



Bullying Policy

What is bullying?

It is behaviour, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, physically or emotionally, bullying can be by a group or an individual.

How does bullying differ from banter?

- There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate an individual
- There is a power or situation imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- It is usually persistent

In some cases an incident may be deemed as bullying even though the behaviour has not been persistent or over a long period of time if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This should be considered in cases where there are cases of sexual, sexist, racist, or homophobic bullying and when young people with disabilities or learning support are involved.

What forms does bullying take?

Bullying can include: name calling; Taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; Kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; inappropriate touching; producing offensive graffiti; spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours; or always leaving someone out of groups. Bullying should also be considered in cases where by young people are forced to act against their will by others.

Technology is also increasingly used as a method to bully young people. This may involve sending inappropriate, or hurtful text messages, emails, instant messages, or posting malicious material online (e.g. social networking websites), or sending or posting offensive or degrading images and videos. 'Cyber bullying' as it is often referred to has the added danger of following the young person where ever they maybe so at home, at college and wherever they may log on to a computer and social network facility.

Bullying may also take a more specific form singling out an individual because they may belong to a particular group. This would be considered as prejudice-based bullying, some examples of prejudice-bullying are, racist and religious bullying, sexual, sexist and Transphobic bullying, homophobic bullying, and disablist bullying to name a few.

Why is it important to tackle bullying?

Every learner should feel safe to learn and socialise. Every student should be safe from victimisation and discrimination at college. Their journeys to and from college should be free from fear and intimidation. No-one should suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause.

Although this policy focuses on bullying it will not usually be publicised in isolation but within the context of the wider expectations of student behaviour. This policy does not cover issues of abuse. In the event that abuse is suspected the College Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy will be followed.

The College views bullying as a serious matter and one that could warrant severe disciplinary action. However, the intention is to create an environment where bullying is unlikely and where, if it does occur, the person being bullied will feel able to seek help and allow action to be taken early to avoid serious incidents developing.

How do we Create/Foster an Environment that Minimises Bullying?

- The college will encourage openness in the discussion of bullying issues and will refer to this policy in the Student Handbook and in the induction for new students and staff. It will also be raised at other times in other contexts at appropriate opportunities.
- The College will publicise within the student body that bullying, intimidation and harassment is unacceptable.

Policy/procedures

1. Members of staff approached by an individual who is being bullied should respect the confidence of the student. If members of staff judge the student or other people to be at risk they should consult with their Senior Manager in the first instance.
2. Any member of the College community who suspects that an individual(s) is being bullied should report this suspicion to the appropriate Course Tutor/Team Leader.
3. Team Leaders/Course Tutors will investigate reports of bullying and will ensure that evidence is gathered and recorded as soon as possible, and involve parents/guardians where appropriate.
4. Bullying is regarded as a serious matter, one that might justify the suspension of the perpetrator. If, in the opinion of the Tutor, suspension is warranted they will refer to the Head of Department and Student Welfare Manager. The terms of the suspension will include the provision for expulsion from the college if the perpetrator continues to intimidate the victim(s).

5. The Heads of Department and/or the Student Welfare Manager will come to a decision on the matter and if suspension is warranted the terms will be specified by the Heads of Department which may vary according to circumstance. Appropriate conduct outside the campus and in the use of mobile phones and computer networking will be implicit to the agreement.
6. The Heads of Department/Student Welfare Manager may suspend for up to one week and will inform the Assistant Principal
7. Upon their return the student (perpetrator) will be interviewed by their tutor/Head of Department, and the Student Welfare Manager, the purpose of which is to establish agreement to modify their behaviour and cease bullying. At interview they will be warned that further incident may lead to disciplinary action under the college's standing disciplinary procedures.
8. Victims of bullying will be informed of the services offered by the Student Counsellor and encouraged to make an appointment.
9. Any student implicated in bullying another will be advised to arrange an appointment to see the Student Counsellor.
10. The Student Counsellor will be informed of any incidents and may offer advice and/or become involved as a neutral party.
11. Appropriate members of staff will be informed of incidents to enable monitoring and controls.
12. If a resident student the suspension will include their contract for residence for the period.

Other relevant documents to this policy:

- Single Equality Scheme
- College Code of Conduct for Students
- Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Preventing bullying?

All BCA staff members should adhere and support the college ethos of:

- Encouraging values such as respect.
- Model fair and respectful behaviour and leadership
- Challenge all forms of prejudice and promote equality.

- Discourage young people from colluding with bullying, for example being bystanders, and those who reinforce bullying behaviour through comment or laughter.
- Encourage students to have respect for themselves, their peers, staff, visitors and their college environment.
- Students conduct themselves in a way that promotes a friendly and positive learning and social environment.
- Maintain tolerance and politeness.
- Everyone to challenge harassment, bullying, and disrespect.

Responding to bullying?

When bullying does occur a clear and consistent response is essential. There are many ways staff can respond to bullying however the goals of intervention should always remain the same:

- To make the victim safe and feel secure
- To stop the bullying, and change the bully's behaviour
- To make clear to every learner that bullying is unacceptable
- To learn lessons from the experience that can be applied in future.
- Bullying is complex behaviour and if it is not clear who the perpetrator is, it may be more productive to focus on the future than to spend time when each party is in denial. In such cases steps should be taken to agree with the learners how they will behave in the future and develop a learner's agreement plan.

What you should consider when tackling the learners?

- Invite and encourage talk
- Consider your body language – sit down, make eye contact
- Return and clarify what the young person tells you.
- Be comfortable with silence.
- Summarise the problem.
- Encourage the young person to come up with ideas about next steps

- Monitor and record the situation
- Record any bullying incidences and take appropriate action
- Report back to and reassure the victim.
- Follow up, discreetly, with the victim to make certain the bullying has actually stopped, and they feel safe.
- Inform your senior manager and seek appropriate advice

Responding to serious or persistent bullying?

In cases of continued bullying the Student Welfare Manager should be kept informed. A decision will then be made as to whether the situation needs to be taken to the next level which may include external agencies particularly if bullying is taking place outside the campus.

How do we know our actions have been successful?

Continued consultation with learners is the most effective way to find out if anti-bullying interventions are working, and young people feel safe, some key questions are:

- Does the victim feel safe?
- Did the bully's behaviour change?
- What have we learned?

Staff members to seek advice from:

- Student Welfare Manager
- Vice Principal
- College Counsellor
- Heads of Department