Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

Approved: 19 June 2025 (Standards & Curriculum Committee)
Review Date: June 2028
Author: Executive Team Member with Responsibility for Safeguarding

ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Please note: It is absolutely essential that all reports of bullying or any incident where bullying appears to be taking place must not be ignored but must be acted upon and followed up.

1. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to bullying and harassment and its implications for our students and the ethos of the College as a whole.

The policy should be read with other relevant College policies, in particular the College's Student Disciplinary Procedure and Equality and Diversity Policy.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

2.1   Clarify for students, staff, parents and employers what bullying is and that bullying in any form is always unacceptable.

2.2   Provide clarity on what harassment is and define how this might present. Any form of harassment will not be tolerated.

2.3   Explain to the College community some of the reasons why bullying and harassment occur and their impact on individuals and on the College as a whole.

2.4   Provide a secure, stimulating, positive, respectful and inclusive environment for learning.

2.5   Provide clear guidance on how to address reported cases of bullying and harassment.

3. Policy Statement

Harlow College will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment and is committed to eliminating bullying from the organisation. Our vision is to have high standards of teaching and learning which challenge our students to achieve. Our anti-bullying and harassment policy support this by promoting respect and tolerance for each other and for the College. We believe in tackling incidents of bullying by encouraging an environment where individuality is celebrated, and individuals can develop without fear. This involves ensuring that all our students and staff share the same perception of what constitutes bullying, and that students are encouraged to report all incidents of bullying to a member of college staff. We educate our students about the behaviour, attitudes and skills needed to prepare them well for a life in modern Britain.

4. Definition of Terms

4.1   Harlow College adopts the following definition of bullying:

'a physical, psychological or verbal attack against an individual or group of individuals by a person or group of persons, intending to cause physical or psychological harm to the victim'

4.2 Harassment is any form of behavior that is offensive, aggressive, intimidating or intrusive to an individual with a sexual, physical or racial element

4.3 Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. It is usually conscious and willful and commonly consists of repeated acts of aggression and/or manipulation.

People can be bullied or harassed on the grounds of:

- Race
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Socio-economic status
- Nationality
- Language
- Religion
- Other real or perceived differences

However, it can also be for no apparent reason.

Bullying can take many forms, including:
- Use of IT and mobile telephones, i.e. cyber-bullying and text messages
- Being called names
- Being teased or taunted
- Being pushed or pulled around
- Being hit or attacked
- Having bags and other possessions taken and thrown around
- Having rumours spread
- Being ignored and left out
- Being forced to hand over money or possessions
- Being attacked because of religion, colour, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, disability, gender, class, age, family circumstances, etc

Harassment can take many forms. These include:

- The display or distribution of offensive material, graffiti or badges
- Non-verbal abuse such as offensive gestures and body language
- Inappropriate comments about someone's appearance
- Intrusive questioning about someone's private life
- Verbal abuse such as suggestive remarks, 'jokes' and name calling
- Physical contact such as unnecessary touching, with may be of a sexual nature
- Threatened or actual physical abuse or attack.

In extreme cases, such as stalking, assault, rape, incitement to racial hatred or homophobic hate crime, harassment may constitute a serious criminal offence.

4.4   The table below shows a distinction between the two behaviours and how these might present in College or the workplace

Harassment	Bullying
Has a strong physical component – e.g. contact, touch, intrusion into personal space, damage to possessions and sabotage of target's work.	Almost always psychological
The perpetrator tends to focus on individual difference as the object of harassment (e.g. sex, race, sexuality).	The target is usually discriminated against because they are competent or popular.
Harassment may occur once or several times, but the target is usually aware that it is harassment right from the beginning.	The target may not realise they are being bullied for weeks or months. Often the target will have a light-bulb moment, when they realise that a series of often seemingly insignificant incidents amount to intimidation and victimisation.
Offensive vocabulary often used.	Tends to be characterised by a series of minor criticisms or false or unfair allegations. Offensive words are less commonly used than in harassment.
The aggressor attempts to possess the target.	Often, a bully will start by attempting to control and dominate the target. Later, they will try to drive them to break down or leave the organisation e.g. college or workplace
Harassment often takes place in public as a means of peer approval or image building.	Usually bullying takes place in private without witnesses.
Target seen as easily victimised.	Target seen as a threat that must be dominated.

4.4   Bullying can be subtle, or it can be blatant. It can cause short-term suffering for the victim or it can go on for years, but it is always damaging and the College will always take it seriously and address it.

