



# BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT POLICY

## **Statement of Policy Purpose**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying or harassment of any kind is unacceptable at our College. If bullying or harassment does occur, all students should be able to tell a member of staff and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, sensitively, and effectively. **Anyone**, students or staff, who believes that a student is being bullied or harassed is expected to report it to the appropriate person.

Respect is an important value throughout College life. The College recognises that all students have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their background or protected characteristics. Protected characteristics are defined as: age, disability, gender re- assignment, marital and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. These characteristics' protection encourages all students to behave respectfully towards each other. Bullying or harassment will not be condoned or tolerated at PPA.

## **Applicability**

This policy applies to all students enrolled at PP Academy Ltd ("PPA").

Disciplinary action will be taken against the bully or harasser as appropriate. See Appendix 2.

## **Dissemination**

Management will ensure that the policy is distributed to relevant College Faculties and/or Departments. Dissemination within Faculties and Departments to staff and/or students is the responsibility of the respective management teams.

## **Definition**

### **General Policy Content**

This policy applies to all College students at their place of study, in College grounds, on College transport, during off-site visits and at other locations while undertaking work placement. The College is not responsible for bullying or harassment taking place at other locations, including student accommodation. However, support is available to students involved in bullying or harassment incidents.

Bullying or harassment can cause serious physical and mental problems and can ruin individual's chances of success, both in college and in their future career. No-one deserves to be a target of bullying or harassment. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect.

Failure by staff to take on their responsibility under this policy and procedure may be regarded as a potential disciplinary offence.

### **1. What is Bullying or Harassment?**

'Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'.

*Safe to Learn: Embedding anti bullying work in schools (2007)*

- There is an intention to hurt or humiliate
- There is a power imbalance that makes it difficult for the person being bullied to defend themselves
- It is usually persistent

Bullying or harassment may be present in the form of, but not limited to:

**Relational:** Ignoring, pestering, excluding, tormenting, insensitive jokes or pranks, damaging property belonging to another person, demanding money or property, obscene gestures, threats, name calling

**Physical:** Pushing, kicking, prodding, hitting, punching or any other use of physical contact, stalking, damage to possessions

**Racist:** Persistent racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, inappropriate language or an insulting attack on the basis their ethnicity, culture, religious beliefs and colour or failing to take into account cultural differences

**Sexual:** Unwanted physical contact or inappropriate sexual comments

**Sexual Orientation:** Verbal, physical or emotional bullying behaviour because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality or gender re-assignment

**Prejudice based bullying:** related to special educational need, or to looked-after young people or care leavers.

**Verbal:** Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, making derogatory remarks, intrusive questioning or goading, jokes, unfounded criticism

**Cyber:** All areas of internet such as email and internet chat room misuse, threats by text messaging and misuse of associated technology, e.g., camera and video facilities. This includes uploading of images to/from the internet that may be hurtful or insulting to an individual or group.

**Hate Crime:** Hate crime is any offence committed against a person or property which is motivated by the offender's hatred of people because they are seen as being different. People do not have to be a member of a minority community to be a target of hate crime. Any incident where an individual or group of people are targeted because they are believed to be of a different race, religion/belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or have a disability can be reported as a hate crime. See Appendix 3 for information on differences between bullying and harassment.

## **2. Principles**

The policy and procedures were developed with the following principles in mind:

- **All** members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that suspected bullying or harassment is dealt with quickly and fairly – whether it is reported by the victim or not.
- **All** students may report suspected bullying or harassment concerns through a tutor, Welfare Officer or the Head of Faculty and Education.
- The welfare of the student is paramount and alleged bullying or harassment must be investigated and prioritised.
- A mediation approach is favoured. However, at a stage when formal disciplinary action is to be taken, then the appropriate disciplinary policy and procedures must be followed.
- Any person alleging harassment or bullying will be provided with help and support throughout the process and will be protected from victimization.
- Witnesses have a role to play and have the power to drastically reduce bullying by letting a staff member know in confidence what is happening, by distracting the bully, or by showing support to the target of the bullying. A witness should not physically intervene.
- A student who brings a complaint in good faith, or assists in an investigation, shall be protected from any form of victimisation, regardless of the outcome.

