



Wirral Met College

Student Anti-Bullying Policy

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Within the scope of this policy the term “bullying” is used as an overarching term to include child on child abuse, sexual harassment and violence, online abuse, bullying, harassment and persistent unwanted, offensive and/or potentially harmful behaviours displayed towards students including 16-18s and adults. Definitions and examples are given for guidance in section 2.

This policy relates to all students of Wirral Met College across all campuses and includes any incidents that are reported to take place outside of College involving students, including social media.

1. Introduction

At Wirral Metropolitan College we believe that:

- 1.1 Every student and staff member of the College is entitled to peace of mind and to be treated with respect and dignity by other members and users of the College
- 1.2 Nobody at College should have to suffer harassment or bullying from any other member of the College community
- 1.3 Bullying will be treated as a disciplinary matter when appropriate.
- 1.4 Victims have the right to take actions and be supported to stop bullying to which they are subjected.

2. Definition of Bullying/Harassment

- Bullying is behaviour, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, physically or emotionally. One person or a group can bully others. Bullying and harassment takes many forms. Some people may not realise their behaviour is offensive, and think they are ‘only teasing’.
- Bullying behaviour can be:
 - Physical: pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc
 - Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling, banter, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
 - Emotional: isolating others, tormenting, taking or hiding belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidation, excluding, manipulation and coercion
 - Sexual: unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive and/or sexually inappropriate comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate media and sexual assault; transphobic abuse; mis gender on purpose.
 - Online/Cyber: requesting or sending inappropriate images, social exclusion, sending inappropriate or hurtful text messages, emails, instant messages, or posting malicious material online through social networking sites, or sending or posting offensive or degrading images and videos.

Bullying can also include the exploitation of individuals

- *Harassment may include:* unwanted conduct which violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

It should be recognised that any form of bullying can have an impact on a individuals mental health and/or well being and this should be taken into account when dealing with incidents and support offered accordingly.

3. Steps taken to prevent Bullying and Harassment

- 3.1 Staff members at the College will model respectful behaviour
- 3.2 Every student and user of the College will have their rights respected.
- 3.3 Through equality and diversity we will work to raise awareness amongst students of treating everyone with positive regard.
- 3.4 We will create a safe and easy way for students to report and seek support for bullying and harassment.
- 3.5 We will work with any student who has been a victim of bullying to help them build/re-build their confidence.
- 3.6 We will work with any student who bullies to help them change their behaviour.
- 3.7 We will put in place sanctions to be used as appropriate in relation to the College's Student Code of Conduct.

4. What will happen if a student reports bullying to college staff?

- 4.1 We will listen respectfully to the student
- 4.2 We will take steps to stop the bullying with the student's permission.
- 4.3 We will meet with the perpetrator/s and try to resolve the problem.
- 4.4 We will not humiliate or put at risk any student that reports bullying or make it known that they have done so outside of the due processes of resolving the matter.
- 4.5 We will give the perpetrator opportunities and support to change but if this fails we will take further steps which could include permanent exclusion.
- 4.6 We will monitor and follow up incidents to ensure bullying has stopped.

5. Procedure for Students:

- 5.1 If you have cause for concern, you should make it clear to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unwanted and you want it to stop speak to any member of staff that you trust. This could be your personal tutor, pastoral support mentor, specialist support tutor, college counsellor, mental health and wellbeing officer, student representative/union. You can also send an email to besafe@wmc.ac.uk
- 5.2 We will follow-up your concerns and the matter will be investigated.

6. Summary of Code of Behaviour Regarding Bullying & Harassment:

- 6.1 If you are being bullied or harassed:
 - a) Avoid staying silent and suffering - speak out for yourself
 - b) Make it clear that their behaviour is unwanted and you want it to stop
 - c) Maintain a sense of respect and do not retaliate.

- d) Ask for help to sort out the issues, which are causing you anxiety

6.2 And even if you're not being bullied or harassed:

- a) Always think about what you say and do to avoid offending others
- b) If you think somebody else is suffering, talk to a member of staff. Seek assistance on their behalf
- c) Always treat others the way you would like them to treat you

7. Procedure for Personal Tutors and Curriculum Managers:

7.1 If a student reports bullying to you (or if it is reported to you by a third party):

- a) Record the incident and subsequent actions (allegations of bullying should be summarised on ProMonitor - add a 'Tutor Comment' and select the comment type 'Alleged victim of bullying' on the alleged victim's record. It may be appropriate to keep a separate more detailed account on paper).
- b) Ensure the student is safe.
- c) Work with the student who reported the bullying to agree a way forward that they are comfortable with.
- d) Check ProMonitor for any useful background information (e.g. previous incidents; support from Specialist Support Tutors; ALS; support from Pastoral Support Mentors etc).
- e) See the bullying student/s separately and: explain the implications and consequences of their actions/behaviour, agree what they will do and what they must not do.
- f) If appropriate, refer to the Student Discipline and Progress Policy and Procedure and take any appropriate actions e.g. this may include suspension of the alleged perpetrator pending an investigation.
- g) Track any further actions such as calling or writing to parents, or undertaking any mediation or other meetings.
- h) If appropriate enable the student to seek support from the College counsellor or mental health officer (this could be beneficial for the bully as well, depending on what issues may be behind the bullying).
- i) Report action taken to College Manager or appropriate line manager.
- j) Record the allegation on the victim's ProMonitor page, by creating a Tutor Comment with Comment Type 'Alleged victim of bullying'. Record action taken as follow ups, and once resolved re-classify the comment as 'Bullying investigated and resolved' so that this can be tracked.
- k) Record action taken with the perpetrator, on their ProMonitor page (classify Tutor Comment as 'Behaviour')
- l) If the student is at risk of significant harm record your concern on Safeguard and contact the Safeguarding Manager immediately.

7.2 **The Student Discipline and Progress Policy and Procedure need to continue within the curriculum area/s** regardless of any action taken by the Safeguarding Manager.

8. Procedure for all other staff, plus course reps

8.1 If a student tells you they are being bullied, or reports to you that another student is being bullied:

- a) Reassure them that they have done the right thing by sharing the information and that you will treat the information as confidential and pass it on to a member of staff who can help (e.g. Personal Tutor, Curriculum Manager or Safeguarding Manager)
- b) Reassure them that the college has a clear policy on anti-bullying that is designed to support the victim and ensure the bullying stops
- c) If the student is worried about this, reassure them that this person will speak to them before taking any action, and agree with them a way forward that they are comfortable with (see 7.1c, above)
- d) Report the situation to the Personal Tutor or College Manager

9. Other Relevant Policies and Procedures

- Student Handbook
- Student Discipline and Progress Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy and Protection of Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy