

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 parent/carers and seek their active support
- Seek advice from and work with other agencies, including Islington Children's Services
- 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	Homophobia, transphobia, biphobia because of, or focussing on the issue of sexual orientation or gender identity.
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. Parent/carers 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, parent/carers, staff and people in related organisations.

Specific Safeguarding Issues under the bullying policy

1. Peer on peer abuse

- Our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children. Our school recognises that some children may abuse their peers and any incidents of peer-on-peer abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.
- Peer-on-peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence / sexual harassment, 'upskirting', 'sexting' or initiation / hazing type violence and rituals. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs. We use lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with peer-on-peer abuse.

2. Online Safety and Peer-on-Peer Abuse

School staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues:

- Children are at risk of online abuse as well as face to face
- Peer-on-peer abuse can happen online through:
- Abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages
- Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images/videos especially in chat groups
- Sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive it

Staff should:

- Recognise and respond to the indicators
- Recognise it may be taking place, even if not reported
- Understand their role in preventing and responding where a child is at risk
- Understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours to ensure a safe environment and not to normalise abuse
- Recognise it can take place inside and outside of school and/or online

3. **What to do if you have safeguarding concerns**

- Staff should not wait for a child to make a disclosure, they should act on concerns immediately
- Staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child may have been harmed or behaviour may be an indicator
- If the report includes an online element, staff may confiscate devices for evidence to hand to the Police
- Staff can ask children outright if they have been harmed and what the nature of the harm was.

(a) **Support**

- Pupils who have been experienced peer on peer abuse will be supported by:
- Being offered an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice
- Being advised to keep a record of concerns as evidence and discussions regarding how to respond to concerns and build resilience, if appropriate.
- New River College is aware of and will follow the ISCB procedures <https://www.islingtonscb.org.uk/key-practice-guidance/Pages/Education-and-safeguarding-education.aspx>) for supporting children who are at risk of harm as a result of their own behaviour.
- Pupils who are alleged to have abused other pupils will be helped by:
 - Discussing what happened, establishing the specific concern and the need for behaviour to change
 - Informing parent/carers/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child
 - Providing appropriate education and support
 - Sanctioning them in line with school behaviour/discipline policy. This may include official warnings, detentions, removal of privileges (including denial of online access), fixed-term and permanent exclusions.

Speaking with police or other local services (such as early help or children's specialist services) as appropriate – see NCPP advice on when to call the Police, paragraph 26
Local Support

4. **(c) Next Steps after Initial Report**

- The DSL's risk and needs assessment in response to a report of sexual harassment should also consider whether there have been any other victims. The DSL will regularly review the actions taken to respond to reports and
- Regularly review the risk and needs assessment and put active measures in place to safeguard pupils
- Any risk assessment should be informed by any CSC or multi-agency risk assessment

Staff should be aware of the following:

- Be aware of and respond appropriately to all reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or harassment both online and offline, including those happening outside of school
- Balance the victim's wishes against their responsibility to protect other children
- Remember that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers
- Think about other related issues and wider context, including any links to CSE and CCE and take the potential for sexual violence and harassment in intimate personal relationships into consideration
- Keep victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises including at before and after-school activities
- Ensure recording practice is comprehensive and accurate
- The DSL should know what the early help process is and how and where to access support
- The previous restrictions on the use of Police bail have been removed – the Police will now consider what action to take to manage the assessed risk of harm, this could include the use of Police or court bail.

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, designated safeguarding lead 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, parent/carers 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 parent/carers 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 throughout college sites.