- Malicious allegations will be subject to the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- Managers, staff, and students may approach Student Services for advice and support at any stage.
- All staff and students will be made aware of this policy through training and the publication and display of supporting statements in staff and student handbooks.
- Where a student requests or needs it (e.g. because they have learning difficulties, or their first language is not English), the member of staff receiving the complaint must ensure that the student is fully supported through the process.
- Any allegation of bullying or harassment will be dealt with sensitively and with regard to PPA's policy on confidentiality.
- Complaints may be made in line with the PPA Complaints Policy.

**Allegations of a sufficiently serious nature may be referred directly to the police by the relevant Course Leader or Head of Faculty and Education.**

### **3. Signs and Symptoms**

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied or harassed. Staff should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a student:

- Is frightened of walking to or from College
- Doesn't want to travel on public transport
- Changes their usual routine
- Has an increase in unauthorised absence
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Begins to do poorly in College work
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other students
- 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 and jumpy when a text or cyber message is received

See Appendix 3 and 4 for further information.

#### **4. Managing Allegations**

Any allegations must be taken seriously and investigated as a priority, within 72 hours of receipt. The member of staff who becomes aware or has suspicions of bullying or harassment, should report this to the appropriate Course Leader or Head of Faculty and Education who will initiate an investigation.

The target of, and/or witnesses to, any bullying or harassment should be encouraged to make a statement, which should include the following:

- Date(s), times(s) and place(s) of incident(s)
- Name of any witnesses
- What actually happened
- How it made them feel
- Any action taken, e.g. reported to a member of staff
- Original copies of any correspondence or written material connected with the issue

This information will be used as evidence in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings or inform any mediation process.

**All members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that suspected bullying is dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently.**

However informal the support at this stage, staff must:

- Understand bullying and harassment
- Be familiar with the College policy
- Be able to give information
- Be able to explain options
- Be able to help students to understand that they can do something if they want to but are not under any pressure to do so

## **5. Allegations Against Staff (By Students)**

Any allegation against a member of staff should be reported to the Head of Faculty and Education. Consideration will be given, in serious circumstances, as to whether suspension of the staff member, pending an investigation, should be requested from the Head of Faculty and Education.

In the event that the allegation is made by a young person (under 18) or vulnerable adult, the Head of Faculty and Education will be involved in any initial discussions from a potential safeguarding perspective.

## **6. Allegations Against Students (By Staff or Students)**

Depending on the nature of the incident(s), a Course Leader may be asked to authorise a suspension of the alleged student harasser/bully whilst an investigation is carried out.

### **Informal Process**

In some instances, and with the agreement and understanding of the target, the issue may be resolved informally through a facilitated meeting or mediation (see Appendix 5 for Guidelines on Mediation). This may be facilitated sensitively by the target's Course Leader, the Welfare Officer, or the Head of Faculty and Education.

Once the alleged harasser/bully has been made aware of the complaint, they must be given the right to respond. They have the right to be accompanied to any meeting by a parent, friend or the Welfare Officer. This informal stage may solve the problem. If it does not, the complainant may take the complaint to the formal stage of the procedure.

### **Formal Process**

If the informal stage does not resolve the issue, or the issue is sufficiently serious, then the matter should be referred directly to the disciplinary process. It is important that the severity of the allegation is recognised and referral is directed to an appropriate level. Bullying or harassment, if proven, and by its very nature, should be treated as at least serious misconduct.

## **7. Follow-up**

Students who have been the target of bullying or harassment should be considered 'at risk' for a period of time after the event. Tutors will be responsible for monitoring the student's progress closely and ensuring that access to appropriate support is available.

