



Anti-Bullying Policy

Swansea College is committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all students are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect.

This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs at college and out of the college, such as on trips or at educational events or social functions. It covers bullying and harassment by staff (which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers), by other students, and also by third parties such as customers, suppliers or visitors to our premises.

It has been prepared with particular reference to

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/rights-respect-equality-statutory-guidance-for-governing-bodies-of-maintained-schools.pdf>

1. Definitions

What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.

It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include, for example:

- unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content;
- mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's voice, mannerisms or disability.
- A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

What is bullying?

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened.

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, on the journey to and from school, on residential trips and cyberspace. It can take place in group activities and between families in the local community.

Perpetrators and Victims

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one person or persons over another. This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual,
- The strength of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying or using email, social networking sites, texts etc

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include, by way of example:

- physical or psychological threats;
- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance;
- abusive behaviour carried out online or using technology

Signs and symptoms for parents and staff

A pupil may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a pupil:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runaway
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do make less effort with school work than previously
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable

- is bullying other pupil or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- lack of eye contact
- becoming short tempered
- change in attitude to people at home.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a student's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to students in the course of their studies, will not amount to bullying on their own.

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Examples of Cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

Why Cyberbullying is Different

Pupil who are being cyber bullied are often bullied in person as well. Additionally, pupils who are cyber bullied have a harder time getting away from the behavior.

Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach a pupil even when he or she is alone. It can happen any time of the day or night.

Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.

Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.

Effects of Cyber bullying

Cell phones and computers themselves are not to blame for cyberbullying. Social media sites can be used for positive activities, like connecting pupil with friends and family, helping students with school, and for entertainment. But these tools can also be used to hurt other people. Whether done in person or through technology, the effects of bullying are similar.

Pupil who are cyberbullied are more likely to:

- Use alcohol and drugs
- Skip school

- Experience in-person bullying
- Be unwilling to attend school
- Receive poor grades
- Have lower self-esteem
- Have more health problems

2. Safeguarding

Under the Pupil Act (1989) a bullying incident can be addressed as a safeguarding concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that the pupil is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.' Where this is the case, concerns should be raised to the safeguarding team, who will work alongside other staff to determine the necessary contact with parents, other professionals, and the local authority Pupil's Social Care.

Bullying outside of college

Where bullying outside of Swansea College is reported it should be investigated and acted upon, to determine the appropriate response from the college, and any necessary information sharing with other organisations and professionals, including the police. The College has the power to discipline students for misbehaving outside of Swansea College premises "to such an extent as is reasonable", and covers students' conduct in the local vicinity, around local shops and properties, and on public transport.

3. Prevention & strategies to reinforce our stance on bullying:

Summary

A fundamental aspect to dealing with bullying and harassment is to robustly promote positive behaviour, through infrastructure, school systems and the curriculum. Some of the specific measures Swansea College has in place to achieve this include:

- Learner Agreement (policy)– Students have the behavioural expectations and consequences explained to them as part of their induction at Swansea College. They then sign a Learner Agreement (policy) as a means of committing to the behavioural expectations and consequences of the organisation.
- PSHE curriculum – There is specific content within the PSHE curriculum focusing on bullying, positive friendships and relationships, tolerance of others, respect and individual liberty, digital resilience and safety, equality and diversity and active citizenship.
- Strong utilisation of team games and team building activities – at the start of each course, and throughout student's time at Swansea College. They are actively encouraged to interact with their peers, find out more about them and their values, work collaboratively, and learn the benefits that come with co-operation and working together.

- Academic Literacy – Following closely the themes and ideas explored in PSHE, this is an opportunity for this group of learners to explore a variety of topics (including those related to the Prevent Duty, British values, and equality and diversity).
- Informal Engagement – Teachers/ support staff spend time in the social areas of the college, including the common rooms, engaging the learners in discussions, as an informal way of developing their citizenship and building upon their interests and values. And where learners are online classrooms online will be joined to check on pupils, pupils are asked to stay behind after class if they are unsure of work or teachers would keep back specific pupils if they feel they need support.
- Learner agreed classroom and site rules – Students are involved in developing, agreeing, and implementing rules within classrooms and around the site.
- Code of conduct for learners and staff displayed in classrooms with clear expectations for all involved – the information contained within the Learner Agreement is clearly presented in all learning environments to reinforce the behavioural expectations and standards.

Strong staffing and pastoral support – Swansea College has a supportive staffing model that ensures each learner can approach teachers and staff if they need to. In addition to this, there are further forms of support available including mentoring, safeguarding officers, and external referrals.

- Strong site supervision – There are robust site duty procedures to ensure communal spaces and site entrances are closely monitored by staff to support student safety and positive behaviour. And this is the case online too, classrooms are joined to check on pupils.

Staff

Talking to the pupils can often prevent a situation escalating, even if it is minor. The ethos and working philosophy of Swansea College means that all staff actively encourage pupils to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded.

Staff will regularly discuss bullying, this will inform pupils that we are serious about dealing with bullying and leads to open conversations and increased confidence in pupil to want to discuss bullying and report any incidents and concerns about other pupil's behaviour.

Staff will reinforce expectations of behaviour as a regular theme in line with our Vision and our Steady Good Learner expectations.

Staff support every pupil in our school. Staff must be careful not to highlight differences of pupil or an individual pupil, even if this is done in jest. This gives other pupil advocacy to use this difference to begin calling names or teasing.

