

# Anti-bullying Policy



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**Approved by:** Governing board

**Date:** 13 March 2025

**Signed by:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Liz Cooper".

**Position:** Chair of the Governing board

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## Monitoring arrangements

*This policy will be reviewed bi-annually in line with DfE, HSCP, HCC and any other relevant guidance.*

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# 1. The Inclusion Way

The Inclusion Way is based on over ten years' experience and captures our wellbeing and mental health ethos, our pedagogical approach and all aspects that affect a student's education experience.

We know that the Inclusion Way works because:

- Our students are happy
- Our students tell us it works for them
- Our students make emotional and social progress
- Our parents/carers tell us they feel supported by their college in caring for their child

For over ten years we have supported the most vulnerable young people in our community to become mentally healthy, resilient and successful young adults.

In this and all other policies, all of which come together to form The Inclusion Way, you will learn what we do to unlock potential in each student and how we do it.

Before reading this policy, it is important to know our student and the journey they have taken before they start Inclusion College:

- Our students will have a severe and chronic diagnosed mental health need. They will be experiencing, or have experienced, self-harm, suicide ideation, depression and high anxiety. Most of our students will be experiencing more than one of these things at any one time.
- Our students will likely have diagnosed and undiagnosed SEND needs related to speech, language and communication (SLCN), communication and interaction needs (C&I) or a specific learning need (SpLD).
- Our students will have experienced significant gaps in their schooling (in some cases years) at primary and/or secondary level
- Our students will have a history of non-attendance due to high anxiety and mental health needs and been identified as an emotionally based college avoider (EBSA)
- Our students' academic levels will be below age related expectations in Maths and English due to these gaps in education and unmet needs
- Our students will have experienced trauma, whether through an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) or by having been a victim of bullying in previous settings
- Our student is a young person exploring their identity and discovering who they are and who they want to be. They may present as having difficulties with emotional regulation and academic attainment but they are not of the cognitive ability of college age children. They are young adults and want to be treated like one

The Inclusion Way is designed to meet these needs so the student can succeed.

## 2. Aims

The aim of this policy is to outline Inclusion College's zero tolerance approach to bullying, in all its forms, and to give guidance to all staff, students and parents/carers regarding what to look for, what to do and how Inclusion College will investigate and work to eliminate bullying behaviour.

## 3. Definitions

Inclusion College defines bullying as:

*“The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.” – Anti-bullying Alliance*

Bullying behaviour can be:

- **Physical** – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- **Verbal** - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- **Emotional** – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- **Sexual** – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- **Online /cyber** – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- **Indirect** - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

Bullying can be based on any of the following things:

- Race or ethnic identity
- Religion or spiritual belief
- Culture or class
- Gender (sexist bullying)
- Sexual (talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way)
- Sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic bullying)
- Sexual activity (whether real or fictionally constructed)

- Gender identity (bullying of trans or non-binary people)
- A person’s disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty
- A person’s appearance or health
- Pregnancy and maturity
- Related to a person's home or personal circumstances, such as young carers or looked-after children

## 4. Contributing Factors

Students attending Inclusion College are often extremely vulnerable and may be previous victims or perpetrators of bullying. It is important that we are sensitive to students and recognise that because of their vulnerabilities they can be particularly susceptible to being a victim of bullying or being the perpetrator of bullying.

Bullying is deeply damaging, potentially causing psychological damage for the person being bullied and the person conducting the bullying, and its legacy can follow young people into adulthood.

If bullying behaviour leads to concerns that any student may be at risk of harm, the Headteacher & DSL will be informed and Inclusion College’s Child Protection & Safeguarding policy and procedures will be followed.

Nevertheless, all behaviour not in keeping with Inclusion College’s values – outlined in our Behaviour Policy – should be dealt with in accordance with Inclusion College's Behaviour Policy.

## 5. Identifying Signs of Bullying

Inclusion College will enable staff to identify the signs and symptoms of bullying and the damage that it can do to all staff and students through regular safeguarding training.

Staff are trained to recognise behaviour patterns that may indicate a cause for concern. These could include when a student:

- is unwilling to attend lessons or begins to miss lessons/college
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- often feels unwell
- begins to do poorly in lessons or refuses to engage in learning
- changes their usual behaviours/routine
- starts stealing money or other items (in order to pay their bully)

- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other students
- starts stuttering
- 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 & jumpy when a message is received.

It is necessary to treat cases of bullying in a different way to one-off acts of aggressive or victimising behaviour. The latter would include pushing past someone, taking another student's possessions without genuine permission, taunting another student, or shutting a door in someone's face. In these cases staff are expected to intervene with a firm response, indicating that such behaviour is not acceptable or in keeping with the college's values to prevent escalation into future bullying.

Please refer to the subheadings 6.2 Derogatory Language and 6.3 Prejudice-based Incidents for further information about how Inclusion College and its staff should challenge students who exhibit these behaviours on singular occasions or when not personally targeted but used generally towards others.

## **6. Preventing Bullying**

For the issue of bullying to be tackled successfully a college culture needs to be created in which all forms of victimisation are discouraged and where reporting cases of bullying is seen as the normal and right thing to do.

