

GUILDFORD COLLEGE GROUP POLICY

ACADEMIC/NON ACADEMIC: NON ACADEMIC

FRAMEWORK AREA: SAFEGUARDING

POLICY TITLE: ANTI-BULLYING & HARASSMENT

**LEAD COLLEGE MANAGER: VICE PRINCIPAL
IMPROVEMENT & EXCELLENCE**

CONSULTED WITH: Safeguarding Committee, CMT

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**ORIGINATOR: Director of Estates and College
Services**

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GUILDFORD COLLEGE GROUP

STATEMENT OF POLICY PURPOSE

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of 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 ethnic origin, disability, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief (or none), and encourages all students to behave in such a manner towards each other. Bullying or harassment will not be condoned or tolerated at any of the campuses comprising Guildford College Group.

APPLICABILITY

To whom: This policy applies to all students enrolled at Guildford College Group, its campuses and any of its outreach centres, including franchises and work placements, that offer qualifications on behalf of the College, regardless of race, gender, disability, religion, age or sexual orientation.

Consequences of non-compliance: Disciplinary action may be taken against the bully or harasser as appropriate, see Section 2.

DISSEMINATION

The Head of Safeguarding 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, on 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. 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 victim of bullying or harassment. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect.

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

1 What is Bullying or Harassment?

Differences of attitude or culture and the misinterpretation of social signs can mean that what is perceived as bullying by one person may not seem so to another. However, the defining features are that **the behaviour is unwanted by the recipient.**

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

Emotional: 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

Homophobic: Verbal, physical or emotional bullying behaviour because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality

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 victim 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 2 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 College staff have a responsibility to ensure that suspected bullying or harassment is dealt with quickly and fairly – whether it is reported by the person possible at risk or not
- The welfare of the student is paramount and alleged bullying or harassment must be investigated and prioritised
- 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 victimisation
- 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 College's Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Managers, staff and students may approach the Safeguarding Manager 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 and on 'Go', the College intranet
- 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 they are fully supported through the process
- Any allegation of bullying or harassment will be dealt with sensitively and with regard to the College policy on confidentiality

Allegations of a sufficiently serious nature may be referred directly to the police by the Duty Principal or relevant Director.

3 Signs and Symptoms

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is 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 go on the College/public bus
- Begs to be driven to College
- Changes their usual routine
- There is 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 for further information.

4 Managing Allegations

Any allegations must be taken seriously and investigated as a priority and within 24 hours.

The member of staff who becomes aware of, or suspects possible bullying or harassment, should report this to the appropriate Director of Faculty or Head of Learning and Standards (or Duty Principal) who will initiate an investigation.

The victim of, and/or witnesses to, any bullying or harassment should be encouraged to make a statement to 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 appropriate Director of Faculty or Department who will liaise with the Human Resources

Department as a matter of priority. Consideration will be given, in serious circumstances, as to whether suspension of the staff member, pending an investigation, should be requested from the Principal. (See Staff Disciplinary Policy.)

In the event that the allegation is made by a young person (under 18) or vulnerable adult, the Director of Estates and College Services 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 Duty Principal or Faculty Director 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 individual involved, the issue may be resolved informally through a facilitated meeting or mediation (see Appendix 4 for Guidelines on Mediation). This may be facilitated sensitively by the individuals Head of Learning and Standards or Director of Faculty. Where appropriate, a member of the Counselling Team may be asked to attend to support the process.

Once the alleged harasser/bully has been made aware of the complaint, he/she must be given the right to respond. He/she has the right to be accompanied to any meeting by a parent, friend or member a member of staff. 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 directly 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 bullied or harassed 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 Student Parliament and the Executive team on an anonymous basis by the Head of Safeguarding and Learner Involvement.

