Student Bullying and Harassment Policy

Scope

Middlesbrough College has a firm commitment to equality and diversity and will not tolerate the harassment or bullying of any member of its community.

This policy is applicable to students, staff and visitors at Middlesbrough College. This policy is to outline the vision that the College has, to create a College community that is tolerant, inclusive and free from bullying and harassment, in all its forms. The College will treat all incidents and reported incidents of bullying extremely seriously and has a procedure that is transparent and reviewed and monitored regularly.

This policy is in conjunction with other policy documents including:
•   Safeguarding Students Policy and Procedures
•   Student Disciplinary Policy
•   Student IT Acceptable User Policy
•   Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
•   Equality Statement and Policy
•   College Mission Statement and Strategic Priorities

Policy Content

Middlesbrough College is committed to ensuring that everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect as part of the College community. Middlesbrough College is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our students. By its nature, bullying is contrary to these values and is unacceptable. The College will inform all students, parents, staff members of the Corporation and visitors that all types of bullying and harassment are unacceptable. All staff and students have a responsibility to ensure students feel safe and that all incidents of bullying and harassment are dealt with appropriately - both to address the behaviour of the alleged perpetrator and to provide support for the victim.

All complaints about harassment and bullying will be taken seriously and will be dealt with quickly and with respect for the people involved. Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for their mental health.

Definitions of Bullying & Harassment Bullying

Bullying is defined as 'the persistent intentional harming of another person with an unequal power relationship'. (Bullying Intervention Group). Bullying is behavior by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either emotionally or physically.

Bullying differs from banter because there is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate, there is an unequal power balance and it is usually persistent or systematic.

Examples of bullying can include:

- Verbal – threatening or intimidating behavior, name calling, put downs and sexual and racist remarks.
- Physical – kicking, punching, hitting, spitting, biting, tripping someone up and damaging belongings or college work.
- Coercion – threats or forcing someone to do what they do not want to do.
- Emotional – rejection or isolating tactics, staring or threatening looks, playing on fears or sensitivities, remarks about personal appearance.
- Indirect – lies and rumor spreading, talking behind a person's back, using chatrooms or websites to spread or invite hatred.
- Cyberbullying – an aggressive and intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time.
- Prejudice-driven bullying – when bullying is driven by negative attitudes towards another group of people or because the victim is seen as 'different' in some way. This can become more severe over time and can lead to hate crime. It can be related to race, religion or culture, special educational needs or disabilities, appearance or health conditions, sexuality or gender, perceived sexual orientation and any so-called perceived differences.

Harassment may include any of the above examples of behaviour, and in particular, a situation in which a person engages in unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the others person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment can be 'one off' incidents or continuous behavior.

Bullying and harassment may include behaviour on the grounds of any protected characteristic as identified in the Equality Act 2010, including:
- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Statutory Duties

The Equality Act 2010 requires the public sector to take into account the needs of all protected groups (except marital and civil partnership status). The Act strengthens and simplifies existing equality legislation and brings together existing duties the College has, not to discriminate on grounds of race, disability and gender. It extends these to include duties not to discriminate on the grounds of age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and gender re-assignment.

The Equality Act 2010 outlines Middlesbrough College's Public Sector Duty to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. These notions have been incorporated into this policy.

The Roles of Staff

All staff have a responsibility to ensure students feel safe and that all incidents of bullying and harassment are dealt with appropriately.

The College's response to bullying should not start if identified at the point at which a student has been bullied. Staff need to be vigilant and identify issues between students which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place.

If staff witness acts of bullying or harassment or are approached in confidence by students who are being bullied or harassed or by students who have witnessed such actions, a Bullying Incident Report Form should be completed (Appendix 3) and the following members of staff should be informed as appropriate:

- Personal Tutor
- Director or Executive Director of Programme
- Safeguarding and Welfare Officers
- The Safeguarding Team is the case is considered to be a safeguarding issue. Where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a student is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm', a bullying incident should be addressed as a safeguarding concern.

These staff will take the appropriate course of action and can also be used as a source of advice or guidance or to provide support to a complainant or alleged perpetrator.

