



Stockton Sixth Form College Anti-Bullying Policy

Stockton Sixth Form College 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. Our policy is highlighted to new students during induction tutorials.

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. It could also relate to bullying using social media sites or texting which takes place outside college hours.

Under the Equality Act it is the duty of the college to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the college community.

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.

Cyber-Bullying

This is when one person or a group of people try to threaten or embarrass someone else using a mobile phone or the internet.

Allegations of Harassment and/or Bullying

Incidents of alleged bullying and harassment may vary from 'teasing' to serious violence and intimidation. Our focus is on finding a solution to the problem and stopping the bullying recurring and informal procedures can be a speedy 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.

It is important that we create an atmosphere in college where students who are being bullied, or others who know about it, know they will be listened to, and that action will be swift, effective, but sensitive to their concerns.

All staff have a duty to challenge any bullying or harassment which occurs in their lesson or which they witness in college. Other students are also encouraged to report incidents which they witness.

Informal Procedures

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. When the alleged bully has been challenged that may be enough to stop it. If a student lacks the confidence to challenge bullying, they should tell an appropriate member of staff and ask for assistance.

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 member of staff. In tutorial students are encouraged to report such incidents to their tutor. At this point, if the student approaches a teacher, they should inform the tutor who will investigate the incidents.

2) Investigation

The incident will be investigated and appropriate action taken. Action will focus upon finding a solution to the problem and stopping the bullying recurring.

The tutor will record the student's account of the bullying and liaise with the Assistant Principal. Where cyber bullying is involved a copy of electronic evidence should be included.

A course of action will be agreed which is sensitive to the concerns of the victim.

3) Mediation

It may be appropriate to organise a meeting between the parties, mediated by an impartial third party (usually the Tutor or the Assistant Principal), 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 more formal disciplinary 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 counsellor.

If mediation is not wanted then the Tutor or Assistant Principal will speak to the alleged bully with the aim of finding a solution and stopping the behaviour.

4) Formal disciplinary procedures

If the alleged bully refuses to modify their behaviour (or if having agreed, fails to do so), or if retaliation or victimisation occurs, then the matter will be dealt with immediately under the college disciplinary procedure. The continued harassment may be outside college or via the internet or phone. This is still behaviour which can result in disciplinary action. If it is deemed to constitute gross misconduct the student(s) will be suspended.

5) Record and subsequent action

A log of the incident, action taken and the result will be kept by the Assistant Principal. Where a complaint is upheld the tutor should monitor the situation and make sure that no further bullying takes place, either by the bully or his/her friends. This could include online or by text messaging.