

# Student Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure

HARROW, RICHMOND AND UXBRIDGE COLLEGES POLICY AND PROCEDURES



<b>Policy No:</b>	S04
<b>Subject:</b>	Student Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
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<b>Person responsible:</b>	Group Safeguarding Lead
<b>Approved by:</b>	Curriculum and Quality Board
<b>For action by:</b>	All staff and students
<b>For information to:</b>	All staff and students

## 1. Background and Institutional Context

- 1.1 All learners at HRUC (the College Group) have the right to study in an environment free from harassment and bullying. Everyone is responsible for preventing and discouraging all forms of bullying, harassment including sexual harassment and victimisation.
- 1.2 HRUC is committed to upholding dignity, integrity, and fairness for all, as part of its dedication to equality and diversity. The College Group values a diverse learner community where everyone is treated with respect. Bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct can harm a person's well-being, confidence, and performance, including for those who witness it. Learners are expected to follow and actively support this policy.
- 1.3 This policy ensures a safe and respectful college environment, in line with the Office for Students (OfS) conditions.

## 2. Aims

- 2.1 This policy aims to prevent bullying, harassment, including sexual harassment, and victimisation within the College Group. If such incidents occur, clear procedures with defined timescales are in place to address them and prevent recurrence.

## 3. Commitment to a Safe Learning Environment

- 3.1 Any instance of bullying, harassment, victimisation, or sexual harassment is taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action under the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Complaints will be investigated promptly, and if upheld, appropriate action will be taken.
- 3.2 All learners should discourage bullying, harassment or victimisation by making it clear that it is

unacceptable and supporting people who suffer such treatment. HRUC is committed to ensuring that any member of staff approached for guidance on the issue of harassment or bullying will act in a supportive and sensitive manner.

### 3.3 Expectations:

- **Tutors** should raise awareness of complaint procedures, seek advice from Student Support when managing allegations, maintain confidentiality where possible, and help prevent recurrence.
- **All staff** to be responsive and supportive.

3.4 All members of the College Group should respect others, regardless of background, and challenge any form of bullying, harassment, or intolerance.

3.4 The **Student Code of Conduct** states that learners are expected:

- To treat all learners, staff and visitors with politeness and respect
- Adhere to the HRUC's Equality and Diversity Policy and treat all individuals equally, regardless of protected characteristics (e.g., race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender).
- Respect the rights of everyone to be free from any form of harassment, including sexual or racial harassment.
- To observe HRUC's Anti-Bullying Policy.

## 4. The Legal Position

HRUC recognises the protection given to its learners by the following legislation:

### 4.1 The Equality Act 2010

HRUC, as a public body, recognises the duty placed upon it by the above Act to:

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

### 4.2 Safeguarding Children and Young People

*Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the College Group will report their concerns to their local authority children's social care.*

### 4.3 Criminal Law

- Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or 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.
- If the College Group feels that an offence may have been committed it will seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

## **5. Bullying outside of College premises**

HRUC will discipline learners for incidents outside the College Group's premises "to such an extent as is reasonable." This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village center.

### **5.1 Making a complaint**

- The College Group does not want any learner to suffer distress or leave because of harassment, bullying or victimisation by others. However, if a complainant wishes to remain anonymous, it may not be possible to act against the person causing the distress or offence, although it may be possible to address the complaint through indirect means by drawing attention to this policy and through training.
- It is recommended that, where possible and appropriate, attempts should be made to resolve the complaint informally. Cultural and attitude differences can cause misunderstandings. Informal resolution should be attempted when appropriate.
- In line with legislation, the College Group will apply a test of reasonableness by taking all the circumstances into account when an investigation takes place.

## **6. What to do if you feel you have been bullied or harassed by someone:**

### **6.1 Individual Action**

There are times when people are unaware of the effect their behaviour is having, or has had, on others. Raising the issue personally, at the earliest opportunity, is often enough to make a person realise that what they are doing, or have done, has caused distress or offence. This gives the person the opportunity to apologise and ensure they do not repeat the behaviour.

