 Documentation and Record Keeping

It is in the interests of all parties to ensure that there is adequate documentation of all information and events relating to a claim of bullying.

All records relating to complaints and investigations must be added to Intuition.

8.0 General

This policy should not be read in isolation, but cross-referenced with all relevant College policies which include the [Student Conduct and Disciplinary 04.26.01](#) and [Safeguarding 01.07.01](#).

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Procedure

This procedure is written in conjunction with the College Bullying Policy and is there to act as guidance on how to deal with bullying issues on a daily basis.

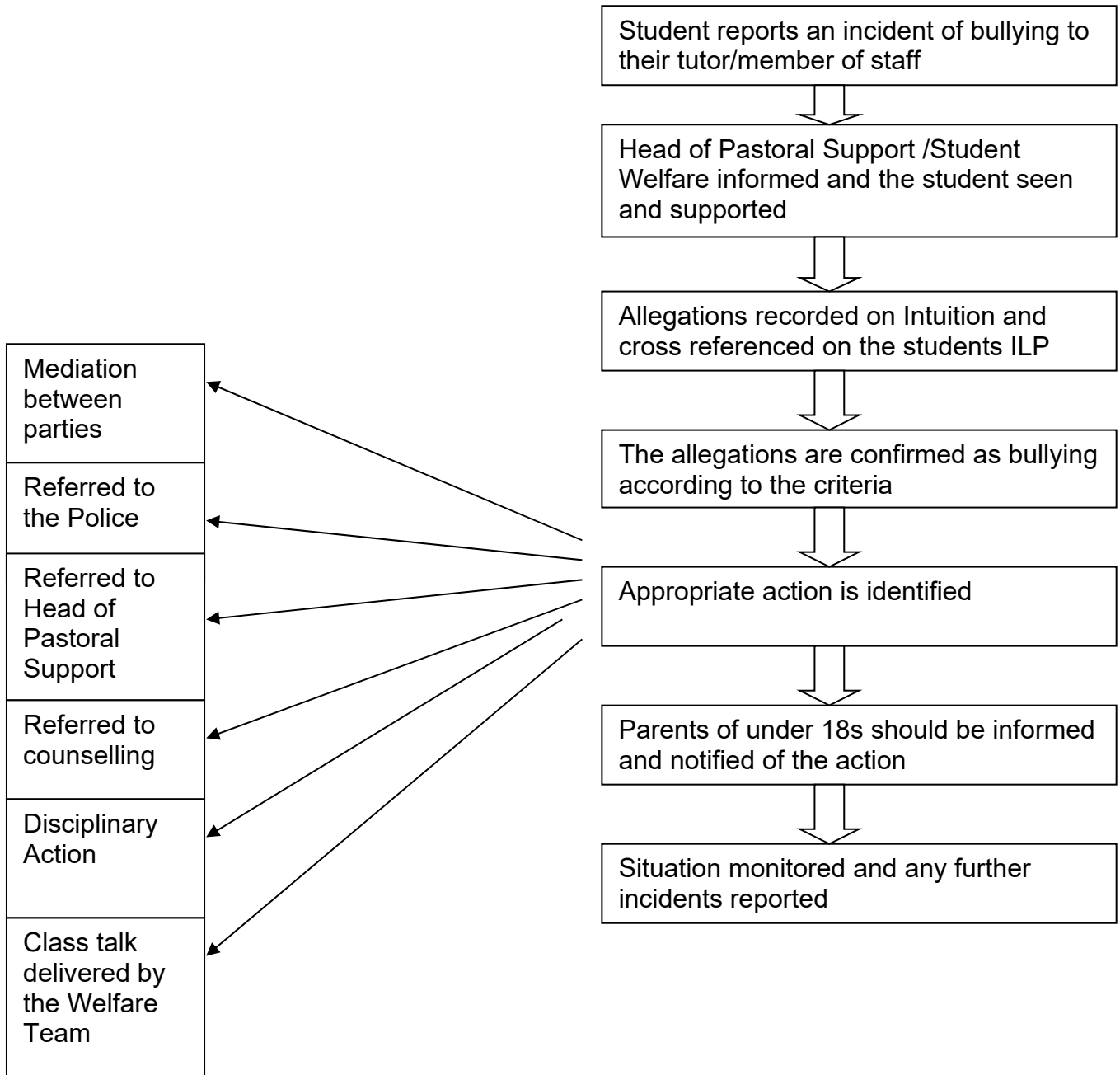
- 1) If a student brings a bullying incident to the attention of a Personal Support Tutor, this will be referred to the Course Director in the first instance e.g. minor classroom relationships or Head of Pastoral Support where the incident is of a more serious nature.
- 2) The Head of Pastoral Support/Personal Support Tutor/ Course Director will then talk to the student about the situation and a course of action will be recommended. Action could include contacting the police depending on the nature of the incident. If it is a group of College students that are involved all parties may be brought together in order for the situation to be resolved.
- 3) Whatever the suggested outcome, the student will receive support from their Personal Support Tutor /Course Director /Head of Pastoral Support, unless they choose to ignore the advice given. However, crimes will be reported to the Police by the Student Welfare Department in line with their boundaries of confidentiality even if the student does not agree with this action.
- 4) The perpetrators of incidents may be subject to the College disciplinary procedures which could end up with a student being excluded from College. Disciplinary action can be instigated by Head of Pastoral Support or an Executive Director.

Accurate reports will be made concerning incidents and this will be added to the Student Welfare Database, Intution, and cross referenced on the student's ILP.

- 5) The confidentiality of information about students will be preserved during the above process save where disclosure is essential as part of Safeguarding or crime prevention procedures.

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Bullying and Harassment Action Flow Chart



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