Staff must be vigilant regarding groups of friends together. Friendship groups may bring about the imbalance of power and must be led towards welcoming others to join them and not excluding others from their group.

Staff must reinforce a general message that pupils do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The role of the Principal

It is the responsibility of the Principal to implement the school Anti-bullying procedure, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying. The Principal ensures that all pupils know that bullying is unacceptable behaviour. The Principal will keep all staff informed of any bullying incidents to ensure constant and consistent monitoring of the situation.

The Principal ensures that all staff, including supervisors, receives sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying.

The Principal leads the school in making our vision a reality, where all members of the learning community value, respect and care for each other.

The role of staff

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of Pupil Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Pupils may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs which means that they may be unable to realise what others may be doing to them.

Staff must also be aware of those pupils who may be vulnerable pupils; those coming from troubled families, or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues which may bring about a propensity to be unkind to others, or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.

The following is a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach as bullies are often victims too – that is why they bully.

- Talk to the suspected victim, and any witnesses individually using Restorative Justice procedures and questions.
- Identify the perpetrator and talk about what has happened, to discover why they became involved. Make it clear that bullying is not tolerated.
- If the perpetrator owns up then sanction procedures outlined in the Behaviour Policy will be followed
- Incidents of bullying are recorded in the student's record.

- Consistently use Restorative Justice procedures with all pupils. Keep an informal log of incidents if there are concerns
- Involve all parties together to discuss the issues if agreed by all parties. Allow pupil time to sort things out.
- Support & empower pupil to resolve the conflict themselves, with a member of staff acting as a mediator, and understand their role in the issues
- Establish an agreement between the pupil and where needed inform parents
- Follow up with further discussions with individuals as and when appropriate, and when necessary support pupil individually or together
- If the incidents persist and are causing a health and safety issue then the Principal could instigate exclusion procedures (see Behaviour Policy)

The role of parents / carers / homestay providers:

Parents / carers have an important part to play in our anti-bullying policy. We ask parents/ carers / homestay providers to:-

- Look out for unusual behaviour in your pupil – for example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their usual standard.
- Always take an active role in your pupil's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, etc.
- Monitor your pupil's use of social media, including their use of messaging systems.
- If you feel your pupil may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform school immediately. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- If a pupil has bullied your pupil, please do not approach that pupil or their parents or involve an older pupil to deal with the bully. Please inform school immediately and we will deal with it following the school procedures.
- It is important that you advise your pupil not to fight back. It can make matters worse! Tell your pupil that it is not their fault that they are being bullied.
- Reinforce the school's policy concerning bullying and make sure your pupil is not afraid to ask for help.
- If you know your pupil is involved in bullying, please discuss the issues with them and inform school. The matter will be dealt with appropriately. Remember incidents are confidential; do not discuss them with other parents. Speak to school staff if you have concerns.

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their pupil to be a positive member of the school.

If a parent is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident, they should follow the school complaints procedure by initially contacting the class teacher. If the concern remains, they should contact the Principal. If they are still concerned, they should contact the Director.

5. Summary of advice for students

The role of pupil: what can pupil do if they are being bullied?

At the student induction, each term and when incidents occur, class teachers will discuss bullying and reinforce the following strategies:

- Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon. Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong.
- Be proud of who you are: It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset or scared. It is hard, but a bully thrives on someone's fear. Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be strong inside – say "No!" Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- If you are getting emails, texts or messages that make you feel uncomfortable please save them and show them to an adult. Do not respond to them.
- Fighting back may make things worse – don't do it.
- Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.
- Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with the bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

What do you do if you know someone is being bullied?

Take action! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.

Tell an adult immediately. Teachers will deal with the bully without getting you into trouble. Do not take direct action yourself.

6. Protection and support for those involved

Students who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

7. Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Complaints Policy for Staff
- Complaints Policy for Students

8. Record-keeping

Information about a complaint by or about a student may be placed on the student's personal file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process

In the event of a further occurrence of bullying, the Principal takes a strict and proactive approach to address the issue. Firstly, they will conduct interviews with both the victim and the bully, carefully documenting the incidents and responses. If it is determined that bullying has indeed taken place, the bully will be required to apologize to the victim in the presence of the Principal. This step aims to foster accountability and encourage the bully to understand the impact of their actions. Additionally, the Principal will meet with the parents to inform them of the on-going problem, ensuring that they are kept in the loop and can support their child in addressing their behaviour. As a consequence, the pupil responsible for the bullying may face a suspension of up to five days.

Upon the bully's return to school, there is a zero-tolerance policy for any further incidents. If another instance of bullying occurs, the suspension will be immediate. This approach emphasizes the seriousness of the issue and emphasizes the need for a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

In cases where serious violence has taken place, suspension becomes the first option, following an apology to the victim. This response demonstrates the severity of the offense and aims to protect the well-being of the victim. However, if there is any subsequent incident of bullying, the pupil responsible will face permanent exclusion from the school. This strict consequence underscores the school's commitment to ensuring the safety and welfare of all its students.

In extreme cases, the Principal has the authority to permanently exclude the bully at the first intervention. This decision is reserved for situations where the bullying is particularly severe or poses a significant threat to the safety and well-being of others. By taking swift and decisive action, the Principal sends a clear message that bullying will not be tolerated in any form and that the school is dedicated to creating a positive and inclusive learning environment for all students.

Updated

October 2023

This policy is reviewed annually