5. Ensuring Acceptable Performance and Behaviour

5.1   Staff have responsibility for ensuring that students adhere to their commitments as expressed in the Student Success Code. Managers have responsibility for ensuring that staff are effective in their duties and behave according to the ethos and policies of the college.

5.2   Ensuring the above has, in some circumstances, the danger of being interpreted as intimidation or even bullying. To minimise this possibility, it is important that staff, when raising serious issues, particularly persistent issues, do so clearly but politely and respectfully.

5.3   Such an approach – particularly when support is offered – is intended to help to minimise the possibility of people feeling intimidated and improve the likelihood that issues will be resolved.

6. Responsibilities

Everyone in the College must take responsibility for promoting a common anti-bullying approach and all members of the College community are expected to report and challenge incidents of bullying without fear or favour.

7. **Procedures for College Staff in Managing Bullying and Harassment**

We expect that staff will:

- Ensure that all alleged incidents of bullying, perceived or otherwise, are reported to line managers and acted upon.

- Provide a good role model for young people by behaving in a respectful and caring manner with students and colleagues.

- Undertake training to help them to deal effectively with issues of bullying and harassment.

- Tackle specific incidents of bullying through the disciplinary procedure, where appropriate.

- Raise awareness in the classroom of bullying, for example through the tutorial programme and induction.

- Record on Pro-Monitor and where appropriate CPOMs, monitor and investigate reported incidences of bullying and harassment in accordance with College procedures.

- Communicate the College's anti-bullying and harassment policy to students.

8. **Managing Bullying and Harassment Incidents**

Instructions to staff:

- Ensure all disclosures about bullying and harassment are taken seriously and treated sensitively. It is important to discuss all possible and desirable strategies with the victim in the first instance and proceed as appropriate.

- Reassure the student that they have done the right thing in reporting the incident of bullying or harassment and it is important to portray a calm, non-judgmental and positive response to the student.

- Do not show your own emotions or ask any leading questions. Instead, use restorative questions to ascertain what has happened and capture all the information including who is involved.

- It is important to be honest with the student – do not promise confidentiality.

- Notes will need to be taken regarding the discussion and the staff member will need to ask the student to complete a statement which must be signed by the student, to declare a true reflection of events. It is important that staff record facts and do not add their own interpretation on the Statement and they must date and sign all documents.

- If a student decides not to take any further action after reporting the incident the College reserves the right to investigate the incident and pursue an outcome.

- In certain circumstances, if the student is under the age of 18, the College may make the decision to involve the parents/carers and in the case of a student being over 18 years of age but in possession of an Education, Health and Care Plan the college may decide that it is appropriate and advisable to involve the parents/carers.

- If the student or staff member decides the matter is best resolved informally, an accurate record should be kept. In some cases, speaking directly with the person concerned can be enough to end the situation. For example, sometimes students do not realise that their conduct is causing offence and explaining this to them is enough

to make them rethink their behaviour.

- If the matter needs to be addressed through a more formal process or there is a serious safeguarding concern this needs to be reported to the College's Safeguarding Team. The Safeguarding Team or Head of Academy can advise on whether the Disciplinary policy needs to be applied.

- If there are allegations of staff bullying or harassment this needs to be forwarded to HR

- In some cases, it may be appropriate to involve police and report incidents then the Safeguarding team will review with the Principalship on a case by case basis. All students involved will be supported in this process and signposted to relevant agency support.

9. Procedure for students

We expect that students will:

- Support College staff in the implementation of the policy

- Become involved in the monitoring of the policy

- Feel confident to challenge and report incidence of bullying or harassment

- Feel reassured that bullying is taken seriously and is always tackled by the College

10. How to report Bullying and Harassment

- If you feel you are the victim of bullying or harassment – act promptly and tell someone. This may be your course tutor; Personal Development Coach, someone in Safeguarding and Well-being Team or any other member of staff.

- Restorative questions (an example of restorative questions can be found in the appendix 1 section of this policy along with an example Plan for Success) will be used by staff when speaking to you to ensure a fair process and that you have had the opportunity to have your say. You will be listened to sympathetically and your concerns will be taken seriously.

- Notes will be taken regarding the discussion and the staff member will ask the student to complete a statement, which must be signed to declare a true reflection of events. All incidents and notes will be recorded and held centrally on Pro-Monitor.

