

Anti-bullying Policy



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Policy Date: April 2025

Review Date: April 2027

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Publication:

Staff area of Intranet



Student and Public area of Intranet



1. Statement of Commitment

Thomas Rotherham College is committed to providing all students with a working environment that is free from all forms of harassment and bullying. It fully supports the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect in line with relevant equality and human rights legislation and will take appropriate steps to achieve this. Harassment, discrimination, bullying and victimisation can lead to fear, stress and anxiety and is unlawful. The College finds any form of such behaviour unacceptable and is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals can operate effectively, confidently and competently.

The College will make all employees, students, contractors, visitors, etc. aware of the policy forbidding harassment and bullying and their responsibility to comply with the policy. If a complaint is brought to the attention of staff, it will be investigated promptly, and appropriate action taken.

2. Definitions of Harassment and Bullying

Harassment

Harassment is defined as any unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It is important to note that harassment is defined by the impact on the person experiencing the unwanted conduct, rather than the intention of the 'perpetrator' of the unwanted conduct.

Harassment could be on the grounds of, but is not restricted to:

- Age
- Disability
- Domestic circumstances
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Race
- Colour
- Religion/belief or religious observance
- Ethnic origin
- Language
- Political affiliation

Examples of harassment include:

- Verbal or written comments of an offensive nature, use of bad language, jokes or gossiping
 - Lewd, suggestive or over-familiar behaviour
 - Displaying or circulating offensive material
 - Insulting or ridiculing a person because of their age, sexuality, race, religion, beliefs, disability, gender or class
 - Isolation or exclusion from social activities
 - Criminal acts such as indecent exposure, physical attack or sexual assault and racism
- This list is intended to act as a guide illustrating unacceptable behaviour and is not exhaustive.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as offensive actions which humiliate, intimidate, undermine or demean the person involved. This includes, but is not limited to using abusive language, continually ignoring or excluding an individual, frightening someone with physical or other threats and continual shouting at or humiliating an individual.

Cyberbullying is an aggressive act using online social media and other electronic forms of contact. This may include calling, sending messages, sharing images/videos via mobile phone, e-mail, chat room or other web-based platforms. (Please see the ICLT Usage Agreement for details).

We may need to access evidence on student devices. Please see Searching and Screening Confiscation Policy for further information.

Examples of bullying include:

- Shouting at an individual to get things done
- Humiliating an individual in front of their peers
- Conduct which is intimidating, physically abusive or threatening
- Victimisation, where a person is repeatedly or consistently treated less favourably than another
- Consistently undermining someone
- Isolation or alienation
- Sending threatening or unwelcome text or group chat messages
- Using e-mail to send bullying or threatening messages
- Silent calls or abusive messages via mobile phone
- Using defamatory blogs or personal websites and online personal polling sites
- Making negative comments about a person's physical appearance/characteristics.
- Trying to involve others in extremist activity.

3. Responsibilities

The College has a responsibility to take active steps to eliminate harassment and bullying in the College and to promote the wellbeing of all its students.

The College has a zero tolerance towards any form of harassment or bullying. All students are required to take responsibility for their behaviour ensuring that the policy is effectively applied, and that harassment/bullying does not occur. Anyone deemed to be responsible for bullying or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with College disciplinary procedures.

Individual students also have a role to play by:

- Helping to create a climate of respect and tolerance which discourages harassment/bullying.
- Making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable
- Supporting other students – this may include challenging the harasser/ bully at the time of the incident, offering support in any other way, including the reporting of such incidents to the Safeguarding Team and co-operating in any investigations
- Ensuring no victimisation occurs.

4. Supportive Framework

The College recognises that making a complaint of harassment/bullying can be a distressing experience and that it may be difficult for a student to raise complaints against fellow students or teachers within the College. Accordingly, students may approach a friend or member of staff to raise the issue with the Safeguarding Team on their behalf.

A student may wish to discuss the issue with a teacher, their Progress Tutor or with a member of the College Safeguarding Team directly. Staff should make a note of the key facts of the disclosure and report this to the Safeguarding Team.

A student who seeks advice is under no obligation to take further action.

It is recognised that in bringing a complaint, the complainant must be protected from further harassment/bullying or detriment arising from the alleged incident and associated complaint. Any student suspected of bullying/harassing another student may, if necessary, be suspended from College until the matter has been investigated.

