



Bullying and harassment - students

1 Policy statement

- 1.1** King Edward VI College celebrates diversity and believes that every student has a right to work and study in an environment which encourages harmonious relationships. The College is committed to preventing bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment, and its commitment to equal opportunity is enshrined in its equality, diversity and inclusion policy and in the college mission and values.
- 1.2** Every student is also personally liable under the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.3** Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated very seriously by the College and could result in disciplinary action being taken against the alleged perpetrator.
- 1.4** The College will ensure that any student raising a genuine concern under this policy is not victimised as a result.
- 1.5** As allegations of bullying and harassment are very serious and the College will also treat any such allegations proven to be malicious very seriously. These are also likely to be the subject of disciplinary action.
- 1.6** The College will also treat allegations of harassment and bullying of a member of staff equally seriously.

2 Policy scope

This policy relates to all students who are studying at the College. A separate policy on bullying and harassment exists for staff and a copy of the relevant policy may be downloaded from the college website.

3 Policy aims

- 3.1** The College has a firm commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and will not tolerate the bullying or harassment of one member of its community by another. The aim of this policy is to assist all members of the college community to create a working environment in which bullying and harassment are unacceptable and where individuals can complain about harassment and bullying, should they arise, with confidence, knowing their concerns will be dealt with confidentially, appropriately and fairly.
- 3.2** The policy is accompanied by procedures to follow if a student alleges they are being bullied or harassed during their period of study at the College.

4 Equality Impact

The College's equality, diversity and inclusion policy has been taken into account when considering this policy.

Date of review	Date agreed	JCC	Governors	Review date	Comments
March 2023	March 2023	N/A	N/A	March 2026	

Procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment (students)

1 What are bullying and harassment?

- 1.1** Although the terms ‘bullying’ and ‘harassment’ are not synonymous, the guidance in these procedures relates to both issues and the term ‘harassment’ will be used from this point onwards to encompass both.
- 1.2** Harassment is usually conscious and wilful and can take a variety of different forms, ranging from repeatedly ignoring someone or subjecting them to unwelcome attention, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule or offence. More extreme forms of harassment include physical threats or violence and sexual harassment. Behaviour that may appear trivial as a single incident can constitute harassment when repeated, or in the context of the staff/student relationship.
- 1.2** Harassment may not always be intentional, but it is always unacceptable, whether intentional or not.
- 1.3** Some of the most prevalent forms of harassment are detailed below; this list is not exhaustive:
- a) Bullying is the exercise of power over another person through negative acts or behaviour that undermines them personally and/or academically. Bullying can involve threatening, insulting, abusive, disparaging or intimidating behaviour which places inappropriate pressure on the recipient or has the effect of isolating or excluding them. Bullying can take the form of shouting, sarcasm, derogatory remarks concerning academic performance or constant criticism. This could be oral, written, electronic or through a social network. Bullying is to be distinguished from reasonable academic debate or the actions of a teacher or supervisor making reasonable (but perhaps unpopular) requests of their students.
 - b) Sexual harassment can take the form of ridicule, sexually provocative remarks or jokes, offensive comments about dress or appearance, spreading rumours about someone’s sexual activities, the display or distribution of sexually explicit material and making verbal, unwelcome sexual advances or demands for sexual favours in person or online. Sexual violence includes unwanted touching or physical contact, sexual assault or rape.
 - c) Racial harassment is usually, although not exclusively, directed at people from ethnic minorities. It may include jokes about, or gratuitous references to a person’s colour, race, religion or nationality. It can also include offensive remarks about dress, culture, or customs which have the effect of ridiculing or undermining an individual or fostering hatred and/or prejudice towards individuals or particular groups.
 - d) Harassment of people with disabilities can take the form of individuals being ignored, disparaged or ridiculed because of mistaken assumptions about their capabilities. Their disability rather than their ability can become the focus of attention, and harassment can include inappropriate personal remarks, jokes or inappropriate reference to an individual’s appearance or behaviour.
 - e) Harassment on the grounds of a person’s perceived sexuality or gender identity may be aimed at the LGBTQI+ community. Examples of harassment relating to sexuality are homophobic remarks or jokes, offensive comments relating to a person’s sexuality, threats to disclose a person’s sexuality to others or offensive behaviour/abuse.
- 1.4** Harassment can also take place on the grounds of a person’s age, style of dress or any other characteristic that makes them different from the majority or from the person who harasses or bullies them.

2 Harassment – general principles

- 2.1** The over-riding principles in dealing with allegations or concerns of harassment are that they must be taken seriously, considered carefully and addressed speedily and, where possible, in confidence.
- 2.2** Any student who feels that they are the subject of harassment, either by a fellow student, a member of staff or anyone else with whom they come into contact in the course of their time at the college, may wish to make a note of incidents, dates, times and any witnesses, for future reference. Any student who considers themselves to have been the subject of harassment has the right to be listened to and to be given informed advice on how the matter may be resolved. There are usually a number of options. Anyone who feels they have been harassed is likely to wish to speak to someone they feel comfortable disclosing to. For this reason, they should approach one of a number of different people within the college (see section 4.1 below).
- 2.3** Should harassment occur in a group situation, the person in authority within the group has the responsibility to recognise harassment when it occurs and to take speedy action to stop it. It is important that it is made clear to the perpetrator that such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Silence or inaction can be seen as collusion and endorsement of such behaviour. If the person in authority is the harasser, others within the group should support the individual being harassed in taking action to report the harassment.

