



Student Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure

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Student Bullying & Harassment Policy and Procedure

Background

East Coast College is committed to ensuring that everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect as part of the College community. Our aim is to facilitate a culture that is tolerant, inclusive and free from bullying and harassment, in all its forms.

The College will treat all incidents, reported incidents of bullying and harassment extremely seriously, and has an inclusion procedure that is transparent and supportive of student progression and reviewed and monitored regularly.

Main Principles

The College is committed to ensuring that all staff and students understand their responsibility in creating a safe learning environment and that all incidents of bullying and harassment are dealt with consistently - both to address the behaviour of the alleged perpetrator and to provide support for the victim.

The college will communicate its intentions:

To staff through:

- Induction Process
- Policy, strategy and procedures
- Staff Training
- Equality, Diversity and Safeguarding Committee
- Cascade and set meeting agenda items
- Employee Consultation Group

To students through:

- Recruitment and Induction Process
- Student Handbook
- Student's Union campaigns and activities
- Tutorial Programme (Careers and Wellbeing Programme)
- Student involvement activities
- Both pastoral and academic staff
- Moodle (Virtual Learning Environment)
- Peer Mentors
- Student Ambassadors/Course Representatives

To parents/carers, partners and visitors through:

- College website
- Welcome materials
- School/partner liaison activities and events
- Partner Code of Conduct

All complaints about harassment and bullying are taken seriously and will be dealt with in a timely and respectful manner for the people involved.

Definitions of Bullying & Harassment:

Bullying

This refers to any incident of bullying towards both students and staff. There is no legal definition of bullying, however The Anti-Bullying Alliance (Aug 17) defines bullying as: "The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face-to-face or online."

"There are four key elements to this definition:

- Hurtful
- Repetition
- Power imbalance
- Intentional"

Examples of bullying could include:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

Harassment

Harassment may include any of the above examples of behaviour, and in particular, a situation in which a person engages in unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating the others person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment can be 'one off' incidents or continuous behaviour.

Bullying and harassment may include behaviour on the grounds of any protected characteristic as identified in the Equality Act 2010, including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity
- Race
- Religion & Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Statutory Duties

The Equality Act 2010 requires the public sector to take into account the needs of all protected groups. (Except marital and civil partnership status.) The Act strengthens and simplifies existing equality legislation and brings together existing duties the College has, not to discriminate on grounds of race, disability and gender. It extends these to include duties not to discriminate on the grounds of age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and gender re-assignment. The Equality Act 2010 outlines East Coast College's Public Sector Duty to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. These notions have been incorporated into this policy alongside the College Single Equality Scheme.

Prevention of Bullying

The College is dedicated to promoting and reinforcing prevention of all forms of bullying and harassment and this is reflected in the College's approach which promotes tolerance, respect, equality and diversity for all. We do this through a series of preventative actions including but not limited to:

- Student Peer Mentoring
- Regular campaigns that raise awareness, promote equality and celebrate difference
- Dedicated Students' Union roles including LGBT Officer and Equal and Diversity Officer
- College wide approach that outlines expectations of all students, staff and visitors with regard to respect for others.
- Student Ambassador Scheme
- Drop ins and events supported by external agencies
- Careers and Wellbeing Programme for all Full Time and Apprenticeship students. This scheme focuses on helping students develop relevant skills with an emphasis on wellbeing, promoting citizenship, open mindedness and tolerance of others and other cultures
- E-Safety tutorials and training
- Celebrating success and progress and championing student involvement in the Student Involvement Report
- Membership of the ACER Equality, Diversity & Safeguarding regional group and the Norfolk County Community Safety Partnership
- Targeted group work by partners to support self esteem
- Police visits to groups (particular focus on cyber) and "Personal Safety" drop ins
- Emphasis on respect throughout the tutorial programme, including "How to Build a Positive Community" and British values based tutorials
- Reporting button available on Moodle and dedicated email address
- Visits to groups by counselling students and external partners (including Neighbourhood team) to support feeling safe in College
- Access to counselling and support for all students
- Restorative practice approach

College expectations of Staff

All staff have a responsibility to ensure students feel safe and that all incidents of bullying and harassment are dealt with appropriately and reported to Safeguarding and Wellbeing for initial statements, investigation allocation and recording.

Procedure

The College Safeguarding flow chart outlines the reporting procedure for all reported incidents of bullying or harassment, which should be read in-line with the College Student Inclusion and Disciplinary Procedure. Interventions and Inclusion and Disciplinary meetings/action plans will be recorded on ProMonitor.