## **8. Monitoring and Reporting**

Information about alleged incidents of harassment or bullying, whether dealt with informally or formally, will be collated and reported to the Head of Faculty and Education on an anonymous basis by the Course Leader.

## **9. Related Policies/Documents**

Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure  
Student Disciplinary Appeals Procedure  
Staff Disciplinary Policy  
Safeguarding Policies  
Complaints Policy  
Safe Touch Policy

## **10. Help**

If a student needs to seek help regarding any issues that involve harassment or bullying, the first place to report to is the Welfare Officer.

Students can also speak to their Course Leaders regarding issues that are specific to a classroom or class group.

Serious issues reported to the Welfare Officer will also be reported to the Head of Faculty and Education.

## **Procedure to be Followed**

Any student who reports a case of bullying needs to know that the allegation will be taken seriously and investigated promptly. No promises should be made about the outcome.

Sometimes counter allegations are made by the alleged perpetrator. These will also be investigated so that a full picture is obtained. The student or parent who initially reporting the bullying should be made aware of this possibility and sensitively asked whether they are aware of any claims that the alleged perpetrator might make. They should be re-assured that this would not condone the behaviour they are reporting and that an investigation will still go ahead.

## **Reporting and Investigation**

If a student reports a case of bullying to you, you should:

- Reassure the student/parent that the matter will be dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible
- Talk to the student and find out what has happened. Keep notes of this conversation. Try to find out **when** (dates/times), **where** (places) and **who** (names of the bully/bullies). Students are not always keen to give this information as they are concerned about the repercussions if the bully/bullies find(s) out. Please reassure them as we cannot deal with specific cases of bullying if we do not have this information.
- Refer the case to the relevant Course Leader or the target of the bullying allegation and send a copy of the Bullying Allegation Record form to the Course Leader.
- Your Course Leader may suggest you deal with the situation if it is straightforward, and you feel that you are able e.g. name-calling in a classroom situation.
- The Course Leader may invite parents to discuss the problem and in extreme circumstances may involve the police.

