Bullying/Harassment Policy

1. Introduction

The College aims to promote respect for others, intolerance of bullying and harassment, the importance of self-discipline and the right to be treated with dignity and respect. All staff have a duty to establish and maintain a learning environment free from bullying. Bullying is defined as any unsolicited or unwelcome act that humiliates, intimidates, or undermines the individual involved. There is no justification whatsoever for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form. Differences in race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and ability never give grounds for bullying behaviour.

We recognise the serious impact bullying can have on a person's wellbeing, learning and development, and we are dedicated to preventing bullying through proactive education, clear procedures, and a whole-college approach.

This policy outlines our approach to:

- Preventing bullying before it occurs
- Responding effectively to incidents of bullying
- Promoting equality, respect and understanding among all members of our college community

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all students whilst on college premises. The College is not directly responsible for bullying/harassment off their premises although each case will be dealt with individually to determine if there is any way the college can support or should intervene if the incident is particularly serious or violent.

3. General Considerations and Definitions

Bullying is a subjective experience and can take many forms, it is defined as behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally, or both. It often involves an imbalance of power. Children, young people and adults can instigate bullying.

Prejudice-Based Bullying refers to bullying motivated by prejudice against particular groups, including but not limited to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or socio-economic status.

Discriminatory Bullying involves bullying that violates the Equality Act 2010 by targeting individuals based on protected characteristics such as race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief.

The nature of bullying is changing and evolving as technology develops. Bullying via the internet or through the use of mobile phones and other devices (cyberbullying) is now

common. This is also a very serious form of bullying because the bullying can follow the victim home. Further information on cyberbullying is outlined in point 4 below.

4. Cyberbullying

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 states: All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content. In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:
   • content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material; for example, pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views.
   • contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
   • conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.

Background

Social media is the term commonly used for websites which allow people to interact with each other in some way - by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, and interests. As the name suggests, social media involved the building of online communities or networks, encouraging participation and engagement.

Social networking websites are perhaps the most well-known examples of social media, but the term covers other web-based services. Examples include Blogs, audio and video podcasts, Wiki's, message boards, social bookmarking websites, photo, document and video content sharing websites or micro-blogging services.

For the purposes of this policy, "students" refers to all individuals who learn through provision provided by the college.

The Safeguarding Team will:
Be aware of the potential for serious child protection/safeguarding issues to arise from:
   • Sharing of personal data
   • Access to illegal/inappropriate materials
   • Inappropriate online contact with adults/strangers
   • Potential or actual incidents of grooming
   • Cyber-bullying

Learners:

• Are responsible for using the College digital technology systems responsibly in line with the North Yorkshire Council Internet Acceptable Use Policy
• Need to understand the importance of reporting abuse, misuse or access to inappropriate materials and know how to do so

• Should understand the importance of adopting good online safety practice when using digital technologies out of college and realise that the Internet Acceptable Use Policy covers their actions out of college, if related to their membership of the College.

Parents/Carers:
Parents/Carers play a crucial role in ensuring that their children understand the need to use the internet/mobile devices in an appropriate way.

The College will take every opportunity to help parents understand these issues through newsletters, website, and information about national / local online safety campaigns/literature. Parents and carers will be encouraged to support the College in promoting good online safety practice and to follow guidelines on the appropriate use of:
• Digital and video images taken at College events
• Their son/daughter's personal devices in the College (where this is applicable)

Education
Whilst regulation and technical solutions are very important, their use must be balanced by educating students to take a responsible approach. The education of students in online safety is therefore an essential part of the College's online safety provision. Children and young people need the help and support of the College to recognise and avoid online safety risks and build their resilience.

Online safety should be a focus in all areas of the curriculum and staff will reinforce online safety messages. The online safety curriculum should be broad, relevant and provide progression, with opportunities for creative activities and will be provided in the following ways:
• A planned online safety curriculum will be provided as an integral part of learning sessions
• Students should be taught in all lessons to be critically aware of the materials/content they access on-line and be guided to validate the accuracy of information.
• Students should be taught to acknowledge the source of information used and to respect copyright when using material accessed on the internet.
• Students should be supported in building resilience to radicalisation by providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues and helping them to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making. They should be made aware of the Prevent Strategy and the College's actions around this.
• Staff should act as good role models in their use of digital technologies the internet and mobile devices.
• In lessons where internet use is pre-planned, it is best practice that students should be guided to sites checked as suitable for their use and that processes are in place for dealing with any unsuitable material that is found in internet searches.
• Where students are allowed to freely search the internet, staff should be vigilant in monitoring the content of the websites the young people visit.