### **6.2 Informal Procedure**

- If it is too difficult to approach the alleged offender individually, support can be sought from a teacher or Student Support Officer. If appropriate, they will approach the alleged offender and try to explain clearly that the behaviour is not welcome, is unacceptable, is inappropriate or is offensive.
- They will ask the alleged offender to stop the upsetting actions. This is often enough to stop any further recurrence of the bullying or harassment behaviour.
- If telling the person how the victim feels fails to stop the bullying or harassment behaviour, or if this option is unacceptable, then on receipt of the complaint a meeting may be set up with the alleged offender to discuss the allegation informally.
- Alternatively, a mediation meeting between the alleged offender and victim can be set up. This meeting will give us the opportunity to explain what has happened and how each person feels. Student Support can advise on mediation meetings. No meeting will be set up without the consent of both parties.

### **6.3 Formal Procedure**

- If an informal resolution is not appropriate or fails to resolve the issue, the learner should keep a record/diary of the harassment or bullying behaviour including dates, times, and the names of any witnesses. This record will become particularly important should the complaint become more formal.
- If harassment or bullying continues then the HRUC Disciplinary policy will be used, and the tutor and Head of School/Assistant Principal will decide on the appropriate disciplinary hearing and action.

## **7. Definition of Bullying**

7.1 Bullying is persistent, offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour which causes the recipient to feel distressed, vulnerable, humiliated or threatened. It can undermine self-confidence, performance, and cause stress. The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure, or other types of demands placed upon them.” The bully is often trying to divert attention away from their own inadequacies and shortcomings.

### **7.2 Typical examples of bullying behaviour include:**

- a. Shouting and/or screaming at people either in public or in private
- b. Open aggression, threats, physical attacks
- c. Persistent, unjustified criticism
- d. Spreading malicious rumours by various means e.g., face to face, behind a person's back, texts, postings on social websites and emails
- e. Making wild or inaccurate accusations by various means e.g., face to face, behind a person's back, texts, postings on social websites and emails
- f. Name calling, ridicule or humiliation by various means e.g., face to face, behind a person's back, texts, postings on social websites and emails.

## **8. Definition of Harassment and Sexual Harassment**

8.1 Harassment is behaviour which fails to respect the dignity and rights of others. The most frequent form of harassment is inappropriate comments or jokes. Denying the intention to hurt, mock or humiliate does not excuse the conduct. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, nationality, sexuality, gender orientation or any personal characteristic of the individual. It may be persistent or a one-off incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as: demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

8.2 Harassment creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating environment. HRUC staff have a responsibility for ensuring that learners behave and work to an acceptable standard as set out in the Learning Agreement. The appropriate handling of legitimate concerns about a learner's conduct or performance does not constitute harassment.

### **8.3 Examples of Harassment or Sexual Harassment can be:**

- Physical conduct ranging from the invasion of personal space and/or inappropriate touching to serious assault.
- Questions or remarks about a person's sex life
- Comments or ridicule on appearance or dress
- Unwanted sexual advances
- Suggestive looks and gestures
- Sexually explicit remarks or innuendoes
- Displays or distribution (including electronic) of pornographic or sexually suggestive material, including graffiti, posters, or other offensive material.
- Banter, sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names.
- Grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras, pulling down trousers and lifting up skirts.
- Online sexual harassment, including standalone, or part of a wider pattern of harassment.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos. As set out in UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (which provides detailed advice for schools and colleges) taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence.
- Sharing of unwanted explicit content
- Upskirting
- Sexualised online bullying; unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on

social media; sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

- 8.4 Taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence. Further advice can be found at: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people)

**8.5 Pregnancy and maternity harassment can be:**

- a. Conduct, verbal, non-verbal or physical, which denigrates a learner because they are pregnant.
- b. Stereotypical comments, assumptions, and generalisations
- c. Putting a pregnant woman under pressure to conform or prove themselves
- d. Deliberate exclusion for reasons related to pregnancy
- e. Penalising a pregnant learner for missing a coursework deadline
- f. Refusing a place to a potential learner because they are pregnant.

**8.6 Racial Harassment can be:**

- a. Conduct, verbal, non-verbal or physical, which denigrates an individual because of his or her ethnic background
- b. Obscene gestures or jokes about, or gratuitous references to, a person's colour, racial or ethnic origin or nationality
- c. Stereotypical comments, assumptions, and generalisations
- d. Putting individuals under pressure to conform or prove themselves
- e. Deliberate exclusion for reasons related to ethnic background
- f. Offensive remarks about dress, culture or customs which have the effect of ridiculing or undermining the individual or fostering hatred and/or prejudice towards individuals or particular ethnic groups
- g. Inappropriate displays or distribution (including electronic) of posters, photographs, drawings, racist propaganda, flags or emblems or other offensive material.

**8.7 Disability Harassment can be:**

- a. Ignoring, disparaging, or ridiculing individuals who have a disability
- b. Denying opportunities because of mistaken assumptions about an individual's capabilities
- c. Stereotypical remarks about people who have disabilities
- d. Unwelcome touching, physical abuse, or intimidation
- e. Exclusion from events, conversation, or information
- f. Impractical or unfair expectations
- g. Personal remarks, jokes, or inappropriate references to an individual's appearance
- h. Uninvited, patronising, or derogatory comments.

**8.8 Harassment on grounds of sexual orientation can be:**

- a. Homophobic remarks, gossip or jokes whether spoken or written (including electronic)
- b. Offensive comments relating to a person's sexuality
- c. Threats to disclose a person's sexuality to others
- d. Offensive behaviour/abuse relating to HIV or AIDS status
- e. Intrusive questions about a person's actual or perceived sexuality.

**8.9 Harassment on the grounds of religious belief can be:**

- a. Jokes about items of clothing, religious artefacts, religious beliefs or rituals
- b. Displays or distribution (including electronic) of offensive materials.
- c. Exclusion from activities without justification
- d. Offensive comments relating to a person's religious belief.

#### **8.10 Harassment on the grounds of transsexuality can be:**

- a. Jokes, name calling, humiliation, gossip, or derogatory remarks
- b. Intrusive questioning related to the transsexuality of the individual
- c. Exclusion or being singled out for different treatment

#### **8.11 Harassment on the grounds of age can be:**

- a. Jokes or insults about a person's age
- b. Singling a person out for different treatment
- c. Denying opportunities because of mistaken assumptions about an individual's capabilities because of their age.

*The above examples are not meant to be an exhaustive list but to give guidance on what can constitute harassment. See also the College 'Hate crime statement' in Appendix 1*

#### **8.12 Sexual Misconduct includes:**

- a. Sexual harassment, assault, coercion and exploitation
- b. Unwanted touching, lewd comments, explicit jokes or online sexual bullying
- c. Stalking, upskirting and online sexual harassment
- d. Any behaviour that abuses power in an academic or professional context to obtain sexual favours.

### **9. Victimisation**

- 9.1 Victimisation is unlawful and is a disciplinary offence. HRUC will not tolerate victimisation against a learner or member of staff because he or she has made, intends to make, a complaint or allegation, or has given, or intends to give, assistance and/or evidence in an investigation. HRUC will also not tolerate victimisation or discrimination against former learners or members of staff. For example, because a person has made a complaint of disability harassment.

### **10. Cyber-bullying**

- 10.1 The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside college. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. The resource in the useful links has more information on tackling this type of bullying.

### **11. Prohibition of Intimate Personal Relationships**

- 11.1 This policy meets the requirements of the Office for Students (OfS) Higher Education conditions.
- 11.2 HRUC prohibits intimate personal relationships between staff and learners where a professional, academic, or supervisory relationship exists, to protect learners from conflicts of interest, abuse of power, and coercion.
- 11.3 All staff and learners must disclose any pre-existing or developing relationships. To any teacher, Student Support Officer or Designated Safeguarding Officer.

### **12. Promotion of a bully-free culture**

- 12.1 All staff are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here.' Staff should be aware of and respond appropriately to all reports and concerns including those outside the school or

college, and online. There is a zero-tolerance approach to all bullying and harassment. And particularly physical and sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated, and it should never be passed off as “banter,” “just having a laugh,” “part of growing up” or “boys being boys.”

