

1. AIM

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will students be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available in college.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To define what is meant by bullying
- To make staff and students aware of possible signs of bullying, and their responsibility in reporting bullying
- To ensure that teaching, support staff and students are aware that incidents of bullying will be fully followed up and not tolerated.

3. DEFINITION AND EXAMPLES OF HARRASSMENT/ BULLYING

Harassment is defined as any behaviour which is inappropriate, demeaning, and offensive, unwanted by the recipient, creates distress and creates an unpleasant or intimidating working environment. Harassment may take many forms in response to an individual's race, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental disability, ethnic origin or nationality, or adherence to political beliefs that deny equality in one or more of these categories.

The following are some examples of inappropriate behaviour covered by the policy:

Sexual Harassment: involves unwanted attention which emphasises an individual's sexuality. Examples include unwanted contact, sexual innuendo and display of indecent material.

Racial Harassment: offensive remarks on basis of skin colour, race, ethnicity, nationality. Manifestations of it may include racist jokes, graffiti, images and insignia.

Bullying: This may be verbal or physical and occurs when someone deliberately threatens, frightens, abuses or hurts another person. This could be physical, verbal or mental. This includes hitting, name calling, teasing, leaving someone out, putting someone down, racism, threatening gestures and looks, damaging belongings, ganging up, demanding money or sexual harassment. It includes bullying by electronic means, including instant messaging, text messaging, posting comments on a social media site or blog, e-mailing, doctoring photographs etc.

4. PREVENTION OF BULLYING

The Colleges Group raises awareness of this policy through staff training and development opportunities.

The Tutorial programme includes content which deals with the topic of bullying. This will help deter bullying through education of the consequences for both the perpetrator and victim.

Students and staff receive detailed advice on cyber-bullying whilst at college.

Students are aware that all allegations of harassment and bullying are taken seriously and followed up thoroughly.

5. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS OF HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Students are informed that they can disclose complaints of harassment or bullying to any member of staff. All members of staff are asked to understand the procedures that are set out in this policy.

The lead on responding to disclosures is taken by the Course Tutor or Progression Specialist (preference of the student) for students following vocational study programmes and by the Student Support Manager for students following academic study programmes. This lead involves arranging the necessary meetings and action plans as laid out in the Bullying Procedure Flowchart.

It is important to note that some students will not feel comfortable about disclosing bullying, or may not clearly state that they are being bullied. It is therefore the responsibility of staff to be sensitive to what is taking place and to be vigilant.

If a member of staff suspects that bullying is taking place, they need to ensure that they make an opportunity for the student that they are concerned about to disclose.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

As a general guideline, members of staff will request a student's agreement to pass on any information. However, if a student is at risk, confidentiality must not be promised.

In some cases the individual may just want to talk about the harassment or bullying but may not wish to take matters further. Whilst this wish should be respected, it would be good practice for that member of staff to encourage the student to seek help by highlighting that the Colleges Group will endeavour to ensure that the harassment and/ or bullying ceases.

In many cases, parents/ carers are keen to be involved with the process of resolving cases of alleged bullying. This is perfectly acceptable if the student is comfortable with this.

7. INVESTIGATING AND RECORDING DETAILS

When following up a disclosure of bullying or harassment, follow the flow chart in Appendix 1.

Following the initial contact, the student should be encouraged to make records and notes to include the following, where possible:

- Date, time and place of incident(s)
- Names of those alleged to be responsible
- Name of any witnesses
- What actually happened
- How it made them feel
- Any action taken (eg) if reported to a member of staff
- Copies of any correspondence or written material connected with the issue (this may include screenshots of electronic communications)

This information will help with the following up of the allegation, as a basis for mediation or as evidence in a formal disciplinary action.

It is important to record information carefully using the **Anti-Bullying Report Form** (Appendix 2). This will help with record keeping and deciding on/ recording the next steps.

The member of staff dealing with the disclosure will meet with the student as many times as appropriate in order to work through this process.

They should meet with the alleged bully, take their account of events and, if appropriate, signpost to support to help them to cope with the allegation and/ or change their behaviour.

They should also arrange to meet, as soon as is practicable, with any witnesses of the incident(s) in order to gather their evidence (and add this to the documentation)

There may be cases where a bullying allegation involves a group of students. Here, each person involved should still be followed up. It is important to do this so that the dynamics of the situation can be understood.

The college keeps a log of all reported bullying incidents (including details on what has happened, how it has been followed up and the outcomes)

8. RESPONDING TO INSTANCES OF BULLYING

As a result of the meetings that have taken place during the investigation stage there should be a clear view of the agreed actions that are to be taken forward.

Potential outcomes include:

(i) Mediation

If the student feels comfortable with mediation this can be organised. The mediator(s) can be other neutral tutors, managers or members of the Student Services/ Safeguarding teams. Then mediator(s) can help participants resolve their dispute and to co-exist at college.

They should use the process below.

- 1) In the mediation, both parties define the problem as they see it. This is in an individual session without the other party being present.
- 2) The mediator(s) are impartial, identifying the key issues for both parties and then listing them on paper.
- 3) At the end of this initial session a judgement is made as to whether the parties are willing to meet together with a mediator.
- 4) At the joint meeting, both parties are able to speak and express their opinion, but this is led by the mediator.
- 5) Both parties are given the opportunity to offer solutions to the issues so that ways to progress can be looked at
- 6) The mediator can then draw up an agreed plan of action with consensus from all parties
- 7) Follow up action can be agreed and monitored.

