

## Anti-Bullying Policy

**Policy type:** Local

**Approved by:** AQC (Matt Smith, Assistant Principal – Pastoral)

**Effective From:** February 2026

**Revision Date:** February 2027

### Policy statement

The Sixth Form College Farnborough is committed to providing a supportive, friendly and safe environment for staff and students. Any form of bullying or harassment will not be tolerated and all students are encouraged to inform the College if they are being bullied or harassed, or if they are aware that others are being bullied or harassed. This includes bullying using social networking sites or by mobile phones.

The College recognises its obligations under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to provide measures that encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst students. This includes times when the students are not at College or under the supervision of College staff. This could relate to bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the College premises, such as on public transport.

This policy also recognises that students may also be bullied by a teacher or person in authority at the College.

Under the Equality Act it is the duty of the College to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the College community as part of our monitoring procedures.

### What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as:

**‘The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.’**

There are four key elements to this definition:

- hurtful
- repetition
- power imbalance
- intentional

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical - pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling
- Emotional - isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online/cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect - can include the exploitation of individuals

### **Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of ALL members of the College to ensure that the workplace and the transport to and from College is free from harassment or bullying. The College takes reports of bullying extremely seriously and will do all it can to resolve any issues, through mediation, support and, where necessary, disciplinary procedures. As part of our disciplinary process incidents of harassment or bullying will be recorded and assessed annually by the Pastoral Leadership Group and the Assistant Principal, Pastoral.

### **Allegations of Bullying**

Incidents of alleged bullying may vary from ‘teasing’ and ‘horseplay’ to serious violence and intimidation which threaten the life or mental health of the recipient. It is therefore important to select the appropriate level of response.

Informal procedures can be a speedy and amicable way of resolving conflict and should be sought in the first instance, unless the nature and seriousness of the complaint are such that informal action would be inappropriate. In such a case, the Formal Procedure will be followed immediately.

The recipient of any unwanted behaviour should be advised to make notes of any incidents and names of witnesses in case the Formal Procedure should be invoked at a later date. Where cyber-bullying is involved, the victim should keep all electronic evidence.

## What to do

If you feel that you have been harassed or bullied, or if you witness bullying or harassment, you have a number of options.

***If you are a student***, you could:

- talk to the person concerned; it may be that they do not realise that they are causing offence or discomfort
- talk to your Personal Tutor or Student Progress Advisor (SPA)
- talk to a counsellor

***If you are a member of staff who is worried about a student***, you could:

- talk to the person concerned
- talk to your line manager, Director or any other senior member of staff

If you are talking to a student, Appendix A “Anti-Bullying: Guidance for students” should be printed off and handed to them.

## What will happen next?

### Informal Procedures:

#### The alleged bully is a student

##### 1) Challenge the Behaviour

Anyone who feels they are being bullied should ask the other person to stop; they should also explain why the other person’s behaviour is unacceptable.

All staff and students have a duty to challenge any bullying or harassment as follows:

- make sure that bullying is or was taking place, not merely horseplay in which the recipient is happy to take part
- make it clear to the alleged bully that their behaviour is unacceptable, and explain why
- encourage and support the recipient

If a student lacks the confidence to challenge bullying, they should tell an appropriate member of staff (e.g. Personal / Subject Tutor, SPA or any member of the Student Services team) and ask for assistance.

When the alleged bully has been challenged and told that their behaviour is unacceptable, that may be enough to stop it. They may have been unaware that their behaviour is offensive or unwanted. If this does not stop the bullying, then the recipient may wish to seek a resolution via the informal or formal procedures as set out in the remainder of this policy.

##### 2) Mediation (probably with the assistance of the Personal Tutor/SPA team)

If harassment or bullying has occurred, and the recipient either feels uncomfortable about challenging the other person, or they have already done so to no effect, they should talk

the situation through with a friend or a member of staff such as their Personal Tutor or SPA. This can sometimes give the student the confidence to deal with the situation themselves.

If the student still feels intimidated, they may want to ask for the support of one of the above, to mediate: either to accompany them when they speak to the other person, or to speak on their behalf. It may be appropriate to organise a meeting between the parties, mediated by an impartial third party (e.g. Pastoral Lead), especially if the alleged bully is making a counter-complaint. It is important to identify the cause of the conflict and to agree a solution. The College will usually try to encourage a solution via mediation before moving to the formal procedures.

Advice and support is available for as long as the recipient needs it. Counselling is available both for the recipient and for the person whose behaviour is alleged to be unacceptable. This can be organised via the College counsellors.

### **3) Mediation is not wanted by the recipient, refused by the bully or ineffective**

If the recipient does not wish to take part in mediation, then the matter will be dealt with immediately under the normal College Code of Conduct procedures.

If the alleged bully refuses to participate in mediation, or having met, refuses to modify their behaviour (or if having agreed, fails to do so), or if retaliation or victimisation occur, then the matter will be dealt with immediately under the normal College Code of Conduct procedures.

#### **The alleged bully is a member of staff**

If the alleged bully is a member of staff, the student should seek assistance from an appropriate (other) member of staff such as their Personal Tutor. After an initial discussion with the recipient, that (other) member of staff should decide whether there is 'cause for concern' and ascertain whether the recipient wishes any action to be taken.

If the (other) member of staff decides there is 'cause for concern', they should contact the **appropriate Curriculum Manager** who will offer mediation between the student and the alleged bully, if appropriate. If mediation is refused by the alleged bully, or unsuccessful, or if the alleged incident is sufficiently serious, the **Curriculum Manager** will refer the matter to their **Director of Faculty** who may recommend that the Staff Disciplinary Procedure be invoked.

#### **Formal Procedures:**

##### **The alleged bully is another student**

Details of procedures can be found in the College Code of Conduct.

**The alleged bully is a member of staff**

Details of procedures can be found in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures (staff).

**After the Formal Procedure has been concluded:**

- Where a complaint is upheld, it is the responsibility of the bully's Personal Tutor or SPA to check that no further bullying takes place and that there is no subsequent victimisation, either by the bully, or the bully's friends
- Counselling can be arranged via the College counsellors for both or either parties of the complaint, irrespective of the outcome

***Associated Policies / Procedures:***

- Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Disciplinary Procedures (Staff)
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Grievance Procedure (Staff)
- Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures (Code of Conduct)

## Appendix A

### Anti-Bullying: Guidance for Students

The Sixth Form College Farnborough is committed to providing a supportive, friendly and safe environment for staff and students. Any form of bullying or harassment will not be tolerated and all students are encouraged to inform the College if they are being bullied or harassed or if they are aware that others are being bullied or harassed. This includes bullying using social networking sites or by mobile phones.

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**If you believe you are being bullied or harassed:**

Do not retaliate or seek revenge. If you are in immediate danger from bullies, get away, don't try to fight. Find the nearest member of staff, or go to Student Services.

If you cannot resolve the situation on your own by challenging the other person(s) directly, recognise that to stop the bullying, you must do something about it. Tell a member of staff (e.g. Personal/Subject Tutor or any member of the Student Services team) who will help you decide on the best course of action. The College will usually consider mediation to be the most appropriate way of ensuring the bullying / harassment stops.

**If you see anyone being bullied or harassed:**

- Satisfy yourself that bullying or harassment really is occurring.
- Encourage and support the person being bullied to take appropriate action to address the situation e.g. by asking the bully to stop.
- Tell an appropriate member of staff.

**Remember that the best defence we have against any anti-social behaviour, including bullying, is the respect we have for each other.**

For further information and guidance, look at the College **Anti-Bullying Policy** and Procedures document, available on the College website.