

# Norton College (Worcester and Tewkesbury) limited

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Statement of intent

Norton College Worcester believes that all students are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the College's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the College. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines a number of legal obligations regarding the College's response to bullying. Under section 89, Colleges must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst students. These measures are part of the College's Code of Conduct, which is communicated to all students, College staff and parents.

All staff, parents/carers and students work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the College. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at the College.

Date policy last reviewed:	04/09/23
Date for next review:	Every 2 years

## **1. Legal framework**

**1.1** This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011 DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

## **2. Definitions**

**2.1** For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.

**2.2** Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

**2.3** Vulnerable students are more likely to be the target of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Students with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Students who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students.
- Students with SEND.

### **3. Key roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1** The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any pupils on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that the College adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the College is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Appointing a safeguarding Director who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.

#### **3.2** The Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Keeping a record of all reported bullying incidents on CPOMs, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.

#### **3.3** Head of School is responsible for:

- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.
- Corresponding and meeting with parents/carers where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for students and parents/carers when more serious bullying incidents occur.

#### **3.4** All staff are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in the College.
- Being available for students who wish to report bullying.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of student groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a student for support.

### **4. Types of bullying**

**4.1** Many different kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and can be related to almost anything. Teasing another student because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or special educational needs are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

**4.2** Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally

- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (Cyber)

**4.3** Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

**4.4** Homophobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

**4.5** Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

**4.6** Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

**4.7** Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or nonverbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

**4.8** Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviour that focusses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

**4.9** Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.

**4.10** Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

**4.11** Socioeconomic bullying: Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

## **5. Statutory implications**

**5.1** The College understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

**5.2** The College understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of children and young people at the College to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.

**5.3** Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive,

a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

## **6. Prevention**

**6.1** The College will clearly communicate a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying in the form of a written statement which will be regularly promoted across the whole college.

All members of the College will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

**6.2** All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the RSE and health education curriculum.

Staff will encourage student cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work.

**6.3** Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in pastoral/social events, e.g. off site visits, sporting activities and onsite co-operation activities.

**6.4** The College will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst students, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.

**6.5** The College will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development is not negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

## **7. Signs of bullying**

**7.1** Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a student is a victim of bullying:

- Unwillingness to attend College or truancy
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill in the morning
- Decreased involvement in academic work
- Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered

- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

**7.2** Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating.

**7.3** Students who display a significant number of these signs are approached by a member of staff, in order to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.

## **8. Staff principles**

**8.1** The College will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision.

**8.2** Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and will not ignore signs of suspected bullying.

**8.3** Staff will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasantness from one student towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.

**8.4** Staff will always respect students' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying is not discussed with others, unless the student has given consent, or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a student is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL immediately.

**8.5** Follow-up support will be given to both the victim and perpetrator in the months following an incident to ensure all bullying has stopped.

## **9. Preventing peer-on-peer sexual abuse**

**9.1** The College has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of peer-on-peer abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

**9.2** To prevent peer-on-peer abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the College will educate students about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum and PSHE lessons, in line with the Prevention section of this policy.

**9.3** All staff will be aware that students of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers. Staff will take all instances of peer-on-peer abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims, will never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up", and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as "boys being boys", as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours.

Staff will also be aware that peer-on-peer abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing- or initiation-type violence.

**9.4** Students will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a student has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children's social care services (CSCS), where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

## **10. Cyber bullying**

**10.1** Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target students, staff and others, and may take place inside College, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

**10.2** Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

**10.3** The College has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The College views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in section 12 this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

**10.4** All members of staff will receive training on an **annual** basis on the signs of cyberbullying, in order to identify pupils who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively.

**10.5** Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the 'Signs of bullying' section of this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a student is being cyberbullied:

- Avoiding use of the computer
- Being on their phone routinely
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages

**10.6** Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyberbullying others:

- Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
- Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
- Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

**10.7** Parents/carers will receive regular information to educate them on the signs and symptoms of cyberbullying, and will be advised to report to the Head of School if their child displays any of the signs outlined in this section.

**10.8** Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- **Possible extensive scale and scope** –students may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
- **The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying** – students may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- **The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is** – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and students may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity
- **The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying** – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to pupils crossing boundaries without realising

- **The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened** – students may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

**10.9** The College will support students who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the student about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped.

**10.10** In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the College has the right to examine and delete files from students' personal devices, e.g. mobiles phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

## **11. Procedures**

**11.1** Minor incidents are reported to the Pastoral Manager, who investigates the incident, sets appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator and informs SLT in writing of the incident and outcome via the afternoon briefing notes or on CPOMs.

**11.2** When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are adopted:

- The victim, alleged bully and witnesses are all interviewed separately
- Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the Students being interviewed, including electronic communication
- If a Student is injured, members of staff take the Student immediately to a College First Aider for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, the alleged bully, the victim and witnesses, are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
- The Head of School will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc provided by the victim.
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not attaching blame until the investigation is complete
- All concerned students are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other students

**11.3** Due to the potential for sexist, transphobic and sexual bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

## **12. Sanctions**

**12.1** If the Head of School is satisfied that bullying did take place, the student will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The Head of School will apply the 'no blame' principles.

**12.2** The Head of School informs the student that he expects student to 'put things right' and will take the student through this process using the 'no blame' approach. Sanctions will not be



issued at this point as it is recognised that this option hasn't been effective in the past. The Head of School will outline potential consequences if the behaviour continues.

**12.3** If possible, the Head of School will attempt reconciliation and will obtain a genuine apology from the bully. This will either be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion is used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully.

**12.4** The perpetrator is made to realise, by Senior staff using the 'no blame' approach that some students do not appreciate the distress they are causing, and that they should change their behaviour.

**12.5** Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

**12.6** The Pastoral Manager and all staff informally monitors the students involved for the foreseeable future.

**12.7** The College will avoid unnecessarily criminalising students for bullying or abusive behaviour where possible, as young people with criminal records face stigma and discrimination in future aspects of their lives. The College's focus when handling perpetrators will be supporting them to develop more positive behaviours and to refrain from abusive and bullying behaviours in the future.

**12.8** The College will remain cognisant of the fact that continued access to College can be important for rehabilitation of harmful behaviour, and will not exclude students unless as a last resort.

### **13. Support**

**13.1** In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Emotional support and reassurance from an emotionally available adult staff member.
- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken
- Liaison with their parents/carers to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent/carer or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents/carers to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online
- Discussion with their parent/carer on whether police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation or abuse where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents)

**13.2** Staff, particularly the DSL, will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional therapy.

### **14. Follow up support**

**14.1** The progress of both the bully and the victim are monitored by the Pastoral Manager. One-on-one sessions to discuss how they are progressing may be appropriate.

**14.2** If appropriate, follow-up correspondence is arranged with parents/carers after the incident.

**14.3** Students who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to

- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with the Pastoral Manager or a member of staff of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued support
- Being offered counselling, where appropriate

**14.4** Students who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents

**14.5** Students who have been bullied will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the DSL will, if necessary, refer the victim of bullying to CAMHS.

**14.6** Where a child has developed such complex needs that alternative provision is required, then the Student who has been the victim of bullying, their parents, the Head of School and the DSL will meet to discuss the use of alternative provision.

## **15. Bullying outside of College**

**15.1** Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of College, and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside College.

**15.2** Where bullying outside College is reported to College staff, it is investigated and acted on.

**15.3** The Head of School has a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the College premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Head of School the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on College premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a College staff member.

**15.4** The Head of School is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a student.

**15.5** If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police are always informed.

## **16. Monitoring and review**

**16.1** This policy is reviewed every two years by the Executive Headteacher and the DSL.