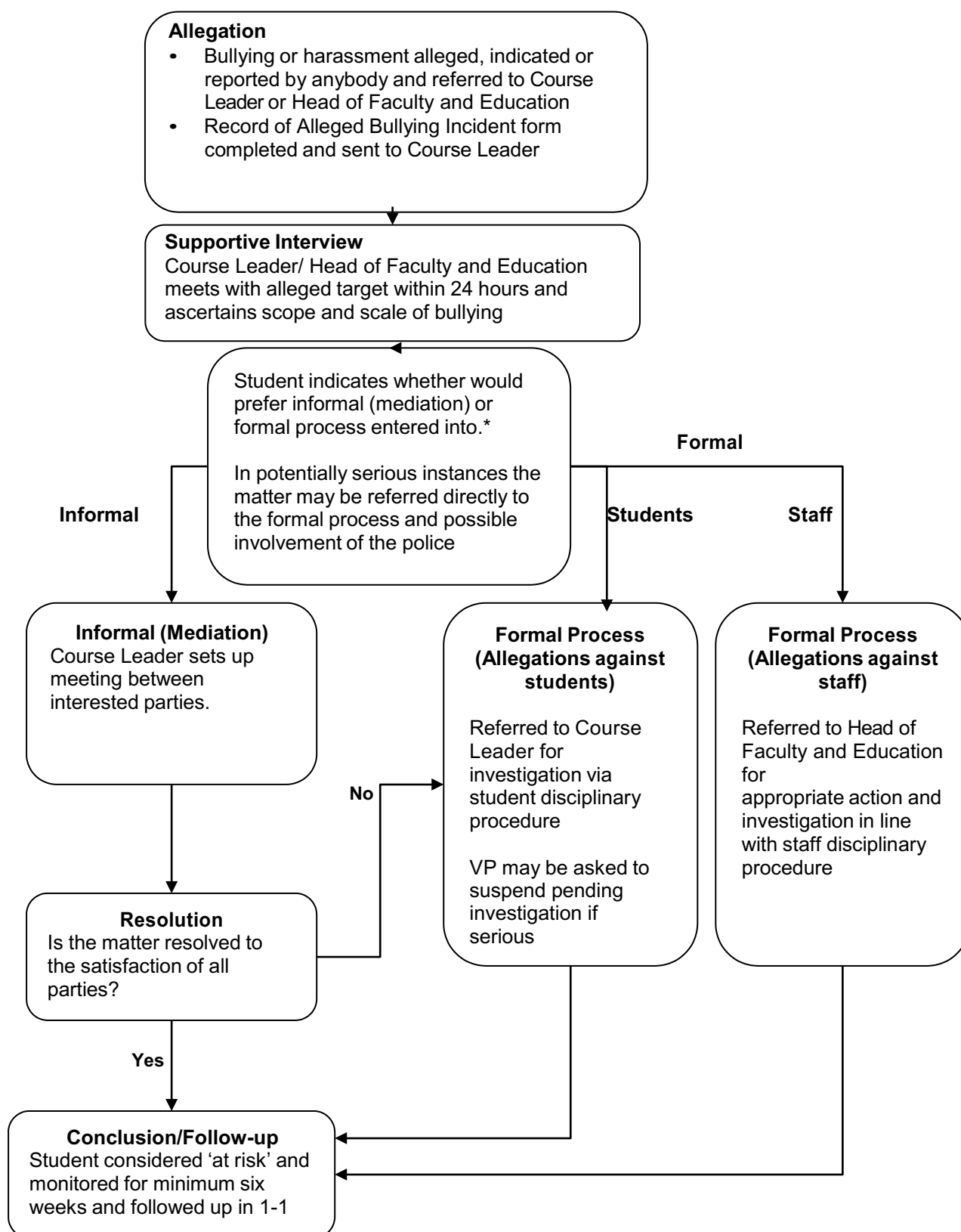
## **Outcomes from Investigation**

Part of the discussion with the student being bullied should involve asking him/her "What would you like the outcome to be?" A number of different alternatives can be discussed:

- An informal approach which will involve a facilitated meeting between both parties (see appendix 5). The intention is to achieve some reconciliation to allow for students to co-exist and be successful in College.
- A formal complaint will be referred to the Course Leader for investigation under the student disciplinary procedure.



## Summary Process Flowchart



\*In the event that a student indicates they would not like to take the issue further, but there is reasonable evidence or grounds to believe that bullying or harassment has taken place, consideration should be given as to how to support the welfare of the individual.

## Distinguishing Between Harassment and Bullying

**Harassment:** Acts of harassment usually centre around unwanted, offensive and intrusive behaviour with a sexual, racial or physical component. Measures to identify acts of harassment relate to the Equality Act 2010.

It is very difficult to distinguish between harassment and bullying and there is much overlap between the two. The following lists some of the differences between the two:

Harassment	Bullying
A strong physical component e.g., contact and touch in all its forms, intrusion into personal space and possessions, damage to possessions including a person's work etc.	Primarily psychological (e.g., criticism) but may become physical later
Tends to focus on the individual because of what they are (e.g. female, black, disabled etc.)	Anyone will do as long as they are competent, popular and vulnerable
Is usually linked to sex, race, prejudice, discrimination etc.	Sex, race and gender play little or no part; it's usually discrimination on the basis of competence
May consist of a single incident, a few incidents or many incidents	Rarely restricted to a single incident and tends to be an accumulation of many small incidents
The person who is being harassed knows almost straight away that they are being harassed	The person being bullied may not realise for weeks or months that they are being bullied – until there is a moment of enlightenment
There is often an element of possession, e.g. as in stalking	The person being bullied is seen as a threat that must be controlled. If this doesn't work, the person bullying may try to get the person they are bullying removed from the social circle or group
Often the harassment is for peer approval, bravado, macho image etc.	Tends to be secret, behind closed doors, with no witnesses
The harasser often perceives the victim as easy, albeit sometimes a challenge	The person bullying is driven by envy and jealousy
The harasser often has specific inadequacies (e.g.- sexual)	The person bullying is inadequate in the area of interpersonal skills

**Persistent Bullying and/or Harassment can lead to:**

- Low self esteem
- Shyness
- Poor academic achievement
- Isolation
- Threatened or attempted suicide
- Constant high levels of stress and anxiety
- Frequent illness such as viral infections
- Aches and pains in the joints and muscles
- Headaches and migraines
- Tiredness, exhaustion, constant fatigue
- Sleeplessness, nightmares, waking early
- Flashbacks and replays, obsessiveness
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Skin problems such as eczema, psoriasis, athlete's foot, ulcers, shingles, urticaria
- Poor concentration, can't concentrate on anything for long
- Bad or intermittently-functioning memory, forgetfulness, especially with trivial day-to-day things
- Sweating, trembling, shaking, palpitations, panic attacks
- Tearfulness, bursting into tears regularly and over trivial things
- Uncharacteristic irritability and angry outbursts
- Being constantly on edge
- Hypersensitivity, fragility, isolation, withdrawal
- Reactive depression

### **Guidelines for Mediation**

The mediator will normally be a member of the relevant Faculty management team. The mediator can help participants to resolve their dispute and to co-exist at the College, through using the following procedure:

- Both parties define the problem as they see it, alone with the mediator.
- The impartial mediator identifies the key issues for both parties - these are listed on paper.
- At the end of the individual session with the mediator, the mediator ascertains whether or not the parties are willing to meet together, along with the mediator. This is the point when real mediation can take place, if both parties are willing to try, to move towards reconciliation.
- At the joint meeting, led by the mediator, both parties should be encouraged to speak and express their opinion with only one person allowed to speak at a time. The mediator needs to firmly control the meeting to ensure it does not turn into a battle.
- The mediator sets up a plan of action which will satisfy each party and obtains agreement on these.
- A follow up meeting is agreed, and the situation monitored at agreed intervals.

Outcomes are likely to involve apologies, changed behaviour and perhaps some support to achieve changed behaviour, e.g. anger management or other skill improvements.

The mediation approach cannot always replace a disciplinary approach and student perpetrators may be placed on behaviour contracts or in more extreme or repeated cases be excluded using the College Disciplinary Procedures.

The outcomes of all investigations should be recorded on the perpetrator's student record.

### **Strategies for Prevention**

As part of our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our students PPA has developed the following strategies:

- Cyber-safety e-induction
- Equality & Diversity e-induction which addresses bullying behaviours
- Counselling for student affected by bullying whether in college, outside college or historical
- Safeguarding training for all staff
- Anti-bullying leaflets and poster

**Policy Updated: September 2023**

**Policy Review Due: February 2024**

## RECORD OF ALLEGED BULLYING INCIDENT

### DETAILS OF THE ALLEGATION (continue on separate sheet if necessary)

Student(s) making the report -----

Student DMU ID No.(s) (if applicable) -----

Member of staff receiving the report -----

Date the report was made -----

Student(s) allegedly being bullied -----

Student DMU ID No.(s) (if applicable) -----

Individuals allegedly doing the bullying -----

Is there any link to discriminatory behaviour eg. homophobic, sexist, racist bullying etc. Yes/No

Details – including dates, times, places, witnesses, nature and extent, result of actions, and any other useful information.

**COLLEGE RESPONSE** (continue on separate sheet if necessary)

Member of staff investigating -----

Outcomes of investigation and action taken

Degree of resolution and any ongoing monitoring/action needed.

Signed investigating member of staff \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send a copy of this form to the Head of Faculty and Education for monitoring of anti-bullying measures.**

**Date sent:**