(ii) Formal Disciplinary Procedure

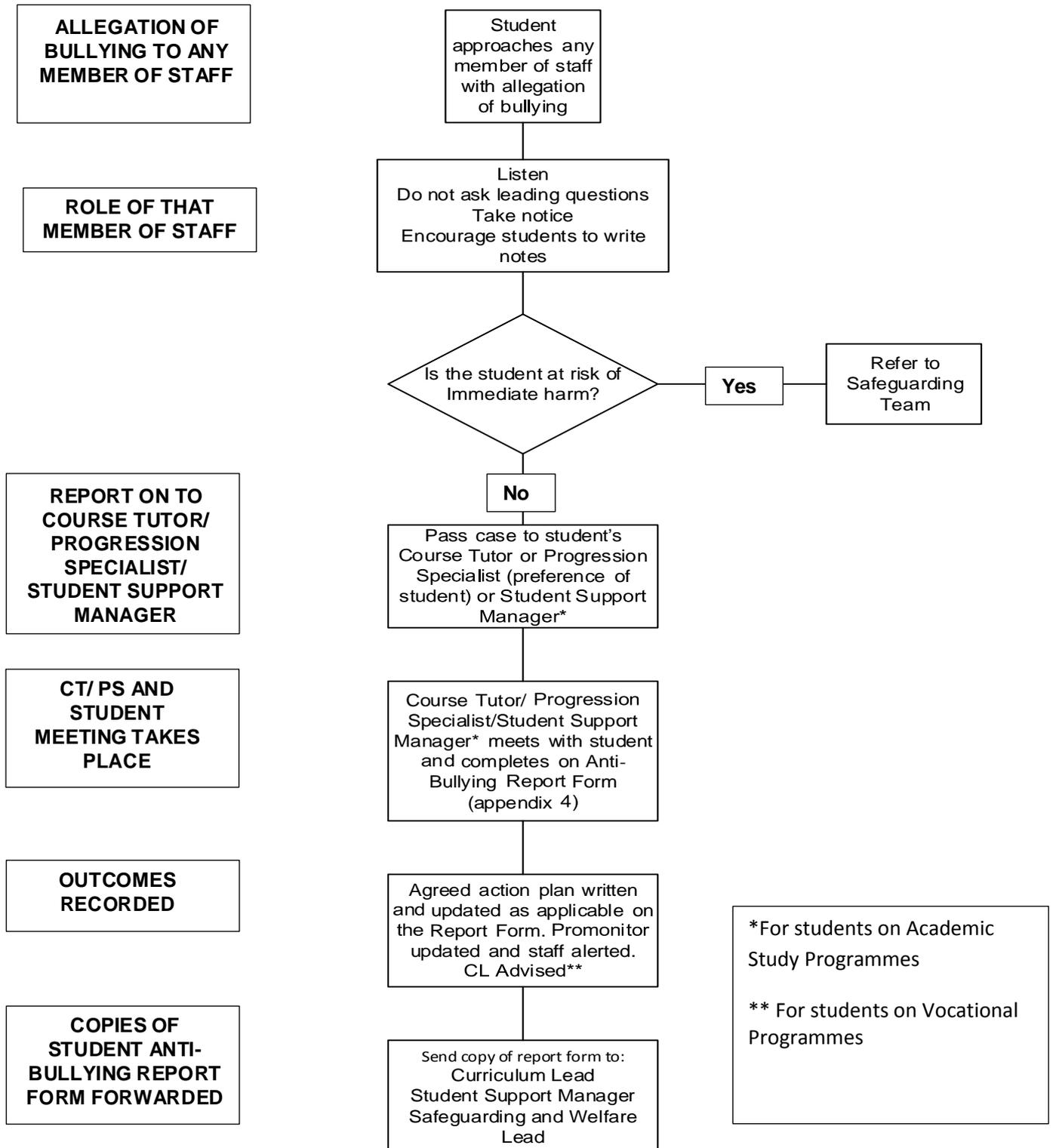
There will be occasions where the formal procedures need to be invoked. The member of staff dealing with the allegation should refer to the procedures and involve other members of staff as appropriate.

(iii) Other Possible Outcomes

There are a number of other outcomes that can be taken forward. These can include counselling referrals, referrals to outside agencies or discussion with parents.

- Inform the victim and alleged bully of the outcome of the investigation as soon as possible (as well as parents and staff if appropriate and consent is given). Add appropriate comments to Pro-Monitor if disciplinary action is taken as well as contacting the parents of the alleged bully if the disciplinary is at stage 2 or above.

Appendix 1: Anti-Bullying Procedure Flowchart



SHREWSBURY COLLEGES GROUP	POLICY & PROCEDURE
	STUDENT ANTI-BULLYING

Appendix 2: Student Anti-Bullying Report Form

SHREWSBURY COLLEGES GROUP	Student Anti-Bullying Report Form						
Student Name:			Date, time and location of Allegation:				
Student/ Witnesses Notes attached <small>(see policy for guidance)</small>			Progression Specialist/ Course Tutor Name/Student Support Manager:				
Member of staff taking allegation (name)			Date case passed to Progression Specialist or Course Tutor (if student at risk of immediate harm):				
Notes made by member of staff taking allegation:							
Progression Specialist/ Course Tutor/Student Support Manager meeting with student making allegation:							
Assessment of how student wishes to progress:							
ACTION TO TAKE:		Agreed	Done	ACTION TO TAKE:		Agreed	Done
							
Signatures:		Progression Specialist/ Course Tutor/Student Support Manager:		Parent / Carer informed?		Yes	No
		Student:					

