

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the College's commitment to the prevention and eradication of bullying among its learners, and to detail what actions the College will take in pursuit of these goals.

2. Background

- 2.1 An ethos of Stephenson College is The Stephenson Way – demonstrating positive behaviour and respect for each other, in a safe and secure environment. In line with this, Stephenson College considers that all learners have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and will not tolerate any form of bullying

3. Consultation with learners

- 3.1 As part of the process of developing this policy, a consultation process will be carried out with our learners.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all College learners 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 taking place at other locations; however support is available to learners involved in bullying incidents.

5. Related documentation

- Equality Policy
- Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
- Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Health & Safety Policy

6. What is bullying?

- 6.1 Bullying is defined as any unsolicited or unwelcome act by an individual or a group of people which hurts, humiliates, intimidates or undermines the self esteem and confidence of an individual or group of people . Bullying can occur face to face, via e-mail, text, social networking sites, telephone, in writing, in graffiti/posters, display or circulation of offensive materials/books or via a third party.

6.2 Examples of bullying behaviour

- **emotional** – ignoring, excluding, tormenting, insensitive jokes or pranks, damaging property belonging to another person, demanding money or property
- **physical** - pushing, kicking, prodding, hitting, punching or any other use of physical contact

- **sexual** - unwanted physical contact or inappropriate sexual comments
- **discriminatory** – bullying behaviour because of, or focusing on, diversity issues such as race, sexuality, disability, age, transgender identity, religion, gender. This may include inappropriate language or taunts, gestures, graffiti etc.
- **verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, making derogatory remarks, intrusive questioning or goading
- **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

6.3 People are often bullied because of their

- appearance
- race or religion
- gender
- transgender identity
- sexuality
- disability
- economic background
- hobbies and interests
- age

7. Hate Crime

7.1 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.

8. Signs and symptoms of bullying

8.1 These could include:

- not wanting to go to College or travel on usual mode of transport
- changing usual routines
- becoming anxious or withdrawn
- attempting or threatening suicide
- crying without any obvious cause
- feeling ill/feigning illness
- work deteriorating at College
- possessions "going missing"
- becoming aggressive or unreasonable
- bullying other students or siblings
- displaying increasing lack of confidence and self-esteem
- asking for, or stealing money
- having unexplained cuts or bruises
- being excluded from group activities by other students

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

9. Recording incidents

- 9.1 The member of staff who becomes aware of possible bullying should pass the information to their Faculty Head/Student Services Manager and the relevant Programme Manager or member of their team.
- 9.2 The learner reporting bullying 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.
 - where cyber bullying has taken place, printouts should be obtained wherever possible (e.g. of emails), or the member of staff taking the statement should sign it to say they have seen any text messages/call records on the learner's mobile phone.
- 9.3 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 can record this for them, taking care to ensure the students words are accurately recorded.
- 9.4 This information will inform the mediation process if it is decided to embark on this. It will also be used as evidence in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings.

10. Confidentiality

- 10.1 As a general guideline, members of staff will respect confidentiality of the individual as long as it is consistent with the College's Child Protection Policy.
- 10.2 However, where confidentiality has to be broken, then the complainant should be involved in that process. In some cases the individual may just want to talk about the bullying but may not wish to take matters further. In this case a strategy should be developed with the student to address the situation.

11. Initial meeting and investigation

- 11.1 The Course Lecturer/Manager/Faculty Head dealing with the allegation of bullying should set up an initial informal interview with both parties separately and explain the College policy on bullying. The victim should be enabled to discuss the incident and all possible courses of action e.g. empowering the victim to address the issue with the perpetrator, mediation or invoking the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 11.2 Counselling can be offered to both parties. Appointments can be made through the main reception.

12. Mediation

- 12.1 The mediator would ordinarily be the learner's Course Lecturer, but may also be a College Manager. 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, individually 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

13. Student Disciplinary Procedure

- 13.1 The Student Disciplinary Procedure may be invoked in the case of particularly serious incidents of bullying or, following mediation where no satisfactory plan of action can be formulated or if the perpetrator continues his/her bullying behaviour.

14. Alleged bullying of a student by a member of staff

- 14.1 A student who feels that she/he is being bullied by a member of staff should discuss the issue with their Course Lecturer/Faculty Head.
- 14.2 If it is not possible to resolve the issue, the student can make a formal complaint in writing. This should be handed in to Student Services. The complaint will be investigated and the student will be contacted regarding the outcome.

15. Supporting the bully

- 15.1 There is often an underlying reason for bullying behaviour. A bully can be very insecure and may
- have been bullied themselves
 - be afraid of becoming a victim to someone else
 - want to be accepted into a certain group
 - want to be well known for their physical status
 - have low levels of self-esteem and self confidence

- 15.2 Support may be required to enable a bully to change his/her behaviour. Breaking patterns of behaviour and expectations of other students and staff may make him/her a victim to others. Bullies wishing to reform should be encouraged to seek help and advice from the College Counsellor or their Course Lecturer, or be put in touch with external support organisations such as Childline or KidScape.
- 15.3 A bully should be encouraged to change his/her behaviour and should not be intimidated, humiliated or made to feel uncomfortable when seeking support.