This form should be stored within Directorate areas to enable incidents to be recorded and any trends identified. The Safeguarding team will add to this document if the incident/s escalate and this will then be logged as a safeguarding issue.

Procedure

The attached flow chart outlines the reporting procedure for all reported incidents of bullying or harassment. (Appendix 1).

Complaints of bullying or harassment could come from the following sources:

- Informal complaints
- Formal complaints
- Counter complaints
- Third party or 'witness' complaints
- Parent/carer complaints

Complaints regarding Bullying and Harassment

Quick and appropriate action can often lead to a problem being solved informally between those involved in a situation where someone perceives that they have been harassed or bullied. All those involved should make every effort to resolve a situation quickly and informally wherever possible.

Staff should respond positively to a request from a complainant to meet or speak about the complaint and seek an amicable and mutually acceptable solution, via mediation where appropriate. Further action may be taken depending on the incident/s reported. Support may be

required or the student/s may be signposted to other services if appropriate. The disciplinary procedure may be initiated on the basis of evidence gathered.

Staff should keep a formal record of any reported incidents including dates, times, location, names of individuals involved (including witnesses), action they have taken and ways in which they have been affected by the situation. This information should be recorded on the dedicated Bullying Incident Report Form (Appendix 3) available from Student Services, Directorate Administration areas and on Canvas.

Students can also report bullying by using the confidential online bullying report mechanism via Canvas (VLE) - *'Tell Someone' or via the TXT Safe to 60081 facility.*

Any complaint should be taken seriously and every effort made to resolve it. Students should not automatically feel that the complaint is their fault or that there is nothing they can do about it. They can receive help and support from the same people listed earlier in this section.

The College, where possible, and in the context and nature of bullying incidences and age appropriateness, will take both a disciplinary and restorative stance to dealing with bullying incidents and of bullying prevention in the wider sense.

All parties, once the issue has been investigated and actions agreed, including sanctions, are encouraged to meet in a class, small group or 1:1 environment. These forums are used to look at triggers, the idea of blame and of taking responsibility and the impact of bullying on behaviour. It is an opportunity to apologise and accept the consequence of actions to influence future behaviours. It sets ground rules going forward, where everybody knows the consequences of non-compliance with agreed actions.

Complaints against a member of staff or member of the Corporation

If the complaint of bullying or harassment is against one of the above, the informal stages of this procedure may apply. However, if a formal complaint is received this will be dealt with using the Employee Disciplinary Procedure.

Allegations of a Serious Nature

If the allegation is sufficiently serious to warrant investigation by the Police, this should be referred immediately to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

7.   **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Incidents reported under this policy will be monitored by the Assistant Principal – Students and reported annually to the College Leadership Team and Governing Body as part of the Safeguarding review process. Bullying incidents reported via the Safeguarding Team are reviewed at a weekly Safeguarding meeting and records are stored confidentially. An annual safeguarding review examines the process and reflects on effectiveness and strategy of bullying intervention in order to promote and improve best practice.

Student Consultation and Feedback

Students are consulted at regular intervals throughout their course of study, to survey the effectiveness of bullying prevention and intervention and to assess the impact and effectiveness of the strategies in place.

Methods of consultation across the student body include:

• Twice yearly QDP survey for all students at induction and on programme.

• Regular targeted surveys via Student Voice mechanisms, including the Students' Union, Cross College Student Council, Focus Groups, Open Forums and Drop-ins.

• Targeted Advantage Programme group work to ensure an inclusive approach to engage all students.

• The Bullying Prevention Focus Group held on a half-termly basis.

Prevention of Bullying

Middlesbrough College is dedicated to promoting and reinforcing a zero tolerance policy towards all forms of bullying and harassment and this is reflected in the College's 'Respect and Behaviour' campaign which promotes tolerance, respect, equality and diversity for all. Middlesbrough College fosters an inclusive community and culture of respect which is reinforced via a series of student led initiatives, including:

• A Student Ambassador Programme - Peer Mentoring scheme.

• Student and Staff Bullying Prevention Focus Group.

• Regular Students' Union campaigns which raise awareness and promoting equality and celebrates differences.