Complaints of harassment or bullying could come from the following sources:

- Informal disclosure
- Third party or witness
- Formal complaint
- Counter complaint

1. Informal disclosure:

Quick and appropriate action can often lead to a problem being solved informally between those involved in a situation where someone perceives that they have been harassed or bullied. All those involved should make every effort to resolve a situation quickly and informally wherever possible.

Sometimes it is not appropriate to take an informal approach. However, it should always be considered before formal action is taken.

If a student feels harassed or bullied, they do not need to take action alone, they can report to and may seek support from (not an exhaustive list)

- Personal Tutor
- Curriculum Lead
- Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team
- Student Services

Staff should respond positively to a request from a complainant to meet or speak about the complaint and seek an amicable and mutually acceptable solution, via mediation where appropriate.

Further action may be taken depending on the incident/s reported. Support may be required or the student/s may be signposted to other services if appropriate.

The Inclusion and Disciplinary procedure may be initiated on the basis of evidence gathered. Staff should keep a record of any reported incidents including dates, times, location, names of individuals involved (including witnesses). They should also record action they have taken and ways in which the student has been affected by the situation. This information will be recorded initially by the Safeguarding and Wellbeing team. Follow up intervention will be recorded by teaching/support staff involved.

Any complaint should be taken seriously and every effort made to resolve it. Students should receive fair and non-judgmental support for their concern. They should understand that they can receive help and support from the same people listed earlier in this section.

The informal stage may resolve the problem. If it does not, the student may progress to a more formal complaint.

2. Third party or 'Witness' complaints:

If a student witnesses behaviour that they perceive to be inappropriate, they should consult with one or more of the below:

- Personal Tutor
- Curriculum Manager
- Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team
- Student Services

If following this consultation the "witness" concludes the behaviour should be investigated further, a formal route should be followed

Hate Crime incidents can be reported to the Police by a third party witness, if the witness would like to take a formal route the Safeguarding and Wellbeing team will implement this.

3. Formal Complaints

If an informal approach has not been possible, or is seen as inappropriate, the student should make a formal complaint to the Assistant Principal for their curriculum area in the first instance via the Safeguarding and Wellbeing team.

The Assistant Principal will conduct a further investigation and action in line with the Student Inclusion and Disciplinary procedure.

4. Counter Complaints

If an alleged perpetrator, following a complaint, makes a counter-complaint the two complaints may be investigated separately or simultaneously.

The College manager undertaking the investigation will make a judgement about the appropriate course of action according to the extent to which evidence, witnesses etc. are the same in both cases.

5. Complaints against a member of staff or member of the Corporation

If the complaint of bullying or harassment is against one of the above, the informal stages of this procedure may apply. However, if a formal complaint is received this will be dealt with using the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

6. Allegations of a Serious Nature

If the allegation is sufficiently serious to warrant investigation by the Police, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Wellbeing Co-ordinator/Head of Student Wellbeing and Support, as appropriate, will formally contact the Police and advise the Principal/Deputy Principal/Deputy Chief Executive.

7. Appeals against investigation decisions

Where the complainant or alleged perpetrator is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation they may follow the formal College Complaints Process to appeal the decision made. A complaints form is available from main Reception or via the Safeguarding and Wellbeing team.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months by College students and staff.

Incidents reported under this policy will be monitored by the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support and reported monthly in a Safeguarding Position Paper available to Senior Leadership Team and termly to the Governor Standards group as part of the Safeguarding review process.

Bullying incidents reported via the Safeguarding Team are reviewed at a fortnightly Safeguarding Co-ordinator 1:2:1 meeting and records are stored confidentially.

An annual Safeguarding review examines the process and reflects on effectiveness of bullying intervention in order to promote and improve best practice.

Student Consultation and Feedback

Students are consulted at regular intervals throughout their course of study, to survey the effectiveness of bullying prevention and intervention and to assess the impact and effectiveness of the strategies in place.

Methods of consultation across the student body include:

- Thrice yearly QDP survey for all students
- Regular targeted surveys and consultation via Student Voice mechanisms, including the Students' Union, Student Ambassadors, Focus Groups, Pop-up surveys and Drop-ins
- Targeted tutorials to ensure an inclusive approach to engage all students

Resources

Directory of useful websites

<https://nobullying.com/anti-bullying-websites-uk/>

ChildLine

Tel: 08001111

www.childline.org.uk

If you are hearing impaired try textphone 0800400222 in daytime hours.

The Samaritans: (confidential, non-judgemental support 24 hrs a day)

08457909090

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

Hosts the Young People's online charter and is responsible for safety on the internet.

There is advice for parents and carers and for young people

www.ceop.police.uk

Stonewall

Information on tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying

www.stonewall.org.uk