5. How to Tackle Harassment/Bullying

All students and staff must be alert to the possibility that bullying/harassment can happen. Some students may be vulnerable and/or afraid to complain. Therefore, everyone should be mindful of this and ready to offer support.

It is essential that anyone who perceives that they are subject to harassment/bullying keeps notes of the details as outlined below for each incident. It is recommended that they should include:

- ✓ Date
- ✓ Time
- ✓ Place
- ✓ Name of person allegedly bullying or harassing
- ✓ What actually happened
- ✓ How the person felt at the time
- ✓ Name/s of any witnesses
- ✓ Any correspondence relating to the incident
- ✓ Any electronic communication i.e. phone texts, or emails or social message sites.

6. Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- Every effort should be made to resolve the issue informally in the first instance. As soon after the incident as possible, the individual should make it clear to the offender that the action is not welcome and should stop. If, for whatever reason, the individual feels unable to speak to them this may be done by an independent third person such as a member of teaching staff, Progress Tutor or a member of the Safeguarding Team
- Staff should be informed if the harassment does not stop. No action will be taken without the consent of the complainant unless the incident is considered to be extremely serious or of a child protection nature.
- In agreement with the complainant one of the following courses of action may be followed:
 - a) To take no further action at this stage, but to record any future incidents and to keep the situation under review.
 - b) Informal resolution through a mediation meeting with the Progress Tutor, DSL or Deputy DSL, the complainant and the alleged perpetrator. The mediator is responsible for writing accurate notes of the meeting. These must be signed and uploaded to CPOMS. These notes may form evidence in any future investigations.
 - c) Where allegations of criminal acts such as indecent exposure, physical attack or sexual assault have been made, the complainant should be encouraged to report the matter to the police. The College have a legal responsibility to report any such incidents to the police.
 - d) If informal methods do not resolve the problem, a formal complaint can be made.

7. Stage 2: Formal Complaint.

- Use of the formal element of this procedure (which may invoke the College's Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedure) will be necessary where the informal route proves ineffective, or for more serious instances of harassment/bullying.
- Incidents of harassment/ bullying may be regarded as extreme misconduct and could, therefore, result in a student losing their place at the College.
- The complaint can be made to a member of the Safeguarding Team in writing and signed by the individual. The DSL/DDSL will instigate an investigation into the matter.
- The person against whom the complaint has been made must be informed of the nature of the complaint, given details of the procedure involved and allowed to put forward their version of events in a signed, written statement.
- Both parties should be given the opportunity to nominate witnesses whom they wish to be interviewed. They will have the right to be accompanied by a parent/carer.
- In certain cases, for example physical or sexual assault and/or to prevent victimisation, it may be necessary to suspend the alleged harasser/bully whilst the investigation is taking place. Suspension must be authorised by the Head of College, or, in his absence, an Assistant Principal.

8. Findings

- The DSL/DDSL will meet with both parties to inform them of the outcome of the investigation. They will have the right to be accompanied by a parent/carer.
- Where it is felt that there is not enough evidence to substantiate the allegation both parties will be informed that the matter will not proceed further.
- Where the investigation does substantiate the allegation one or more of the following actions may be invoked:
 1. Mediation between the two parties concerned to find a way of resolving the issue; and/or
 2. The student disciplinary procedure to be invoked
 3. Recommendation to the Head of College that the perpetrator is asked to leave College.
 4. **Where criminal acts such as indecent exposure, physical attack or sexual assault are involved the College has a legal responsibility to report such incidents to the police.**

9. Appeal

Should the complainant or the perpetrator not be satisfied with the findings, an appeal should be submitted within 5 working days of the meeting. This appeal should be in writing to the Head of College giving the reason(s) for dissatisfaction.

10. Malicious Complaints

Should an investigation determine that a complaint has been submitted with malicious intent the matter will be referred for consideration under the appropriate disciplinary procedure.

Policy Review	Every 2 years
Policy to be approved by	ELT to Safeguarding
Date of Review	17 April 2025
Approved by ELT and TRC LGB	
Next Review	April 2027
Lead Professional	Assistant Principal TRC
Communication	Via HR System to all TRC staff and Every