

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Family:	Corporate Governance and Legal Frameworks
Reference Code:	GOV07
Issue Number:	6
Originator:	Assistant Principal Student Experience and Wellbeing
Responsible Manager:	Assistant Principal Student Experience and Wellbeing
Committee for Approval:	Safeguarding/Corporation Board
Approval Date:	02 April 2025
Issue Date:	23 April 2025
Review Due:	2026/27

Impact Assessment Status: In preparing the Policy, any potential disproportionate impact it might have upon individuals with protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, have been carefully considered. It is the conclusion of the College Group that the Policy does not adversely impact on individuals with any of the protected characteristics.

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Aim

The Anti-Bullying Policy aims to ensure that:

1. The Chesterfield College Group provides a safe environment in which all users, particularly young people and vulnerable adults, can learn and in which college users can operate, flourish, and progress.
2. The Chesterfield College Group is committed to the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. It is the right of every student and apprentice to study without fear of harassment or bullying even if it is not directed at them.
3. The Chesterfield College Group recognises the problems associated with bullying and harassment and is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals can operate effectively, confidently, and competently. If a complaint is brought to the attention of management, it will be investigated fully in line with the college's Complaints and Compliments Policy (CSE06).

Scope

This policy and associated operating procedures apply to Chesterfield College, which includes our subsidiary companies: Training Services 2000 Ltd, Learning Unlimited ATA Ltd, Recruit Unlimited Ltd and Chesterfield College Enterprises Ltd.

The policy applies to all staff, students, apprentices, and other college users, including volunteers, external contractors, remote students, and employers where students and apprentices have work placements or are engaged in work-based learning.

Throughout the policy reference is made to 'college users'. This term is used to refer to all students and apprentices but with particular reference to safeguarding duties in respect of young people under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults, where any form of bullying or potential child-on-child abuse is recognised and responded to.

Policy Statements

The Chesterfield College Group has a statutory and moral duty to ensure that it provides students and apprentices with a safe and supportive environment in which they can participate in a range of learning activities that are free from any form of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation. The college recognises that bullying and harassment takes place both within a face-to-face context and online (e.g., via social media, text messaging, email, and other online communication platforms).

The college provides a safe, non-threatening, inclusive environment in which all college users can operate and learn, where they are treated with respect and dignity, feel safe, are listened to, where account is taken of their wishes and feelings, and positive wellbeing is promoted. This will produce students and apprentices who are confident, healthy, safe, emotionally resilient, and personally fulfilled.

The college is an intrinsic part of the local community and as such has strong relationships with external agencies with the aim of managing and reducing conflict, helping different groups of people to get on together. The college promotes Fundamental British Values and gives students and apprentices the opportunity to mix and learn with, from, and about those from different backgrounds.

What is Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, which is intended to hurt another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice, for example on the grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, or because an individual is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between individuals, or perceived differences. Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological, an intellectual imbalance, having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of an individual or individuals through the threat of violence or by isolating them physically or online. Examples of bullying include:

- Verbal and/or physical intimidation: threats, shouting, derisory or sarcastic remarks, often in front of others.
- Asserting a position of intellectual superiority in an aggressive, abusive, or offensive manner.
- Ostracism from groups or from normal conversations.
- Withholding information, spreading malicious rumours, or persistent and unjustified criticism.
- Causing physical harm.

Harassment is the act of systematic and/or continued, unwanted and annoying actions of an individual or group, including threats and demands. This may be linked to an individual's protected characteristics.

What is Online Bullying?

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur inside or outside of the learning environment. Online bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at any time of day, with a potentially bigger audience and more accessories as content is forwarded and shared. Examples of online bullying include:

- Online stalking, including cyber-attacks – the sending of messages to frighten or threaten, or the sending of spyware, viruses, worms, Trojan horses etc.
- Spreading rumours and hearsay online with the purpose of damaging the victim's reputation.
- Sending insulting, threatening, and harassing messages persistently and tirelessly.
- Taking on a false identity, creating a fake profile, or password theft to access the victim's profile, for the purpose of tormenting a person and damaging their reputation or pretending to be a victim.
- Creating websites and pages and loading them with images, statements, and insulting remarks for the sole purpose of tormenting and humiliating a person or group.

