



Harmful and Abusive Behaviours (Anti-Bullying) Policy

Aims and Objectives

At Colfe's, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop their full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Colfe's prides itself on respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/ guardians have an important role in supporting Colfe's in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together.

This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on request. It is also communicated to all staff and pupils.

Harmful and abusive behaviour (including bullying), harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to respect the staff, the school and each other, in return. All forms of harmful and abusive behaviour are unacceptable at our school and any instances will be recorded and, where appropriate, will result in disciplinary action.

This policy applies to all pupils in the school, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage/Nursery. This policy is compliant with the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2025.

Definition of harmful and abusive behaviours

Harmful and abusive behaviour, including bullying, can be defined as "behaviour by an individual or group, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally".
(Guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Department for Education)

Put another way, it is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including any threat of or use of violence of any kind), sexual, verbal (including via email, social media and SMS or other instant messages), and emotional (including by excluding, being sarcastic, name-calling, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours) means. It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at another child. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Harmful and abusive behaviour may involve actions or comments that would be classed as prejudice-based bullying because of a protected characteristic; i.e. sexual or sexist, homophobic, racist, which focus on religion or cultural or family background, special educational needs, disabilities or physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). It may also be unpleasant in other ways.

Harmful and abusive behaviour can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

Arrangements for dealing with child-on-child allegations

Child on child abuse is abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. It can manifest itself in many ways and can include sending nudes/semi-nudes, sexual violence or harassment, initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals and gender-based issues. Abusive comments and interactions should **never** be passed off or dismissed as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

The school recognises that children can be particularly vulnerable in residential settings and are alert to the potential for child-on-child abuse. See Educational Visits Policy.

The school takes the following steps to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse:

- effective implementation of the school’s usual safeguarding and harmful and abusive behaviours (anti-bullying) policies (and recognition that sexualised abuse, including verbal abuse, by peers is a potential safeguarding issue);
- seeking advice from statutory agencies, as appropriate, and readiness to make a referral if an incident meets the referral threshold set by the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership
- if a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, an immediate referral to children’s social care and/or the police;

See our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and Child on Child Abuse policy for more details.

Definition of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be defined as "the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others"(Belsey, <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>). It is an aggressive, intentional act carried out repeatedly over time, often against a person who cannot easily defend themselves.

Cyber-bullying could involve communications by various electronic media, including for example:

- Texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones;
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear or humiliation;
- Posting threatening, abusive, offensive or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or YouTube);
- Using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner; or
- Hijacking/ cloning e-mail accounts.

Cyberbullying – preventative measures

For the prevention of cyber-bullying, in addition to the measures described above, Colfe's:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its policy for the safe use of the internet/ E-Safety Policy. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use;
- May impose disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet;
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address. Access to all social media sites and personal email sites such as "hotmail" is not allowed from school computers/ tablets inside school;
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHEE, Project Evolve (Junior) and Eudaimonia (Senior) lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friend" lists and sharing personal data;
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe;
- Does not allow the use of mobile phones in classrooms (unless at the specific request of a teacher), public areas of the school, or where they may cause annoyance to others; and
- Does not allow the use of cameras/ mobile phone cameras in toilets, washing and changing areas.

The School's response to harmful and abusive behaviours

At Colfe's we always treat harmful and abusive behaviour very seriously. It conflicts with the school's social and moral principles, and potentially with its policy on equal opportunities, and will not be tolerated.

Harmful and abusive behaviour, including bullying, can be so serious that it causes physical, emotional and psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and to violent and threatening behaviour. No one deserves to suffer such behaviour: everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who encounter harmful and abusive behaviour will be supported. Pupils who have engaged in such behaviour will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions and will, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving.

Harmful and abusive behaviour which occurs on school trips or outside of the school's premises will not be tolerated any more than if it happened on school premises. Teachers will, where appropriate, discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside school premises and outside school hours.

Signs of harmful and abusive behaviour (including bullying)

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school;
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- Failure to produce work, or producing uncharacteristically poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others;
- Books, bags, money and other belongings suddenly go "missing", or are damaged;
- Change to established habits (e.g., giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary);
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches;
- Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class;
- Choosing the company of adults rather than peers;
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- Difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares; or
- Talking of suicide or running away from home or school.

Although there may be other causes of some of the above symptoms, a repetition or combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers and reported/recorded as appropriate (see below).

Harmful and abusive behaviours (including bullying) preventative measures

We take the following preventative measures in order to ensure that harmful and abusive behaviour does not become a problem which is associated with Colfe's:

Pupils

- All new pupils are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter harmful and abusive behaviour. We guarantee that those who report harmful and abusive behaviour in good faith will not be punished and will be supported;
- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on harmful and abusive behaviour. Our PSHEE, Project Evolve and Eudaimonia programmes are structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. 'Speak Out Stay Safe', an annual themed week in the Junior School, equips pupils with the tools they need to identify and counter harmful and abusive behaviour. In the Senior School the Eudaimonia programme is structured to enforce messages about community involvement and taking care of each other;

- Other lessons, particularly RP, English and Drama highlight the issue of harmful and abusive behaviour and reinforce this message by developing social skills and by teaching moral and spiritual values that show harmful and abusive behaviour, including bullying, to be unacceptable;
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know or suspect that harmful and abusive behaviour is taking place;
- All pupils have access to a school counsellor that they can talk to privately;
counsellor@colfes.com
- Senior School Heads of House/Year operate a peer counselling scheme, whereby older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils;
- Our Medical Centre displays advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and websites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, Kidscape, Get Connected, and the Samaritans;
- We provide leadership training to our School Captains and their team of prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.