• College wide Respect and Behaviour Campaign that outlines expectations of all students, staff and visitors. (Appendix 2)

• Advantage Programme input from Student Services and external support agencies.

• Advantage Programme scheme for all full-time students. This scheme focuses on helping students develop relevant skills with an emphasis on promoting citizenship, open mindedness and tolerance of others and other cultures.

• In July 2012 Middlesbrough College became the first FE College to achieve the Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) Award, and is still accredited. This externally verified award recognises excellence in anti-bullying practice and that schools, colleges and other services for young people take bullying and inclusion seriously.

Communicating our commitment to a zero tolerance policy on bullying and harassment

To students through:
• Induction Process – Personal Tutors and Safeguarding and Welfare Officers
• Student's Union campaigns and activities

- Advantage Programme
- Canvas (VLE)
- Student Ambassadors - Peer Mentors
- Bullying Prevention Focus Group

To parents, visitors and the public through:
- College website - this policy is available in the Student Zone pages
- Parent's E-Safety advice page on the College website
- Course guides and marketing materials
- Publication of externally verified awards and quality marks such as the BIG Award and the North East Equality Gold Award

Copies of this policy will be available on Canvas (VLE), Student Services and from Directorate Administrative areas.

The induction programme for students highlights the College's commitment to equality, the action to be taken by students who suffer bullying or harassment and the action to be taken against perpetrators of such behaviour.

Tutors will reinforce this information during induction week, Advantage Programme and in the classroom, or work based monitoring visits to work placement providers.

RESOURCES

Bullying UK
www.bullying.co.uk

Anti Bullying Alliance www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk

NSPCC
Tel: 0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

ChildLine Tel:
08001111
www.childline.org.uk

The Samaritans
www.samaritans.org Local
Branch – 01642 217777

Crimestoppers
Call 0800 555 111 - If you think a crime has been committed

Cyber bullying and Online Safety

The CEOP Command
Formerly the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre.
www.ceop.police.uk

Cybermentors
www.cybermentors.org.uk

www.thinkuknow.co.uk
Guide to internet safety.

Homophobic and Transphobic bullying

Stonewall
Information on tackling homophobic bullying www.stonewall.org.uk

EACH
Provides a national helpline for young people experiencing homophobic or transphobic bullying.
www.each.education.org.uk
Tel: 0808 1000 143

Local and Middlesbrough College contacts

Cleveland Police Switchboard
Tel: 01642 326326

UNITE Mediation Service
Tel: 01642 311633
www.unite-mediation.org

College Safeguarding Team
Tel: 01642 333775 / 01642 333629
Email: safeguarding@mbro.ac.uk
Text SAFE to 60081