- Posting embarrassing photos of an individual to torment and humiliate them. In some cases, these photos and images are fake or have been altered.

Although some technology seemingly allows anonymity, there are ways to discover where the bullying originated. However, it is important to be aware that this may not necessarily lead to an identifiable individual. For instance, if another person's phone or college network account has been used, locating where the information was originally sent from will not, in itself, determine who the bully is.

Where issues arise that cause conflict and potential bullying and harassment, staff should work proactively to provide a safe environment that should include:

- Involving parents and carers, where appropriate, to ensure that they are clear that the college does not tolerate bullying, and that they are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents and carers then feel confident that the college will take any complaint about bullying seriously and will resolve the issue in a way that protects the student or apprentice.
- Involve students and apprentices in the process so that they understand the college's approach and are clear about the part they can play to reduce risks and prevent bullying, including where they find themselves as bystanders.
- Openly discuss differences between people that can motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, and different family situations, such as looked-after children or those with caring responsibilities. Teach students and apprentices that using prejudice-based language is unacceptable through role modelling and consistent challenge.
- Ensuring that students and apprentices know how to report bullying, including online bullying, whether this has occurred inside or outside of the learning environment.

Implementation

The college's response to bullying should not start at the point at which a student or apprentice has been bullied. College staff should proactively gather intelligence about issues between students and apprentices which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring. This might involve talking to students and apprentices about issues of difference through dedicated events or projects. Staff can determine what will work best for their students and apprentices, depending on the issues they need to address.

The college will look to create an ethos of good behaviour, where students and apprentices treat one another and college staff with respect, in line with the college's Code of Conduct.

The college will create and maintain a safe environment where students and apprentices can openly discuss the cause of their bullying without fear of further bullying or discrimination.

Respect for staff and other students and apprentices, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how actions affect others permeate the college environment and are reinforced by staff, students, and apprentices.

The College Group will ensure that:

1. The policy is available to parents, carers, and the local community via the college website.
2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with colleagues across the college to implement the policy and will ensure that all staff, including volunteers, have access to the relevant information and training as reasonably required by their role.
3. Alleged instances of bullying should always be dealt with via the college's Student and Apprentice Disciplinary Policy and Procedures (TLA03), as well as being responded to through safeguarding.
4. The policy is implemented in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy (GOV05) and forms part of the wider Safeguarding Policy Family.

Communication Flow

The policy will follow the same communication flow as the Safeguarding Policy (GOV05).

Through safeguarding training and related communication, staff, students and apprentices are clear on the reporting process for bullying incidents, which should follow the same reporting processes as any other safeguarding concern. These referrals will be picked up and actioned by the Safeguarding Team within the usual timeframes for dealing with a concern.

All students and apprentices are actively encouraged to report any bullying to staff members and can seek support and guidance from their LEAP Mentor or the Safeguarding Team if they are at immediate risk of harm.

Students and apprentices who may be at risk of becoming victims of bullying or harassment should be encouraged to maintain a diary to inform support interventions and necessary actions in terms of reporting.

Monitoring

The policy will follow the same monitoring of implementation as the Safeguarding Policy (GOV05).

Safeguarding Committee reports will specifically include detail of any emerging trends around individuals or groups of individuals being subject to harassment or bullying.

Associated Information and Guidance

The policy is underpinned by associated legislation and guidance as listed below:

- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents>
- Equality Act 2010*: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made>
- Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/89>

- Children Act 1989: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>
- Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

*A key provision of the Equality Act 2010 is a public sector Equality Duty covering age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Reference to Criminal Law

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in the UK it is important to recognise that some types of harassment, threatening behaviour, or communications could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

Related Chesterfield College Group Policies and Documents

- Complaints and Compliments Policy (CSE06)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (GOV03)
- Safeguarding Policy (GOV05)
- Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation Policy (GOV06)
- Health and Safety Policy (GOV08)
- Information Security Policy (INF01)
- IT Acceptable Use Policy (INF02)
- Data Protection Policy (INF03)
- Student and Apprentice Disciplinary Policy (TLA03)