



# Prevention of Harassment and Bullying Policy

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Approving Directors		J. Booth, D. Pheasey, B. Swallow	
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## **Introduction**

Beltane College is committed to providing holistic education and wellbeing, of the highest quality and this policy is underpinned by the college culture and values.

**Confidence**– We are enthusiastic, we act authentically and with purpose

**Fairness** – Showing care through our interactions and tackling inequalities

**Integrity** – We are honest, trustworthy and dependable; we do what we say we will do

**Teamwork** – We achieve more together and remain mindful of everyone’s wellbeing.

## **Policy intent and scope**

This policy is designed to ensure a safe, welcoming and inclusive working and learning environments for all members of the Beltane College community. At Beltane all staff are equally valued and respected. Bullying or harassment of any kind is never acceptable, and no individual is expected to tolerate such behaviour.

- This policy intends to promote a positive environment in which people are treated fairly and with respect.
- Ensure all members of the Beltane community play an active part in creating an environment free from bullying and harassment.
- Provide a framework of support for staff and students who feel they have been subject to or have witnessed bullying or harassment.
- Signpost to Beltane College complaints procedure so that any concerns or complaints are dealt with fairly and in a timely way.

This policy applies to allegation of bullying and harassment against members of the college’s community, including students, staff, volunteers and third parties.

All staff and students have the right to complain if they feel that they are being, or have been, subjected to or have witnessed unacceptable behaviour that could constitute bullying or harassment in the course of their work or study at Beltane College.

## **Responsibilities and Communication**

Beltane College is committed to preventing and responding to incidents of bullying or harassment. This will take place through educational and preventative training programmes, and via the effective implementation and operation of this policy and associated processes.

All members of the college community are expected to behave in a way that fosters a safe and inclusive working and learning environment, where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Staff and students are expected to contribute to preventing

unacceptable behaviours, including harassment and bullying of any kind through self-awareness; through an understanding of complex learning conditions, modelling positive behaviour for others, and raising any concerns about harmful behaviours.

All staff and volunteers have a duty to implement this policy fairly and to make every effort to ensure that bullying and harassment do not occur in the area of work for which they are responsible and that if they do occur, any concerns are investigated promptly within the context of a student EHC plan, and recorded and reported appropriately on college central systems.

Students may encounter contextualised material or views they find objectionable. Respectful discussions within a learning context that generally fall under freedom of speech and are unlikely to breach policy. If students exceed these boundaries, teachers and managers should instigate timely remedial discussions, with agreed actions recorded.

## **Our Procedure**

Allegations of unacceptable behaviour, whether by staff, students, volunteers, third party partners or a member of the public should always be taken seriously and considered within the context of any learning or support need detailed on an individual EHC plan. Actions should be taken to stop any inappropriate behaviour identified as quickly as possible, and consideration should be given to support and remedial action or escalation to the formal complaint procedure, always reported on the college central system.

A person affected by alleged bullying or harassment may wish to explore informal resolution in the first instance. This could include speaking directly to the person responsible for the unwanted behaviour, if the person affected prefers this approach and feels it is safe to do so, or requesting mediation.

Members of staff can seek advice on informally resolving issues of bullying and harassment from either their line manager or a college Director.

Students can seek advice on informally resolving issues of bullying and harassment from any member of the teaching and support team.

Where there are several reports (informal or formal) concerning unacceptable behaviours in the same area, the college Directors should be informed. They may take steps, through formal investigation to understand the behaviours, support needs and culture surrounding the concerns to target appropriate support and interventions.

## **Formal Complaints**

All formal complaints should be made in writing and should set out full details of the conduct in question, including references to specific details such as dates, times, and potential witnesses where possible. Student may ask for the help of a trusted adult in drafting their written complaint, however the detail must be in the student's own words and without due influence or embellishment.

A nominated college leader will investigate a report of bullying and harassment fairly and impartially under the relevant procedure. This will include providing both the reporting party and the reported party the opportunity to present their accounts and any supporting evidence and in context of any individual learning need. Throughout any investigation, the nominated lead will consider whether any interim measures are required to protect the wellbeing of all parties.

Confidentiality is important in dealing with alleged allegations. The reporting party, the reported party and the nominated lead managing the process should only divulge information on a 'need-to-know' basis to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individuals involved. Notes are to be recorded confidentially using the college central reporting system.

Where an allegation indicates a crime has been committed or relates to an ongoing police investigation all matters will be referred to the police. The nominated lead will consider whether any interim measures are required to protect the wellbeing of all parties.

Students who feel they have experienced or witnessed bullying, or harassment may make a report via the college REPORT and SUPPORT email or directly to college staff.

Staff who feel they have experienced or witnessed bullying, or harassment may make a formal complaint using the Staff grievance policy.

Staff may make a formal complaint against a student, a third-party member or a member of the public, by contacting their line manager or the college Directors. Where a complaint implicates one or more Directors, the complaint should be directed to any of the other Directors.

## **Outcome of a formal complaint**

After the investigation of a complaint concludes and actions are taken, the reporting party will be informed if their complaint was upheld by the investigating officer and given an overview of any actions taken. The college must balance the need to provide information to a reporting party related to the outcome of their complaint, with the need to maintain confidentiality to staff and students under GDPR UK. The reporting party is asked to respect confidentiality with regards to the outcome.

Beltane College is committed to providing support for members of its community affected by bullying and harassment, including investigating members. Line managers,

alongside the college Directors can signpost managers and members of staff to appropriate sources of support.

## Definitions

**Abuse of power** is where someone uses their position of power or authority in an unacceptable manner. Abuse of power can take various forms and may include, but is not limited to, grooming, manipulation, coercion, putting pressure on others to engage in conduct they do not feel comfortable with.

**Bullying** may include overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision or inappropriate derogatory remarks. Legitimate and constructive feedback related to academic or work-related performance is unlikely to amount to bullying.

**Discrimination.** The Equality Act prohibits less favourable treatment which is linked to one of the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic origin, nationality and colour), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

**Grooming** includes when a person of power or authority builds a relationship with someone so they can abuse them and/or manipulate them into doing things they may not be comfortable with and may also make it less likely that the abusive behaviour is reported or rejected.

**Harassment** includes unwanted behaviour or conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment because of, or connected to, one or more of the protected characteristics. According to the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 it is defined as a course of conduct conducted on at least two occasions that harasses one other person, or a course of conduct that harasses two or more persons at least once each. References to harassing a person include alarming the person or causing the person distress.

**Sexual harassment** occurs when someone is subjected to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or which is related to sex which has the purpose or effect of either violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A person can be sexually harassed by someone of the same or different sex.

**Stalking** can include physically following a person, watching or spying on them or forcing unwanted contact with them through any means, including social media.

**Victimisation** is when someone is treated less favourably because of being involved with a discrimination or harassment complaint.