Student Services
Email: Studentservices@mbro.ac.uk
Tel: 01642 333606

College Counsellor
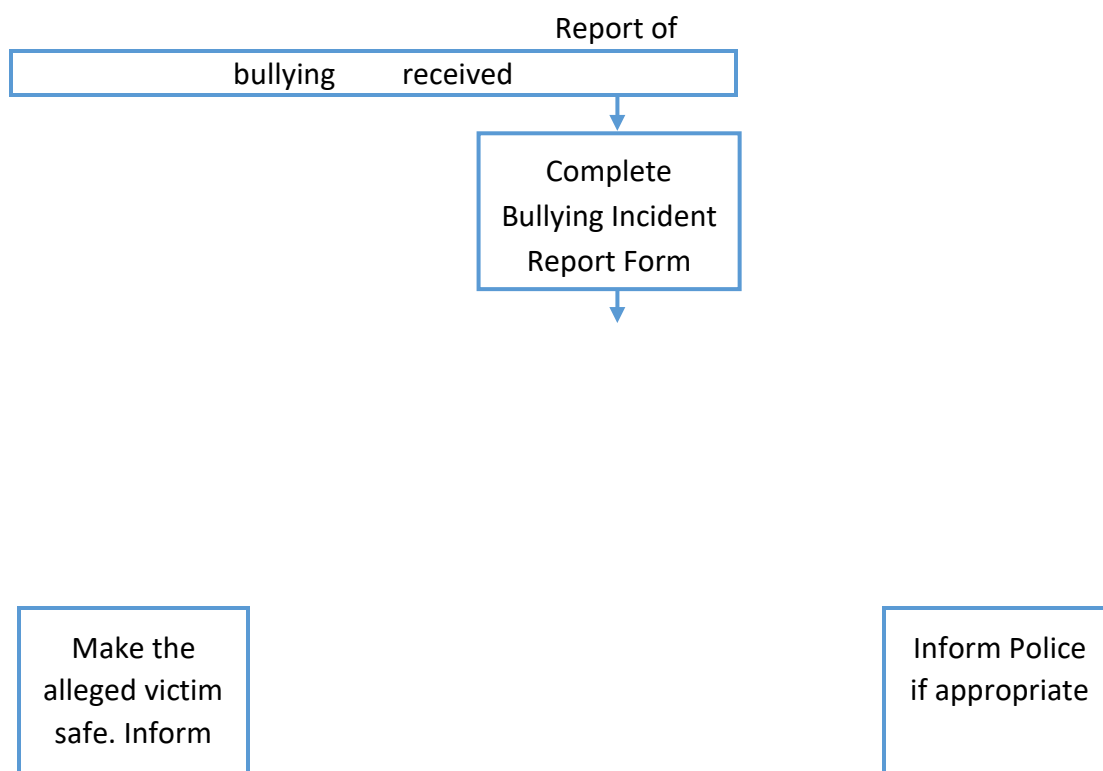Email: EL.Betiku@mbro.ac.uk
Tel: 01642 333472

Safeguarding and Welfare Officers
Tel: 01642 333689 / 01642 333688

Equalities Co-ordinator
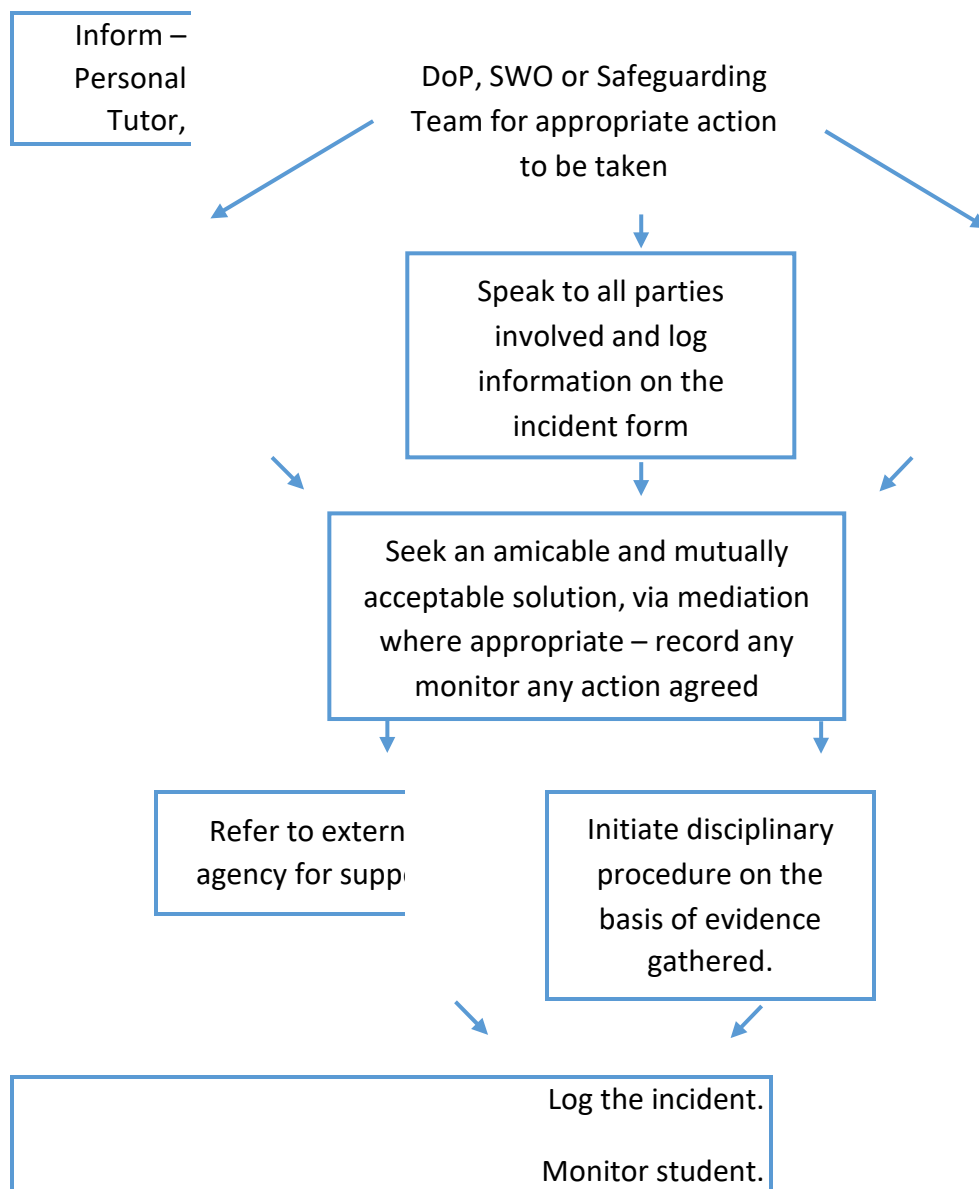 Email: l.barry@mbro.ac.uk
01642 333810