Education – Parents and Carers
Many parents and carers have only a limited understanding of online safety risks and issues, yet they play an essential role in the education of their children and in the monitoring and regulation of the children's on-line behaviours. Parents may underestimate how often children and young people come across potentially harmful

and inappropriate material on the internet and may be unsure about how to respond. The College will therefore seek to provide information and awareness to parents and carers through:

• Curriculum activities
• Letters, newsletters, web site
• High profile events / campaigns e.g., Safer Internet Day
• Reference to the relevant web sites / publications (see table at end of policy)

Education and Training – Staff
It is essential that all staff receive online safety training and understand their responsibilities, as outlined in this policy. Training will be offered as follows:
• All staff must have mandatory safeguarding training at the start of their employment with the College and this will be refreshed every 3 years.
• The Designated Safeguarding Lead will receive regular updates through attendance at external training events and by reviewing guidance documents released by relevant organisations and cascade this to teams.

Personal Safety Online
The promotion of professional and safe practice is a key priority for the College. Therefore, the following points noted below are deemed to help both staff and students make good decisions about protecting and safeguarding themselves and others:
• be familiar with privacy options on social networking sites
• set appropriate privacy guards for your personal comfort level
• be aware that no privacy option protects you 100% from personal information being shared beyond desired boundaries
• be aware that information posted on-line may be perceived differently depending on the viewer, despite the intended effect or outcome
• inappropriate incidents reported to the college will be investigated and dealt with through the college's disciplinary procedures or, in some cases, may require a criminal investigation.

Organisation/Resource	What it does/provide
NYSCP	Tips and guides on how to keep young people safe online
https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/	Contains a specialist helpline for UK schools and colleges
https://www.internetmatters.org/	Help for parents on how to keep their children safe online
https://www.childnet.com	Guidance for schools on cyberbullying
https://educateagainsthate.com/	Practical advice for parents, teachers and governors on protect children from extremism and radicalisation.
https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis	The UK Council for Child Internet Safety's website provides: • Sexting advice • Online safety: Questions for Governing Bodies

	• Education for a connected world framework
https://www.nspcc.org.uk/	NSPCC advice for schools and colleges

5. Examples of Bullying

Examples of bullying behaviour include but are not limited to:
• Derogatory remarks including name calling, taunting, mocking
• Insensitive jokes or pranks
• Insulting or aggressive behaviour including kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings
• Ignoring or excluding the individual, gossiping, and spreading hurtful or untruthful rumours
• Sexual aggression of any kind
• Intimidation by, for example, aggressive or threatening behaviour, inciting someone to violence, extremism, or terrorism
• Inappropriate text messaging, emails, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet
• Any other action or incident which the individual or group of individuals believes constitutes harassment or bullying
• Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, it can also take place in the presence of others

The actions listed above must be viewed in terms of distress they cause the individual. It is the perceptions of the recipient that determine whether any action or statement should be viewed as bullying.

6. Preventative Measures

We will:
• Embed anti-bullying education into the curriculum, including PSHE and RSE
• Promote values of respect, inclusion and kindness across the college
• Train staff to identify early signs of bullying and intervene appropriately
• Encourage learner voice and peer-led initiatives such as anti-bullying ambassadors
• Monitor and evaluate bullying trends and responses regularly

7. Responding to incidents/actions

A member of staff who receives a complaint of bullying, or witnesses bullying, must refer the complaint or incident for investigation to the relevant PLC Manager to ensure that the problem is resolved as quickly as possible. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should also be informed and will log the details under safeguarding and monitor progress.

8. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:
Education and Inspections Act 2006 – requiring the prevention of all forms of bullying
Equality Act 2010 – the elimination of discrimination and fostering of good relations
Children Act 1989 – safeguarding children from harm, including bullying
Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) – statutory guidance on safeguarding and bullying.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in line with statutory guidance and college needs. Next update due August 2026.