#### 12.2 A bullying-free culture will be promoted:

- a) **Induction & Tutorials:** learners will discuss anti-bullying policies and reporting procedures.
- b) **Student Council & Union:** Learner representatives will be encouraged to raise concerns about bullying.
- c) Through its curriculum the college will promote an anti-bullying culture. Curriculum teams will identify areas where the issue of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct are relevant and can be embedded into academic discussions in the same way as they address issues of gender and racism.
- d) Providing guidance, advice, and support on cyberbullying and eSafety through tutorials and events such as anti-bullying week and internet safety day. By encouraging staff and students to challenge bullying behaviour where it arises and to intervene to support victims when it is identified.
- e) Through using the disciplinary policy and procedure.

#### 13. Useful links and resources

Children’s online activities, risks and safety. A literature review by the UCCCIS Evidence Group October 2017.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/759005/Literature\\_Review\\_Final\\_October\\_2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759005/Literature_Review_Final_October_2017.pdf)

Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2017, DfE [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/368340/preventing\\_and\\_tackling\\_bullying\\_october14.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/368340/preventing_and_tackling_bullying_october14.pdf)

Advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads. [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)

#### 14. Appendix 1

##### HRUC College Hate Crime Statement

The College Group abhors hate crime and will always use its best endeavours to cooperate with the police and other appropriate agencies including the Local Authority to report hate crime and monitor instances of it.

In line with HRUC policies, the College Group will support any learner or member of staff who is the victim of a hate crime.

##### Hate Crimes

Hate crimes are any crimes that are targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person’s:

- disability
- race or ethnicity
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- transgender identity

This can be committed against a person or property.

A victim does not have to be a member of the group at which the hostility is targeted; anyone could potentially be a victim of a hate crime.

## **Hate Incidents**

Hate Incidents can feel like crimes to those who suffer them and may escalate to crimes or tension in a community. For this reason, staff and students are encouraged to report Hate Incidents: see “How to report a hate crime” below:

### **Why should I report hate crime?**

Hate crimes and incidents hurt; they can be confusing and frightening.

By reporting them when they happen to you, you may be able to prevent these incidents from happening to someone else. You will also help the police understand the extent of hate crime in the area so they can better respond to it.

### **What crimes should be reported?**

All hate crimes and incidents should be reported, whether you have been a victim, a witness or you are reporting on behalf of someone else. Incidents may include verbal abuse, physical assault, domestic abuse, harassment, and damage to property.

If a person is bullied because of their disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, or transgender identity, this is also dealt with either as a hate crime or non-crime hate incident. Bullying could include name-calling, being spat at, or kicked, or having your things taken or damaged. Bullying can also include SMS texts, emails and the use of websites and social media such as Facebook.

### **How to report a hate crime**

You can report a hate crime as the victim, a witness, or on behalf of someone else. A learner who needs support in reporting should ask their tutor or contact learner support services.

1. *In an emergency call 999*
2. Contact the police. You can speak in confidence. You do not have to give your personal details, but the police's ability to investigate and prosecute the offender(s) is severely limited if the police cannot contact you. Contact your local police force, either by telephone or by visiting your local police station.
3. Report online at [https://www.report-it.org.uk/your\\_police\\_force](https://www.report-it.org.uk/your_police_force)
4. You can download a self-reporting form from [http://report-it.org.uk/self\\_reporting\\_form](http://report-it.org.uk/self_reporting_form)
5. Crimestoppers - If you do not want to talk to the police or fill in the reporting forms, you can still report a hate crime by calling Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 or via their website at [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org). You do not have to give your name and what you say is confidential. It is free to call.
6. Talk to the College support staff who can help you with advice about reporting.

### **Reporting Terrorist and Extremist Material**

The internet is used by some people to promote terrorism and extremism. You can challenge and report terrorist and extremist content you find online, which you feel is offensive, or illegal. For more information about what makes online content illegal and how to report it, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism>.