3 How will allegations of harassment be dealt with?

If a student considers that they are experiencing harassment, they have a number of options available to them. They may be able to speak directly to the individual concerned or to write to them expressing their concerns and requesting that the harassing behaviour stop immediately. Alternatively, or if they achieve no success, they may wish to talk to someone to obtain another perspective on the situation and ensure that someone else knows about it who can support them to make sure it stops. It is envisaged that the majority of cases will be resolved by informal procedures, which are described in more detail below. However, a final option is to make a formal complaint so the matter can be addressed through the student behaviour policy.

4 Conciliation

- 4.1** A student who is concerned about harassment should initially discuss the matter with one of the people listed below (referred to later as an ‘advisor’):
- their Personal Tutor
 - their Lead Tutor
 - a subject teacher, subject leader, Head of Faculty, or any other member of staff with whom they feel comfortable
 - the college counselling team
 - a representative of the Student Union, such as the Student Union Equality and Diversity Officer
 - A member of the safeguarding team.

4.2 Any advisor who is approached by a student wishing to discuss a potential harassment issue should:

- be aware of potential child protection or safeguarding issues and, if in doubt, consult with a member of the safeguarding team
- find a quiet place to discuss the issue confidentially and without interruption using restorative questions to ensure a fair process and provide the student with the opportunity to share their concerns including:
 - What happened?
 - What did you think when you realised what had happened?
 - What were you thinking?
 - What impact has this incident had on you and others?
 - What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
- listen carefully to what they are being told and ensure that they understand the full facts
- make brief notes as a summary; the advisor should not add their own interpretation to the notes and these should be added to CPOMS
- when they are sure they understand the issue, and if they feel confident to do so, they should discuss the options open to the student
- if the advisor does not feel confident to discuss the options, they should ask the student to see their lead tutor
- in all cases, staff and students who are aware of any incidence of harassment should pass on evidence of this to the relevant subject teacher (if the students are part of the same class) or lead tutor

4.3 Confidentiality is very important in dealing with cases of alleged harassment as experience shows that they will be much more difficult to resolve through conciliation if information about the matter becomes common knowledge. Anyone approaching a member of staff or other individual for advice may, however, wish to be accompanied by a friend. However, as stated in 4.2, in all cases, the advisor should inform the relevant subject teacher (if appropriate) and lead tutor of the alleged harassment.

4.4 If, after being approached, the advisor wishes to obtain guidance on how to deal with an alleged case of harassment, they should seek the agreement of the person who has confided in them and then consult with the student's subject teacher (if appropriate), or lead tutor. If the advisor does not feel able to help in a particular case, they should explain the reasons to the complainant and refer them to another advisor.

4.5 Having heard the alleged facts of the incident and the context of the action or behaviour that caused concern, the advisor has a number of options available to facilitate resolution of the matter. It is important to discuss all possible and desirable strategies with the alleged victim in the first instance and proceed as appropriate. For example:

- the advisor could talk to the alleged harasser to try and resolve the conflict; sometimes students do not realise their conduct is causing offence and explaining this to them can make them consider and change their behaviour; or
- the advisor could facilitate a meeting between both parties to give the student the opportunity to talk to the alleged harasser and explain their view of the offending behaviour. Normally, the advisor should not take action following an approach concerning harassment without the agreement of the individual concerned, other than to inform the relevant subject teacher and lead tutor
- If the alleged victim decides not to take any further action after reporting the incident, the College reserves the right to investigate the incident and pursue an outcome
- In some circumstances, the College may make the decision to involve the parents/guardians of the alleged victim, especially if it is deemed the student requires safeguarding at home

- 4.6** As well as aiming to resolve matters through conciliation, advisors should consider appropriate action to facilitate the restoration of working relationships after the event.
- 4.7** The action outlined above will be appropriate in many cases and will often be sufficient to resolve the matter. If, however, a conciliatory approach does not achieve satisfactory results, or the nature of the incident(s) prompts the person who feels harassed to take a more formal approach, a request for the matter to be investigated can be made to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

5 Requesting an Investigation

- 5.1** Formal action may be considered where conciliation proves ineffective, or where a student, a teacher, tutor, friend or relative feels that conciliation is not appropriate. On receiving confirmation that the alleged victim would like the matter to be investigated (or the College decides to investigate the incident and pursue an outcome) the procedure outlined in the Student Behaviour policy will be instigated.
- 5.2** A formal allegation and report of harassment should include the nature of the allegation, with reference to dates, times and places (where possible) in relation to a specific incident(s). The names of any witness(es) to the incident(s) should also be included (where possible), to enable the investigating officer to look into the matter.