The Inclusion College community will ensure the following to act to prevent bullying:

- Listen and take time to talk to our students who disclose bullying, current or historic, and take what they say seriously and investigate the situation
- Work with staff, parents/carers and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying
- Actively provide 1:1 and small group opportunities to develop our students' social and emotional skills, including their resilience, by using our Wellbeing and Engagement teams and tutors
- Personal Development lessons are used to educate on the appropriate usage of social media and internet usage and the possible consequences of inappropriate use
- Embed curriculum opportunities for addressing bullying, such as Monday meetings and

Student voice meetings.

- Train all staff including support staff, administration and facilities staff to identify bullying and follow college policy and procedures on bullying, including recording and reporting incidents of bullying
- Actively create “safe spaces” for our vulnerable students.
- Use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully and those who have been bullied
- Ensuring that bullying and safeguarding are covered within our new staff induction process
- Outline the college’s values and approach, including bullying, during transition visits to new admissions
- Difference and diversity are celebrated and embedded throughout the curriculum, events such as Anti-bullying week, Pride and Black History Month are promoted organisation-wide
- Stereotypes and examples of ‘banter’ are challenged by staff and students are encouraged to challenge peers when they see these behaviours
- Any examples of racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, bi-phobic, or any other example of discrimination, is recorded by members of staff on our CPOMS system

## **6.1 Bystander Effect**

The role of the bystander (those who witness bullying or acts of unkindness), and their reaction, is of also of importance.

Standing by and observing lends support to the perpetrator whilst giggling, laughing or otherwise appearing to enjoy the spectacle could be understood as complicity. Many perpetrators behave as they do to impress an audience. Bystanders should be encouraged to deny them that opportunity by informing a member of staff or if appropriate, offering support to the victim at the time and then ensuring that the matter is brought to the attention of staff, ideally accompanying the victim.

It is hard to challenge the words and behaviours of peers and friends but it is the aspiration of Inclusion College that its students will feel safe, knowledgeable and empowered to challenge bullying, hate or discrimination where appropriate. Inclusion College staff members role model appropriate behaviour for students to follow and educate on how to sensitively challenge bullying, use of derogatory language and prejudice-based incidents.

## **6.2 Derogatory Language**

Derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. It can often be excused by young people (and adults) as 'banter'. This type of language can take any of the forms of bullying

listed in our definition of bullying. It will be challenged by staff and recorded and monitored and follow up actions and sanctions, if appropriate, will be taken for students and staff found using any such language.

Staff should record all usages on CPOMS.

Inclusion College recognises the vulnerabilities and harm that many of its students have experienced but this does not excuse this language. However, Inclusion College recognises these words as an opportunity to challenge sensitively and firmly and to promote its culture of diversity and celebration of identity to create a positive and welcoming community.

## **6.3 Prejudice-based Incidents**

A prejudice-based incident is a one-off incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views towards a protected characteristic or minority group. It can be targeted towards an individual or group of people and have a significant impact on those targeted. All prejudice-based incidents are taken seriously and recorded and monitored in college, with the head of provision regularly reporting incidents to the governing body. This not only ensures that all incidents are dealt with accordingly but also helps to prevent bullying as it enables targeted anti-bullying interventions.

Like the use of derogatory language, these actions will be challenged and sanctioned appropriately but will also be used as an opportunity to promote understanding of difference to embed long-lasting positive change.

## **7. Bullying Outside of College**

Many cases of bullying, particularly cyber or online bullying, take place outside of Inclusion College's. However, Inclusion College reserves the right to take action against those who take part in these incidents and support the victims where necessary. Bullying acts may also be criminal acts so Inclusion College will be obliged to work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts.



It is for this reason that Inclusion College advises its students to avoid being part of group chats on social media.

If a case of cyber or online bullying is brought to the attention of staff, it will be reported to the safeguarding team who will undertake an initial investigation in line with the anti-bullying investigation procedure outlined within this policy. In addition to the procedure, the safeguarding team will:

- Ask the student to show staff the mobile phone messages
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message, to include
  - the date, time and names
  - make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names
  - A take screenshot of the image using an Inclusion Education device only and ask the student to delete the message.

## **8. Involvement of Students and Parents**

We will engage our students to have a voice in determining the college's anti-bullying approach by:

- Conducting regular surveys on the extent and nature of bullying within the college
- Obtaining the views of Student Voice
- Ensure our students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying
- Ensure our students are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying
- Involve our students in anti-bullying and wider diversity and inclusion campaigns within college
- Participate in National Anti-Bullying Week
- Publicise the details of helplines and websites using various methods, particularly during holiday periods
- Offer support to students who have been bullied and to those who are bullying in order to address any underlying issues they may have

We will engage our parents and carers to have a voice in determining the college's anti-bullying approach by:

- Ensuring that all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying. The first point of call should be your child's key staff member contact or by email to the college safeguarding team ([safeguarding@inclusioncollege.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@inclusioncollege.org.uk))
- Report back to parents/carers regarding their concerns about bullying as quickly as

possible

- Conduct regular surveys with parents/carers about their child's experiences within college
- Provide updates on bullying and wider safeguarding topics in the college's newsletter
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, promoting this by its inclusion on the policy area of the college website
- Ensure all parents/carers know where to access independent advice about face to face and cyber-bullying
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the college that give rise to bullying

We expect parents/carers to:

- Inform the college of any suspected bullying, even if it does not involve their child
- Encourage their child to report bullying to a member of staff using the 4Ws: Who, What, Where and When
- Inform their child(ren) not to retaliate through violence in any situation
- If their child has been accused of bullying, work in partnership with the college and listen to evidence

## **9. Responsibilities and Procedures**

If a report of bullying is disclosed by a student, or their parent/carer, this will trigger an investigation into the allegations of bullying, led by the Headteacher and Safeguarding Team.

