

# Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy

## **Document Summary**

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## Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy

### 1: Introduction

1.1 The City College is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment that is free from bullying and harassment, ensuring all students, staff and governors are treated, and treat others, with respect, consideration, courtesy and dignity at all times.

1.2 The College recognises its legal duty to provide a safe environment for all College members. Bullying and harassment are unlawful and will not be tolerated by the College.

1.3 Staff and students are responsible for ensuring the health and welfare of themselves and others by following the College's policies and procedures, including the Anti-bullying and Harassment policy.

1.4 All reports about bullying and/ or harassment will be taken seriously and treated sensitively.

### 2: Scope

2.1 This policy covers any bullying and harassment that takes place at The City College or any place that a member of the College (student, staff or governor) is in attendance in connection with their studies, teaching, employment or governance activities. It covers bullying and harassment by students, staff and governors, and also third parties within the College's reasonable control, such as suppliers or visitors to the College's premises.

### 3: What is bullying?

3.1 Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious and/ or insulting behaviour involving abuse or misuse of power, which can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, undermined, intimidated, humiliated, denigrated and/ or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority. It can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

3.2 Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct.

3.3 Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Physical or psychological threats or intimidation
- Persistent or unwelcome contact
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision
- Derogatory remarks about someone's academic or professional performance
- Making threats about job stability or academic failure without foundation
- Obstructing someone's progression by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities or threatening low grades
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone verbally or by behaviour

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- Unwelcome sexual advancements – touching, standing too close, the display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected
- Exclusion or victimisation (e.g. treating someone less favourably because they submit or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to gender reassignment)
- Outing or threatening to out a person based on sexuality and/or gender
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone, or deliberately setting someone up to fail, such as setting arbitrary or unreasonable workloads or deadlines.

### 4: What is harassment?

4.1 Harassment is any unwanted conduct related to a 'protected characteristic' (see section 4.2) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This conduct can be verbal or non-verbal, physical or sexual. It may be persistent or an isolated incident.

4.2 The Equality Act 2010 makes it specifically unlawful when unwanted conduct is related to any of the "protected characteristics" as outlined in the law, which has the same purpose or effect as detailed in section 4.1. The "protected characteristics" are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership status
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic and / or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

4.3 Harassment also includes victimisation, which is when someone is treated unfairly because they have made a complaint against discrimination that they suffered or a complaint made on behalf of someone else. Individuals found to provide false evidence or make false allegations in bad faith will not be protected from victimisation under the Act.

4.4 Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to

- Unwanted physical conduct or so-called "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing
- Threatening behaviour
- Mocking, mimicking or belittling a person
- Ignoring or unreasonably keeping a person out of meetings or events

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- Preventing or blocking a person from doing their job or task
- Continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- Offensive phone calls, emails, text messages or social media content
- Racist, sexist, ageist, faith-based, homophobic, transphobic jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical comments.

### 4.5 Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (based upon the perception of the receiver of the behaviour)
- Sexual jokes
- Displaying of pornographic photographs or drawings around work areas
- Sending material of a sexual nature via email or social media.

4.6 A person may feel harassed even if the conduct was not directed specifically towards them. For example, someone may feel harassed by a racist joke about a different racial or ethnic group if the joke(s) create an offensive environment.

## 5: Repercussions from persistent bullying and/or harassment

5.1 Persistent bullying and/or harassment may have very serious consequences and can lead to:

- Low self esteem
- Excessive shyness
- Eating disorders
- Poor academic achievement
- Isolation
- Threatened or attempted suicide
- Constant high levels of stress and anxiety
- Frequent illness such as viral infections
- Aches and pains in the joints and muscles
- Headaches and migraines
- Tiredness, exhaustion, constant fatigue
- Sleeplessness, nightmares, waking early
- Flashbacks and replays, obsessiveness
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Skin problems such as eczema, psoriasis, athlete's foot, ulcers, shingles, urticarial
- Poor concentration, can't concentrate on anything for long

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- Bad or intermittently-functioning memory, forgetfulness, especially with trivial day-to-day things
- Sweating, trembling, shaking, palpitations, panic attacks
- Tearfulness, bursting into tears regularly and over trivial things
- Uncharacteristic irritability and angry outbursts
- Being constantly on edge
- Hypersensitivity, fragility, isolation, withdrawal
- Reactive depression.

