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## A Introduction

A.1 All students have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them. Students need to be aware that staff want to be informed of any incidents or concerns and that action will be taken when bullying is reported.

A.2 All bullying and harassment cases are dealt with under the College's disciplinary procedures and constitute a serious breach in a student's commitment to the College.

## B Definition of Bullying

B.1 Bullying is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated;
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally;
- often aimed at certain groups, eg because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

B.2 Bullying behaviour may be direct or indirect:

- **direct** forms include physical violence and threat, verbal assault and taunts, threatening or abusive text messaging or phone calls, damage to personal property, extortion, unwanted sexual interest or contact, name-calling and cyberbullying;
- **indirect** forms include ignoring and the withdrawing of friendship, exclusion, malicious gossip and spreading rumour, abusive or oppressive graffiti.

## C Signs and Symptoms

C.1 It may be a cause for concern if a student:

- is frightened of walking to or from College
- is unwilling to go to College
- feels ill in the morning
- changes usual routine
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide

- runs away
- has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives implausible excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received.

C.2 The above signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. In dealing with an incident of bullying, the following responses may be considered. The list is not intended to be exhaustive and other strategies may be employed.

**For the victim:**

- positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do
- reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully
- strategies to prevent further incidents
- sympathy and empathy
- counselling
- befriending
- assertiveness training
- creation of a support group
- peer mentoring
- informing and involving parents/guardians
- mediation between the perpetrator and the victim, provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability
- encouragement to contact the local Police if appropriate.

**For the bully:**

- engagement with the bully to reinforce the message that his/her behaviour is a breach of College rules and is unacceptable
- removal from class/group
- informing parents/guardians
- counselling/instruction in alternative behaviour
- mediation between the perpetrator and the victim provided this is safe for the victim
- fixed periods of supervision
- suspension
- permanent exclusion in extreme cases which may involve violence
- liaising with other schools/colleges if the bully is from another institution.

**D Commitment Process**

D.1 Incidents of bullying or harassment will be dealt with through the commitment process.

D.2 Cross-reference to Commitment & Student Disciplinary Process, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy including Prevent, E-Safety Policy, Student Enrolment Contract, and Standards for the Conduct of Students as contained in the Student Handbook.