

HART LEARNING GROUP

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL

Date approved by Group CEO	18 th April 2018
Scheduled review date	18 th April 2021
Accountable member of Group SMT	Sarah Robins
Responsible member of staff	Emma Masters
Document author	Emma Masters and Mitchell Holloway

AUDIENCE

Applicable to students?	Yes
Accessible to students?	Yes
Accessible to public?	Yes

PURPOSE

The policy helps us ensure that:

- The Group's commitment to creating and sustaining a positive and supportive working environment and an excellent learning experience for our students is reinforced.
- All students at the Hart Learning Group have the right to learn in a safe and secure environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone. It is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

SCOPE

This policy prescribes our approach to dealing with bullying within NHC, the Hart Schools Trust, HL&D and Group Corporate Services.

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students, employers and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students, employers and parents should know what the policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

DEFINITIONS

There are a wide range of actions and behaviours that constitute bullying. Each situation is different and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. However, behaviours considered to contravene the group anti-bullying policy include the following:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Physical - pushing, punching, kicking, hitting or any use of or threat of use of violence (see appendix 1 - Responding to a Physical Incident)
- Racist – racial taunts or remarks
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - homophobic taunts/language
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Electronic - threatening or unwanted mobile phone messages/calls or emails, insults/abuse/threats/rumours via online chat and network sites (see appendix 2 – Inappropriate use of Social Network sites)

PROCESS

All staff and students have a responsibility to maintain an environment in which students feel safe and confident to learn. This means that any student who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a member of staff and that member of staff is expected to deal with it promptly and effectively.

The Group will introduce an anti-bullying ethos by:

- Activities for tutors to use with groups where appropriate
- Activities for assessors to use with individuals where appropriate
- Advice and information through the plasma screens, screen savers
- Topic-specific events across college
- Informing students about the anti-bullying policy and student code of conduct during induction and reminders throughout the academic year.
- Informing staff about the anti-bullying policy in the induction programme
- Staff will be mindful of cliques forming within classes and organise activities to integrate groups as much as possible.

The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents of bullying

- If bullying is suspected or reported the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached

- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Deputy Head of Curriculum and Student Services Success Coach for that academic area, or relevant assessor for apprenticeships.
- Deputies, coaches or assessors will conduct interviews with all concerned
- Tutors will be kept informed and, if the bullying persists, the tutor should advise the Head of curriculum and Deputy Head of Student Support.
- Where appropriate, assessors will liaise directly with employers to implement relevant company procedures.
- Disciplinary measures will be used as appropriate as stated in the Student Disciplinary Policy.

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their personal tutor and/or a member of the Student Services team
- An appointment with the college counsellor if appropriate, or assistance signposting to nearest counselling services.
- Reassurance
- The offer of continuous support
- The opportunity to have a mediated meeting with the person they feel bullied by, if they feel this would benefit them.

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the student became involved
- Establishing the impact of bullying on the others and the need to change
- Informing parents, guardians or employers to help change the attitude of the student
- Informing tutors to help change the attitude of the student

It is important to note that in some cases both parties will feel bullied and it is important that staff do not pre-judge a situation based on one account of events or concerns. In all cases, staff will discuss carefully with everyone involved to ascertain what happened and what circumstances lead to these events. This will then inform how the bullying is dealt with and resolved.

Bullying will be dealt with within the disciplinary framework, which can lead to:

- Verbal warnings
- Formal written warnings

- Suspension
- Permanent exclusion

In accordance with the disciplinary framework, continued instances of bullying will lead to escalation to the next level of the disciplinary procedure.

MITIGATING FACTORS

Whilst every effort is made to help students in need, the duty of care owed by the Hart Learning Group to the wider student community and to staff takes priority where the behaviour of a student with complex personal or mental health difficulties causes significant disturbance or distress to others.

Efforts will be made to resolve such problems through discussion with the individual concerned and in particular to point out the negative effect that their behaviour is having on others. However, if these efforts are unsuccessful, alternative strategies will be considered, including, if necessary, requesting the student to withdraw from the college for a suitable period.

Withdrawal will also be necessary if the student's mental condition is such that they are unable to meet course requirements, notwithstanding the support of the college and local health services. In these instances, the Fitness to Study policy and procedures will be implemented.

When determining consequences for inappropriate behaviour, the relevant Head or Director must consider whether:

- the student has the ability to control his or her behaviour,
- the student has the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour, and
- the student's continuing presence on programme does or does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any other individual.