The Behaviour and Child Protection & Safeguarding policies will be followed on initiation of the investigation.

If a member of staff of the safeguarding team identifies a repeated pattern of incidents that may indicate bullying, they should explore all the evidence available (including speaking to both parties involved).

If a bullying incident is identified the college's Behaviour and Child Protection & Safeguarding policies will be followed.

## **10. Links with Other Policies**

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy.

# Appendix 1 - LGBTQ+ Glossary

This glossary is designed for staff to be able to sensitively support LGBTQ+ young people and challenge homophobia, biphobia and transphobia where it occurs.

It is important to remember that:

- the terms people use to describe themselves may change over time
- sexual orientation and gender identity are not the same thing
- not everyone thinks of themselves as 'male' or 'female'
- not everyone identifies with the sex that they were assigned at birth

For more information, please read Stonewall's '[\*Toolkit for preventing and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in secondary colleges\*](#)'.

## **Biphobia**

The fear or dislike of someone who identifies as bi based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about bi people. Biphobic bullying may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, bi.

## **Bi, or bisexual**

Bi is an umbrella term used to describe a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender.

Bi people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, bisexual, pan, queer, and some other non-monosexual and non-monoromantic identities.

## **Cisgendered or cis**

Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Non-trans is also used by some people.

## **Coming out**

When a person first tells someone/others about their identity as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans.

## **Deadnaming**

Calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name. This term is often associated with trans people who have changed their name as part of their transition.

**Gay**

Refers to a man who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also, a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality – some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.

**Gender dysphoria**

Used to describe when a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity.

This is also the clinical diagnosis for someone who doesn't feel comfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Gender expression**

How a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender. A person who does not conform to societal expectations of gender may not, however, identify as trans.

**Gender identity**

A person's internal sense of their own gender, whether male, female, or something else (see nonbinary below).

**Gender reassignment**

Is another way of describing a person's transition. To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender. Gender reassignment is a characteristic that is protected in the Equality Act 2010.

**Gender stereotype**

The ways that we expect people to behave in society according to their gender, or what is commonly accepted as 'normal' for someone of that gender.

**Gender variant**

Someone who does not conform to the gender roles and behaviours assigned to them at birth. This is usually used in relation to children or young people.

**Heteronormative**

Denoting or relating to a world view that promotes homosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation.

**Homophobia**

The fear or dislike of someone who identifies as lesbian or gay.

**Homosexual**

This might be considered a more medical term used to describe someone who has an emotional romantic and/or sexual orientation towards someone of the same gender. The term 'gay' is now more generally used.

**Intersex**

A term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary.

Stonewall works with intersex groups to provide its partners and stakeholders information and evidence about areas of disadvantage experienced by intersex people but does not, after discussions with members of the intersex community, include intersex issues as part of its current remit at this stage.

**Lesbian**

Refers to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women.

**Lesbophobia**

The fear or dislike of someone because they are or are perceived to be a lesbian.

**LGBTQ+**

The acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer/questioning. The '+' is used to include all other communities, including such those who are pansexual, agender and gender queer.

**Non-binary**

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

**Orientation**

Orientation is an umbrella term describing a person's attraction to other people. This attraction may be sexual (sexual orientation) and/or romantic (romantic orientation). These terms refers to a person's sense of identity based on their attractions, or lack thereof.

Orientations include, but are not limited to, lesbian, gay, bi, ace and straight.

**Outed**

When a lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans person's sexual orientation or gender identity is disclosed to someone else without their consent.

**Pronoun**

Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation – for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as they / their and ze / zir. Staff should use a young person's chosen pronouns at all times.

**Queer**

Queer is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBT community (racism, sizeism, ableism etc). Although some LGBT people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 80s by the queer community who have embraced it.

**Questioning**

The process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Sex**

Assigned to a person on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are interchanged to mean 'male' or 'female'.

**Sexual orientation**

A person's sexual attraction to other people, or lack thereof. Along with romantic orientation, this forms a person's orientation identity.

**Trans**

An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, genderqueer (GQ), genderfluid, non-binary, gender-variant, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bigender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

**Transgender man**

A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.

**Transgender woman**

A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to female.

**Transitioning**

The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this.

Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.

**Transphobia**

The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including denying their gender identity or refusing to accept it. Transphobia may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, trans.

**Transsexual**

This was used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone who transitioned to live in the 'opposite' gender to the one assigned at birth. This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term trans or transgender.