

**NEW RIVER COLLEGE
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

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Introduction

Sadly bullying is a feature of our society. Bullying is experienced by people of all ages and in all walks of life. It is not a phenomenon restricted to schools and it is the duty of all to promote positive and healthy relationships and to see that bullying does not succeed. Bullying is learnt behaviour and as such is open to correction.

Bullying occurs when an individual or a group intimidates or coerces others through fear. This intimidation can take the form of physical or emotional abuse, it can be verbal or non-verbal and it can be either direct or indirect (e.g.: spreading rumours, texts, emails, cyber-bullying etc). It can be defined as the abuse of power with the intention to cause hurt or distress. Bullying may be an isolated incident or it may be systematic.

Statement of Intent

New River College is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our college. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING college. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

New River College recognises that bullying will never be completely eliminated and is committed to dealing with it both reactively and proactively to allow everyone their entitlement to lead a secure and fulfilling life.

The College Objectives are to:

- Promote positive relationships so that all feel supported
- Promote an understanding and empathy for other people's feelings
- Deal as quickly, fairly and effectively with incidents of bullying as college business allows
- Involve parents and seek their active support
- Seek advice from and work with other agencies, including Cambridge Education @ Islington, when appropriate
- Promote a climate of trust through open communication
- Involve external agencies if college strategies prove ineffective
- Define the behaviour as unacceptable, not the person

What is Bullying

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber All areas of internet ,such as email & internet chat room misuse
Mobile threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

The effects of bullying can be intense. It has even led to death. Mostly, however, it leads to fear causing a damaging lack of self-esteem and self-confidence. Victims of bullying may become quiet and withdrawn. Some may be drawn into bullying themselves. Progress and achievement suffer. Parents may notice abrupt changes in behaviour with 'illness' and an unwillingness to attend the college becoming prevalent.

Bullying thrives where a climate of fear prevents the truth being told, where the victim is unable to speak out and where other people fail to speak out in support of the victim. A determination not to tolerate a climate of bullying and positive support for one another will eliminate many incidents of bullying.

Whilst this policy is concerned primarily about bullying within the student body, it must be recognised that bullying can be a feature of any combination of relationships within the College and include, parents, staff and people in related organisations.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from college
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to college
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to college (college phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in college work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- 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 & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Implementation of the Policy

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with as immediately as possible by the member of staff, who has been approached, or by the Head/Deputy of Centre, or by another suitable member of staff.
- The victim will be fully supported and no actions will be taken that will intentionally cause more pain or hurt to occur.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded.
- An appropriate investigation will take place that may include interviewing those concerned and other witnesses. The outcome of the investigation will be recorded.
- Where appropriate, subject teachers, other members of staff, parents and outside agencies will be kept informed.
- Punitive measures will be used as appropriate.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Being provided with a number of methods for them, and others, to report the bullying to the Head/Deputy Head of Centre (anonymously if preferred).
- Offering an opportunity to discuss the experience with the Head/Deputy Head of Centre (or other member of staff if preferred).

- Reassuring the pupil.
- Offering continuous support.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence.

Pupils who have bullied may be helped by:

- Discussing what happened.
- Discovering why the pupil became involved.
- Establishing the wrong doing and need to change.
- Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil.

The following disciplinary steps may be taken:

- Official warnings to cease offending.
- Detention.
- Fixed term exclusion.

Within the curriculum we will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, tutorial time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to reduce such behaviour.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. The review will include an assessment of its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented through out college sites.