

Student Policy against Harassment and Bullying

1. Introduction

Choice Training is committed to ensuring that all students can study and be part of the training environment free from any form of harassment or bullying. Choice Training will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment and will take firm and decisive action to protect students from harm.

Harassment or bullying can be due to a lack of understanding or intolerance "Of difference" whether that is based on appearance or manner or wider issues such as sexuality, race or gender. In this respect this policy is part of Choice Training commitment to Equality and Diversity to ensure students are free from discrimination.

We expect that all students will treat each other and Choice Training staff with courtesy and respect and this is laid out in Expectations of Behaviour. The college also recognises its responsibility to ensure that all students are clear about expectations of behaviour and the consequences for not meeting these standards.

Choice Training also has the responsibility to take positive steps to create and maintain an atmosphere and environment where students can feel safe, welcome and where they have a voice.

2. Aims of the Policy

This policy outlines behaviour that would be considered inappropriate or unacceptable and details the procedures that should be followed when an allegation or suspicion of bullying or harassment is made.

It is the policy of Choice Training that:

- It is the responsibility of all students and staff to create and support a learning environment free from harassment, threat or intimidation

- Bullying or harassment will not be tolerated at college and any reports or allegations will be treated seriously and dealt with according to the procedures
- Students will be actively encouraged to report incidents and so must be supported and protected through the process of making any complaint
- All students, parents/carers and staff will be made aware of this policy and procedures and are that they should be pro-active and vigilant for signs that may indicate bullying or harassment is going on.
- Harassment and bullying are part of the Expectations of Behaviour; breach of these expectations can result in disciplinary action as potentially gross misconduct
- Bullies will be supported to change their attitude and behaviour and to understand why change is necessary and why bullying occurs.
- Staff will be supported with the appropriate training and skills to deal with incidents of bullying.
- There will be in place strategies and preventative measures to minimise or prevent incidents of bullying arising
- Incidents and perceptions of bullying or harassment will be monitored and recorded and the information used in future reviews of policy.

2. Definition of bullying

Bullying often includes the following:

- Power – misuse or abuse of power
- Persistence – repetitive behaviour, not just an “outburst”
- Peers – group behaviour is often different from individual behaviour
- Purpose – to maintain the dominance, bullies bully as it’s a successful

Behaviour

- Perception – some people will find it harder/easier to cope with certain

types of behaviour and there are varying degrees of what people consider to be bullying.

The following are examples of bullying but this is not an exhaustive list.

- Physical abuse such as hitting, punching, kicking, pushing and pinching.
- Verbal abuse such as name calling, teasing, making nasty remarks,

laughing at someone or mocking them.

- Making someone feel uncomfortable or unhappy.
- Overpowering someone or making them feel weak.
- Being attacked in any form due to religion, race, gender, sexuality,

disability or appearance (see harassment)

- Excluding someone from social groups.
- Cyber abuse such as sending inappropriate or abusive text messages

or emails.

- Being forced to do something they don't want to do.
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Staff and students must remember that bullying is a type of behaviour and it is therefore important to separate the behaviour from the individual.

3. Definition of Harassment

Harassment may be defined as conduct that is unwanted by the recipient and which affects the dignity of any individual or group. Harassment may be repetitive or an isolated incident.

Harassment may occur against an individual because of their disability, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or any personal characteristic of the individual.

This can include

- Threats, physical or verbal abuse against a person
- Jokes, mockery, unwarranted remarks, graffiti or innuendo which offends people
- Provocative behaviour such as the wearing of badges, clothing or insignia which may offend
- Display or circulation (including by email or text) of offensive materials
- The use of stereotypes to demean or discriminatory statements

5. Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is the intentional, persistent behaviour by an individual or group, causing harm to others using information and communication technologies. Aspects of cyber bullying are different from other forms of bullying. These include

- Cyber bullying can take place at any time of the day or night
- Cyber bullying is not restricted by locality and intrudes into personal and safe spaces (like home)
- The audience can be extremely large
- The process of cyber bullying can be rapid with audiences being reached almost instantly
- In some instances of cyber bullying, the bully can remain anonymous
- The instances of bullying can be used as evidence as there is lasting documentation

6. Procedures

Students must be encouraged to feel they can confide in members of staff if an incident occurs. They must feel the incident will be taken seriously and that appropriate action will be carried out. Staff and parents should be alert for signs and symptoms of bullying and be prepared to act upon them.

It may not always be appropriate for the procedures to be followed in sequential order, for example a serious incident may go directly to a formal report or disciplinary. The points below provide a guideline on the procedure

for students to follow if they are being bullied or harassed.

First Action

1. If possible ask the person bullying or harassing to stop. Say that the actions or comments are making you feel uncomfortable or unhappy
2. Try to keep a log of incidents with details of who was present, what was said or happened and where.

Reporting

1. Report the bullying and harassment to a member of staff. This can be a tutor, HR, student welfare or any member of staff. Give as much detail as you can of specific incidents.

Investigation

1. A member of staff will conduct an enquiry. This may be a member of curriculum staff or from Student Support. This will involve talking to all concerned including staff and other students who may be witnesses.

There will be a written record of these interviews.

2. Parents of students under 18 will be informed if the incident was explicit and with the consent of the student.

Outcome

Action taken will depend on the nature of the incident, the reactions of those accused and the wishes of the victims. This will range through:

1. a) Talking through the incident and obtaining assurance that repetition will not occur.
2. b) Monitoring the student who has been bullying.
3. c) Formal disciplinary hearing leading to a formal warning
4. d) Suspension
5. e) Permanent exclusion from the course.

It must be recognised that the investigation of bullying or harassment is not a simple process as much will depend on very different interpretations of intent, consequence and the nature of relationships. Also there will often not be a clean outcome which stops any further bullying or harassment. Incidents can continue resurfacing for months. However it is important that any incidents are acknowledged and investigated and that there is seen to be firm and decisive action in order to maintain the confidence and trust of students.

7. Strategies to reduce bullying or harassment

In order to ensure that students can study in an environment free from bullying or harassment, it is the responsibility of Choice Training to ensure that clear strategies are in place both to prevent occurrences of bullying and harassment and also to encourage students to report incidents. These strategies include:

- All students will be made aware at Induction of the student Expectations of Behaviour, their rights and responsibilities and the appropriate college policies (equal opportunities, disciplinary, complaints etc)
- Information on bullying and harassment and how to respond will be included in student and course handbooks

- All lecturers will keep control of potential harassment or bullying of other students through enforcement of clear standards of classroom behaviour

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important that Choice Training understands the extent to which bullying and harassment are taking place and the impact on students. To achieve this

All incidents of bullying, whether reported or suspected must be recorded

Questions on how students feel about their own level of safety and exposure to incidents of bullying and harassment will be included in Questionnaires