Appendix 1: Bullying Report Procedure
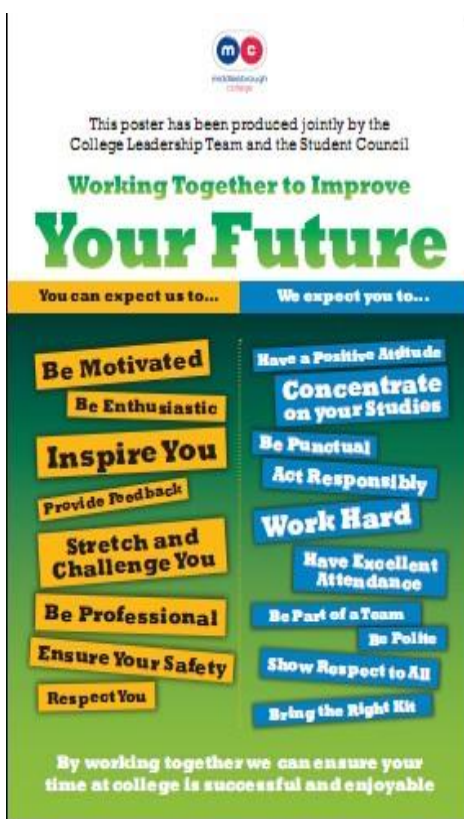
Report of
bullying   received

Complete
Bullying Incident
Report Form

Make the
alleged victim
safe. Inform

Inform Police
if appropriate

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┌─────────────┐
│  Inform –   │         DoP, SWO or Safeguarding
│  Personal   │         Team for appropriate action
│   Tutor,    │                to be taken
└─────────────┘
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Speak to all parties involved and log information on the incident form

Seek an amicable and mutually acceptable solution, via mediation where appropriate – record any monitor any action agreed

Refer to extern agency for supp

Initiate disciplinary procedure on the basis of evidence gathered.

Log the incident.

Monitor student.

Appendix 2: Respect and Behaviours

Appendix 3

Middlesbrough College Bullying Incident Report Form

To be completed in full by the member of staff to whom the incident is reported to initially.

Date:			
Student Name:			
DOB:			
MC Number:			
Course:			
Directorate:			
VYP:		**SEN / EHCP:**	
Reported by:		**Reported to:**	

Details of incident – *please give a brief description of the incident and the details of all involved:*

Action taken/outcome/resolution:*(Was contact made with the alleged victim's parent/carer and the alleged perpetrator's parent/carer? Did the incident lead to any disciplinary action? Was the incident referred to any external agencies? What support was offered to the student?*

Incident resolved and details stored within curriculum area or via safeguarding if applicable:

Name:

Date: