



# PLUMPTON

## COLLEGE

### Anti Bullying & Harassment Policy

This policy is applicable to all students and staff within the Plumpton College Group.

SMT Assigned Owner	James Hibbert
Document Author	James Hibbert
Approved by	SMT
Date of Approval	July 2024
Date of minor amendments approved by SMT	
Frequency of review	Every three years
Date of next review	2024

The SMT is delegated to approve minor changes to the policy in response to legal changes and best practice.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** This policy should be read in conjunction with the College's Equality and Diversity Policy, the Code of Conduct for College Staff, the Student Handbook, the Student Behaviour Management Policy, the Complaints Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- 1.2** Plumpton College is committed to the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of gender, identity, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, creed or religious beliefs, ethnic or national origins, age or disability. The college will always endeavour to uphold the right of every student and member of staff to work or study without fear of bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- 1.3** The college recognises the distress and problems caused by bullying and harassment and views such conduct as grounds for disciplinary action and/or other forms of intervention. If a complaint is brought to the attention of any member of staff, it must be reported to the Student Wellbeing & Safeguarding team promptly. Appropriate action will be taken in consideration of the needs and, where possible, the consent of identified victims.

## **2. What is bullying?**

- 2.1** Bullying is a particular form of personal harassment. It is persistent, threatening, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour that may be an abuse of power, position or knowledge. It may be the use of unfair sanctions. It can happen in public or private, in person, online or via other media. It may arise from the combination of the personal style of the bully and a lack of assertiveness and self-confidence in the person or persons being bullied. What is important is that the conduct makes the recipient(s) feel upset, humiliated, vulnerable, or undermines their self-confidence. It may also cause them to suffer stress.

Some examples of bullying are:

- consistently undermining someone
- shouting and use of sarcasm at an individual
- derogatory or belittling remarks in front of others regarding appearance, work or personal attributes;
- unwarranted exclusions or victimisation;

- 2.2** Bullying is not confined to open, derisory remarks or aggression, but can also be subtle and devious, resulting in an individual being singled out, demeaned or devalued. It can take the form of direct action (for example; verbal abuse, hitting, name calling) or indirect action (for example; spreading rumours, false friendships, coercion).
- 2.3** An individual or a group of individuals can carry out bullying. All types of bullying are viewed as equally unacceptable by the College.
- 2.4** Bullying and harassment can be unpredictable, irrational and may not be obvious to others. They can cause an individual to feel isolated and can have possible implications for physical and mental health. People being bullied or harassed may sometimes appear to overreact to something that seems relatively trivial to others, but may be the latest in a series of incidents.

2.5 Cyber-bullying is 'Virtual' bullying using technology (e.g. chat rooms, instant messaging, email & mobile phone) which can occur in or outside College. Cyberbullying can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, as people can forward on content very quickly and easily.

2.6 The statements above are not exhaustive and the College will intervene in circumstances in which it believes that one person's actions are having a negative effect on the welfare of another.

### 3. What is harassment?

3.1 Harassment is a form of behaviour towards a person that causes mental or emotional suffering. As such, harassment can take multiple forms, including:

- Physical harassment – unwanted contact, unnecessary touching, assault, gestures or aggressive behaviour.
- Verbal harassment - unwelcome remarks, suggestions and propositions, malicious gossip, jokes and banter which is based on a person's sex or race or which refers to a person's age, disability, sexuality, religion or personal appearance.
- Non-verbal harassment - offensive literature or pictures, graffiti and computer imagery, isolation or non co-operation and exclusion from social activities

3.2 Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment means 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include;

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
- Non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos. (UKCCIS sexting advice provides detailed advice for schools and colleges);
- Sexualised online bullying;
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.
- Up skirting this typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Upskirting is a criminal offence and this includes instances where culprits say the images were taken just for a laugh.

## **4. Responsibilities**

**4.1 Students** – each student is accountable for their own conduct and the college expects each student to be capable of ensuring that their conduct does not constitute bullying or harassment. Any student suffering such treatment should report this to their Personal Tutor or any member of staff they feel able to speak to.

**4.2 Staff** – all staff are expected to model professional behaviours at all times and take appropriate action should a student make a disclosure of bullying or harassment to them on the day that the disclosure was made. This should involve reporting the matter to the Student Wellbeing and Safeguarding Team either in person or via the confidential comments section within the student's Pro Monitor profile.

## **5. Confidentiality**

**5.1** Allegations of bullying and harassment will always be treated with the intent of maintaining confidentiality to protect the wellbeing of the complainant. However, there may be issues of safeguarding which result in the necessity to disclose information to other agencies or action to be taken to prevent additional harm to others. Students must be reassured that:

- Their complaint will always be taken seriously
- Their wishes (so far as possible) will guide any action taken against an allegation of harassment or bullying

## **6. Dealing with complaints**

**6.1** Complaints of bullying or harassment will be addressed swiftly and if possible, and depending on the nature of the allegation, using an informal approach which is likely to produce solutions that are effective. However, there may be occasions when an informal approach is not adequate and the Formal Procedure is more appropriate. In any event, the Student Behaviour Management Policy must be followed to ensure that appropriate escalation and clarity of outcome and review.

**6.2** If the college reasonably believes that an alleged bully or harasser is guilty of the complaint raised then any requirement for the separation of the victim and bully/harasser will always prioritise the needs of the victim.

## **7. Induction, training and reporting**

**7.1** As part of the induction process for staff and students reference is made to the College's Professional Workplace Framework as being the non-negotiable set of expectations from which interventions will be triggered.

**7.2** The Personal Development delivery plan will always include themes of respect and healthy relationships early in the academic year.

**7.3** Formal disciplinary sanctions relating to bullying and harassment will be monitored by the college and related judgements will drive actions through the Quality Cycle.

---