- As a result of the interview, the Student Disciplinary Procedure may be followed against the alleged bully and follow up interviews will be conducted with the perpetrator.

- If the bullying could be deemed as criminal or poses a serious threat to the lives of students or the public, the Police will be informed immediately.

- Confidentiality will be maintained, but it cannot be guaranteed. If a student decides not to take any further action after reporting the incident, the College reserves the right to investigate the incident and apply disciplinary sanctions where appropriate.

- In some circumstances, if the student is under the age of 18, the College may make an informed decision whether to involve the students' parents or guardian and in the case of a student being over 18 years of age but in possession of an Education, Health and Care Plan the College may decide that it is appropriate and advisable to involve the parents/carers

- Restorative meetings will be held on some occurrences to explore a resolution where appropriate; on other occasions, a Plan for Success may be introduced as the best course of action

- If students would prefer to arrange contact with an external organisation to discuss their concerns, a list of specialist agency details is available with the Safeguarding Team

11. **Governing Body**

We expect that the Governing Body will:

- Support the Principal and College staff in the implementation of the policy

- Designate a Governor to take lead responsibility for the implementation of the policy

- Understand the definitions of bullying and harassment, and to ensure that the College has effective processes for tackling instances.

TRACKING and REFERENCE INFORMATION
Date Approved: 19 June 2025 (Standards & Curriculum Committee)
Review Date: June 2028
Author/Responsibility: Executive Team Member with responsibility for Safeguarding
Equality Impact Assessment: TBA
List of related policies, procedures and other documents: Complaints Procedure Student Disciplinary Policy Equality & Diversity Policy Student Success Code Safeguarding Policy Office for Students Statement of expectations for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students in higher education [How to handle alleged student misconduct: case studies](#) (March 2024)
Complaints: If you wish to submit a complaint about the application of this policy or the procedure of it, please send your request in accordance with the provisions of the Grievance Procedure.
Monitoring: The application of this policy and associated procedure will be monitored by the Executive Team Member with responsibility for Safe guarding.
Easy reading: To receive this policy/procedure in a different format, please contact: HR Services.

APPENDIX 1: Restorative questions

1. **What happened?**

2. **What did you think when you realized what had happened?**

3. **What were you thinking?**

4. **What impact has this incident had on you and others?**

5. **Who else has been affected?**

6. **What do you think needs to happen to make things right?**

STUDENT PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Name: xxxxxxxxxxxxx   PSN: xxxxxxxx

Date: …………………….....   Review Date 1: …………………………...   Review Date 2: ………………………………….

Q 1. Why is this course of value to you? How will it help you to progress?

Actions	What does this action mean?	Your commitment in your words…	SMART target	Progress review and date
Attendance **Students - _at the Heart_** Enrichment · Staying Safe · Health & Wellbeing Attending college gives you purpose and helps to keep you safe.	Aim to achieve 100% attendance to all classes unless you are unwell or have an appointment that you advise us of in advance. Keep communication professional i.e. via Showbie, Teams, etc not through a friend.	Communication with staff via… Attendance is currently: % How will you improve this?		
Punctuality **Teamwork - _Achieve Together_** Digital Learning · Skills Building Being on time means you are not only thinking of yourself but contributing to your class and respecting everyone's time.	Arrive on time for every class.	How will you achieve this? _Think about any barriers you currently struggle with – long bus journey etc._		
Positive attitude **Ambition - _Build Futures_** Careers Advice · Work Readiness · Work Experience Try and be your biggest champion!	Arrive with a willingness to listen and to learn. You are respectful of other students and staff (e.g. no abusive language, swearing or aggressive behaviour).	How will you achieve this? _Think about if a new seating plan would help. Agree with your teacher how they will give you a reminder to keep you focused._		
Tasks completed to the appropriate standard **Ambition - _Build Futures_** Careers Advice · Work Readiness · Work Experience Set high expectations for yourself.	You complete your target for every class, to a standard agreed with your tutor	Write your agreed standard here:		

Behaviour	Improved engagement at college both in class and around campus. *Respect doesn't have to come naturally – it is something that we learn.*	Behaviour – what do you need to improve: a. in class? b. around campus? c. in my communication with others?		
Respect - Each Other Tutorial Themes including: British Values · LGBTQIA+ · Respect Working in a respectful environment helps us feel safe to express ourselves.				

Student Agreement: I agree to the actions set out above _____ Date _____

Assistant Academy Manager

I agree to support the student to achieve the actions set out above _____ Date _____