9 Related Policies/Documents

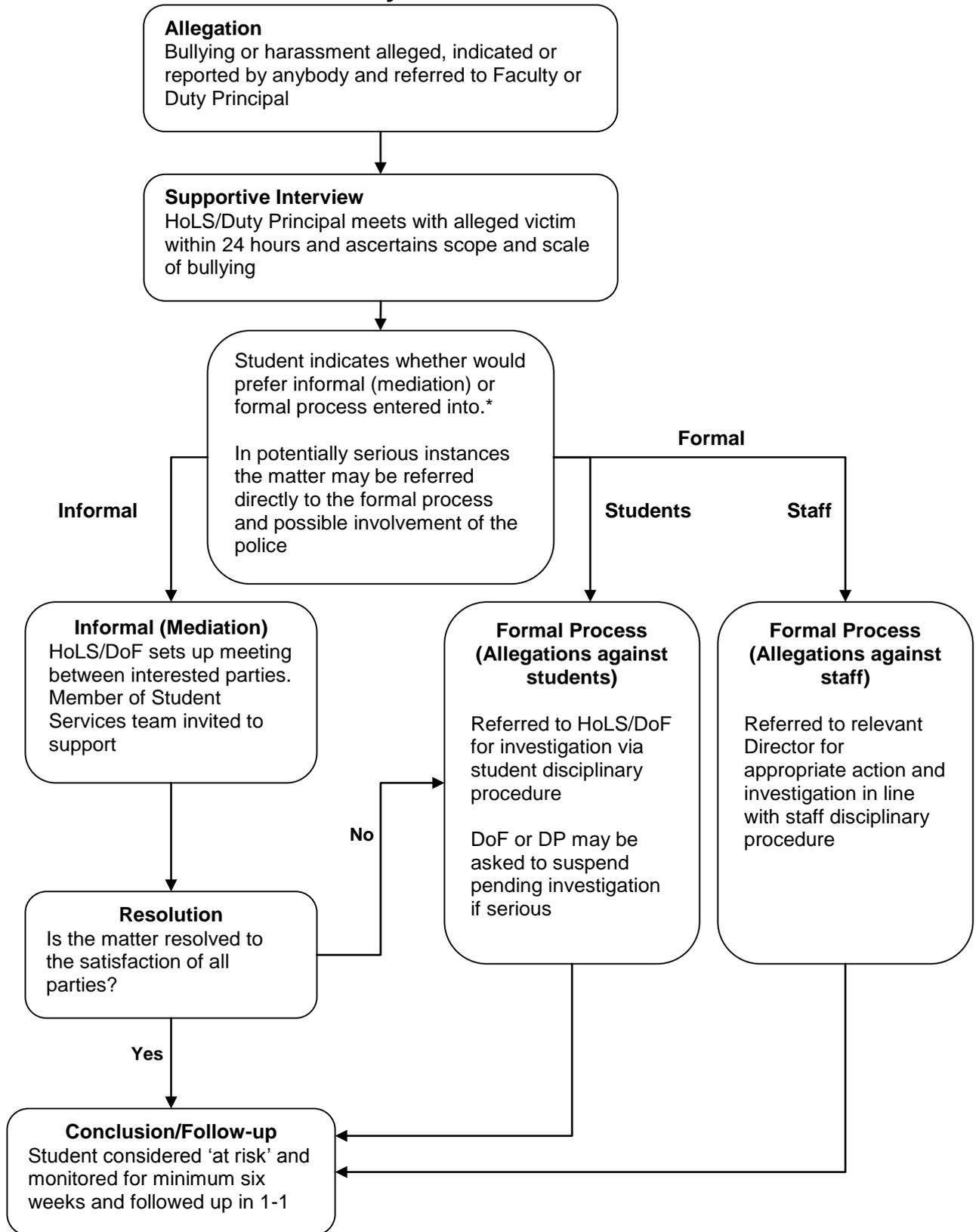
Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Student Disciplinary Appeals Procedure
Staff Disciplinary Policy
Single Equality Scheme

10 Help

Personal tutor
Appropriate Head of Learning and Standards
Appropriate Director of Faculty
Head of Safeguarding
Student Services
Director of Estates and College Services
Students' Union representative

Appendix 1

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. Please discuss with either Head of Safeguarding and Learner Involvement or Director of Student Services.

Appendix 2

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 Sex Discrimination Act, the Race Relations Act and the law of assault. More recently, the Disability Discrimination Act (1996), the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994) and the Protection from Harassment Act (1996) have also influenced attitudes towards harassment.

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, especially with males who bully
Tends to focus on the individual because of what he or she is (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 he/she is being harassed	The person being bullied may not realise for weeks or months that he or she is 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	
The harasser often perceives the victim as easy, albeit sometimes a challenge	Tends to be secret, behind closed doors, with no witnesses
The harasser often has specific inadequacies (e.g.- sexual)	The person bullying is driven by envy and jealousy
	The person bullying is inadequate in the area of interpersonal skills

Appendix 3

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

Appendix 4

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