**Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy - Students**

Last review: September 2023

Next review date: September 2026

Approval by: LGB

Ownership: Vice Principal

Review cycle: Every 3 years

1. **Policy Statement**

Birkenhead Sixth Form College is committed to ensuring that its students are treated with dignity and respect, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We have a zero tolerance approach towards bullying and harassment, including sexual violence and harassment. We encourage a culture of mutual respect within the college where all students learn in a safe and supportive environment and we aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the college.

1. **Policy Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this policy is to prevent any form of bullying/harassment within the College. All members of the College community including staff, students, governors and associates have a responsibility for achieving this.

Where it does occur, the policy aims to take appropriate and effective action to prevent any recurrence.

The specific policy objectives are:

* To ensure that all students of the College are aware of the types of behaviour which constitute bullying/harassment, and of their responsibilities to prevent and report any such incidents.
* To ensure all students of the College understand that bullying/harassment will not be tolerated and that appropriate measures will be taken.
* To promote a climate within the College where everyone feels confident in bringing forward complaints of bullying/harassment without fear of victimisation and recrimination
* To ensure that all allegations of bullying/harassment are responded to quickly, positively and in complete confidence, and that victims and perpetrators are offered support.

1. **Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to the following:-

* Equality Act 2010
* Dfe (2017) ‘Preventing and tackling bullying’
* Dfe (September 2021) ‘Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
* DfE 2021 ‘Promoting and Supporting Mental health and Wellbeing in Schools and Colleges’
* DfE (2023) ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021)
* DfE (2020) ‘sharing nudes and semi-nudes, advice for education settings working with children and young people’.

1. **Definitions**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a student is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between students or perceived differences.

For the purposes of this policy, bullying is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

* **Repetition**: Incidents are not one-offs, they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
* **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm, it is not accidental.
* **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.

Vulnerable students are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable students may include, but are not limited to:

* Students with SEND
* Students suffering from a health problem
* Students with caring responsibilities
* Students who are LGBTQ+ or perceived to be LGBTQ+

Acts of bullying can include:

* Name calling
* Taunting
* Mocking
* Making offensive comments
* Taking belongings
* Inappropriate text messaging and emailing
* Sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet eg via social networking sites
* Gossiping
* Excluding people from groups
* Spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours

**Cyberbullying** can be defined as the use of information and communications technology particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Cyberbullying can include the following:

* Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
* Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips sent via mobile phone cameras
* Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victims phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
* Threatening or bullying emails possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else’s name
* Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
* Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
* Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites eg Facebook

1. **Guidelines for Students**

If, as a student, you feel that you or others are being bullied, harassed, or discriminated against in College or whilst taking part in College activities, you should talk to someone about it. You should discuss your concerns with your Tutor, Teacher or any other member of staff.

Your concerns will be responded to quickly, positively and in complete confidence.

The College understands that some SEND students may lack the social and communications skills to report bullying. All staff will be aware of these students and will take an individualised approach to support them in reporting any concerns.

If there is a concern that bullying is causing, or will cause, ‘significant harm’, safeguarding protocols will be followed. If necessary you can make a formal complaint. Copies of the Complaints Procedure can be accessed via the College website.

Specific advice is available from the Vice Principal, who has overall responsibility for Equal Opportunities. Any concerns or complaints will be dealt with in confidence and acted upon with sensitivity.

1. **Monitoring**

The procedure will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team