If a student does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour, or does not understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour, the Director shall not suspend the student as a disciplinary measure, but may also need to refer to the Health and Safety Policy or Fitness to Study Policy.

CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

In any situation involving bullying it is advised the Deputy of Curriculum or Course Team Leader should involve the students' parents/carers and explain how the group intends to respond to the incident and to the student's needs. Where the group suspects that to sanction this might put the student's safety at risk, or if there is any other cause for concern for the student's safety at home, then the group must exercise caution when considering involving parents/carers. In any situation where a student may need protection from the possibility of abuse, refer to the group Safeguarding procedure and the designated senior person for safeguarding (DSP).

REVIEW AND MONITORING

- The group will review this policy every three years and assess its implementations and effectiveness.

- Serious cases of bullying will be reported as part of the weekly safeguarding update to senior managers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Corporation Board, the Group's governing body, has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Group complies with the Anti-bullying Policy
- All members of the Group are expected to act in accordance with this policy and to challenge cases of bullying at all times.
- All students should understand they can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their studies, against fellow students, staff and visitors.

LINKED POLICIES / PROCESSES

- Fitness to Study Policy
- Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

APPENDIX A

Responding to a physical incident

As stated within the safeguarding policy, the group has a responsibility to protect students from any potential harm or damage that either deliberately or unknowingly causes a person harm. This includes physical bullying as defined within this policy.

When a violent incident occurs between students, staff are advised to take extreme caution and not attempt any action which may result in themselves/other members of staff/students being injured.

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. Reasonable restraining force can be used to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property or from causing disorder.

In the first instance contact:

- On site Director or DSP lead.
- Estates to help provide additional support
- Other staff members in the immediate vicinity to provide support until further back up is provided by the above
- In cases of emergency contact 999 immediately

Ensuring their safety at all times, staff should remove the perpetrator from the environment and isolate them as quickly as possible where they will be dealt with in accordance with the Student Disciplinary measures. If it is not possible to remove the perpetrator, all other students should be removed from the area to ensure their safety.

First Aid

First Aid should be offered to all parties involved in accordance with the First Aid provision policy. All incidents of injury must be recorded, regardless of whether first aid treatment was required or not. An Accident Report Form (ACC1), available from Reception, must be completed in full. If a First Aider was present it is their responsibility to complete the form, otherwise it is the responsibility of the line manager or tutor. All ACC1 forms must be returned as soon as possible to the Estates Office.

Incident Record

Staff should record all violent incidents, which seek to cover the following:

- Details of person assaulted
- Details of the perpetrator/s (if known)
- Details of the incident (include Accident Report Form)
- Action taken (police intervention, support from Student Services, disciplinary)
- Possible contributing factors/improvements

Pass information to relevant Director on site or DSP lead.

APPENDIX B

Inappropriate use of Social Network sites

Social networking, and in particular the use of the Social Network Site Facebook, raises issues for the Hart Learning Group.

It is of concern that students can be unaware of the implications of their comments/postings. In particular, a comment that might be throwaway when spoken face to face can become something much more powerful when saved online and viewable by a wider circle.

Students need to understand that as members of a wider group community they do not have total freedom to express themselves as they wish. The following types of communication are not allowed and may lead to a student being disciplined, or in extreme cases being asked to leave their programme of study:

- Posting any comment that could be viewed as bullying or harassing another member of the HLG community: student or member of staff. It will be viewed as particularly serious if a student sets up a site or page which has the clear purpose of criticising, bullying or harassing another member of the group community. It will also be viewed as particularly serious if a student makes libellous statements about any other member of the group community.
- Posting any comment that conflicts with the group's own values in relation to equality, inclusion and safe learning environments
- Posting any comment that explicitly encourages other members of the HLG community to actively break the law. It will be viewed as particularly serious if a student actively encourages others to take prohibited substances, or commit violence.
- Students are reminded that material posted on the internet can be very hard to remove. They would always be well-advised not to post photographs of themselves or other members of the community that they might not wish others to see, now or in the future. They would also be well-advised not to make written comments that could be used against them in future.

Students who are experiencing bullying should be advised to keep a copy of any abusive texts, emails, comments or messages that they receive and record the date and time they were sent. With this form of bullying there is always a trail and keeping records can be very useful when it comes to reporting the bullying and initiating any disciplinary procedures and/or investigation.