### 6. Do you feel bullied or harassed?

6.1 Bullying and harassment can be conducted face-to-face, via the telephone, in written communications, e-mail, text messages or through social media. It can be directly targeted at an individual or indirect by creating an offensive environment. Individuals or groups can be responsible for bullying and harassment.

6.2 Because bullying and harassment can take many forms, it is not always easy to know if you are or have been subject to such conduct. If you feel unsure and wish to discuss potential bullying or harassment in confidence, you should:

- Meet with the Student Welfare Officer (students)
- Meet with a senior manager of your choice (staff and governors).

### 7: What to do if you are being bullied or harassed

7.1 If you are being bullied or harassed, you can discuss your situation in confidence as identified in 6.2 above to obtain another perspective or seek support and guidance on the options available to you. Your concerns will be handled sensitively and confidentially throughout this procedure.

7.2 Those being bullied or harassed are advised to keep notes of the details of the alleged incident(s) as soon after the event as possible. Details kept should be:

- Date(s), time(s) and place(s) of incident(s)
- Name of any witnesses
- What actually happened
- How it made them feel
- Any action taken e.g. reported to Student Welfare Officer or line manager
- Original copies of any correspondence received.

7.2 Where it is safe and/ or appropriate to do so and you feel able to, you should first attempt to resolve the issue directly, by making it clear to the individual responsible that their conduct

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is unacceptable, and that you consider it bullying and/ or harassment and you would like it to stop immediately.

7.3 If the bullying and/ or harassment continues, or if you consider it not safe and/ or don't feel able to address the issue directly with the person responsible, you should:

- Again meet with the Student Welfare Officer (students) – if the Student Welfare officer is responsible for the conduct you should raise the issue with the Principal
- Meet with your line manager (staff and governors) - if your line manager is responsible for the conduct you should raise the issue with their line manager.

7.4 You are advised to set up the meetings as detailed in 6.3 above, where you can discuss the nature of the issue and agree, where appropriate, on an informal solution. The expectation at this stage is that the person you meet will listen to you, make discreet investigations as appropriate, and propose a way to resolve the issue fairly and promptly. This could include, for example, facilitating a meeting between you and the person responsible for the conduct, so you can explain how the conduct is unacceptable and/ or unwanted.

7.5 By this stage, the person whom the complaint has been made against will be notified of the complaint and who the complainant is. Although every effort will be taken to ensure that only those affected by the complaint will be informed, additional people may be notified in instances where safety may be a concern. This will be handled as appropriate to the specific circumstances at hand.

7.6 If all informal efforts to resolve the issue have been unsuccessful or, in extreme circumstances, where the issue warrants an immediate formal approach, the final option is to raise a formal complaint through the:

- Non-academic Misconduct Procedure (students)
- Grievance Procedure (staff and governors).

7.7 Students can find the Non-academic Misconduct Policy on Sharepoint ('Policies and Procedures' page) or the college website ('Policies, Procedures and Quality' page under the 'About Us' drop-down menu). Students are advised to report the matter using the college complaints form, also available on Sharepoint and the website (or the admin office if preferred). This should be to the Student Welfare Officer or Principal. The College aims to provide a response within twenty days from receipt of the matter being reported.

7.8 Staff and governors can find the Grievance Procedure in the Staff Handbook. Staff are advised to report the matter using the college grievance form which should be submitted to your line manager or the line manager's manager.

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### 8. Protection and Support for all involved perspectives

8.1 Students, staff or governors who make complaints, who have had complaints made against them, or anyone who participates in good faith in any investigation (including external parties) can expect to be treated with respect throughout and must not suffer any form of retaliation and/ or victimisation as a result. Any person found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary process.