Staff

- Upon induction, all new members of staff are given guidance on the school's Harmful and Abusive Behaviour policy at Colfe's. All school staff understand the principles of the school policy, their legal responsibilities, actions to be taken to resolve and prevent problems and sources of further support;
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are recorded by Pastoral Leaders in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored;
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors, Heads of Year and House, and Phase Leaders who support the Director of Pastoral Care, Assistant Director of Pastoral Care and Deputy Head of the Junior School. They are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of harmful and abusive behaviour including bullying;
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with pupils;
- Our trained School Counsellor is an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. Where there are social, emotional or behavioural concerns, the Counsellor is available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves for support in the Senior School and be referred by staff in the Junior School;
- There are always staff on duty at times when pupils are not in class and they patrol the school site, paying particular attention to areas where harmful and abusive behaviour might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour;
- The school has the right, and duty, to investigate incidents of harmful and abusive behaviour involving our pupils which take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips, or that otherwise occur outside of school. The school has the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such acts if appropriate.

Parents

- We encourage close contact between the Form Tutor, Head of House/Year and parents/guardians, and will always make contact if we are worried about a pupil's well-being; and
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and all other aspects and results of this harmful and abusive behaviour (anti-bullying) policy.

Procedures for dealing with reported bullying

Colfe's ensures that all instances of or concerns about harmful and abusive behaviour, bullying and cyberbullying on and away from school premises are easy to report and that they are recorded properly. Records of instances of harmful and abusive behaviour and such allegations will be kept on pupil files and files relating to safeguarding where appropriate, in order to enable the school to identify patterns of behaviour and to evaluate the effectiveness of our harmful and abusive behaviour (anti-bullying) policy.

If an incident of harmful and abusive behaviour is reported, the following procedures will be adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved;
- They will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible;
- Those involved, will immediately be interviewed individually (or, if appropriate, with a suitable person present for support) and asked to write an account of events;
- The incident should be recorded, preferably on a school incident form, and signed and dated before it is given to the Director or Assistant Director of Pastoral Care who are responsible for keeping all records of such behaviour and other serious disciplinary offences. If it is not practicable to use the form, the incident must still be written down, signed and dated, and held securely the Director or Assistant Director of Pastoral Care:
- The Director or Assistant Director of Pastoral Care will inform the tutors, Heads of House/Year of those involved as soon as possible. In very serious incidents, the Deputy Head and Headmaster should be informed;
- In most cases, the child will be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team separately from the other child. They will be offered support to develop a strategy to help themselves. It will be made clear to them why revenge or retaliation is inappropriate;
- It will be made clear to the child who allegedly carried out this behaviour, why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered guidance on modifying their behaviour. The school's Behaviour Management and Child on Child Abuse Policies may also be invoked. Sanctions under the Behaviour Management Policy might include, for example, detention or suspension from school. The school may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe or persistent harmful and abusive behaviour or in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.
- The parents/ guardians of all parties will be informed and may be invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support will be sought;
- A way forward, including where appropriate disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be determined, and where possible agreed with all parties. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for pupils who are being harmed and for pupils who harm others, as well as dealing with disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's Behaviour Management Policy if appropriate;
- As part of this process, a meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, may be convened to help develop a strategy which enables all concerned to close the episode such as restorative work with pupils involved;
- Records are kept of all incidents;
- In very serious cases, and only after the Headmaster has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to Social Services. However, in many cases it will be possible to resolve such issues internally under this policy and the school's Behaviour Management and Child on Child Abuse Policies.

Nursery/EYFS children

From the start of Nursery, the youngest children at Colfe's are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They are taught to look after their own possessions and to respect those of others. Our Core Values underpin the guidance we give each child on their journey of personal development and our PSHE programme of study supports this. We expect the children to be honest, helpful and polite, to work hard and to listen to others. We also encourage them to respect everyone and learn to value difference and diversity. The Head of the Junior School and Deputy Head/Head of EYFS, oversee the management of behaviour in the EYFS Department.

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others.

We rarely need to impose sanctions in the EYFS and follow the Junior School Behaviour Policy in delivering a 'Time to Talk', 'Time to Think' or 'Time Out' to a child when hurtful behaviour is demonstrated. When a sanction is given it will always go hand in hand with a class teacher helping the child to reflect on the consequences of their actions and the impact it has had on the other child/ren; at the same time a plan for future positive outcomes will be drawn up with the child and, depending on the sanction given, parents will be informed by the class teacher or a member of SMT .

Occasionally, a child may be sent to see a member of SMT at the Junior School for a 'Time Out', who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action. Parents are informed in person, by email or phone when a sanction or reproof is needed, and these are recorded on SIMS. Following any repetition of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, parents will be invited into school to discuss the situation with both their child's teacher and Deputy Head/Head of EYFS to agree a joint way forward for handling the difficulty.

Copies of our Behaviour Management Policy for Junior children, including those in EYFS, can be found on the school website.

Senior and Junior School specific procedures

Junior School

Head of Junior School will:

- be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems
- ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help all pupils involved.

- ensure that any incidents of harmful and abusive behaviour are discussed at staff meetings so that all staff are kept informed of the situation. (If more practicable staff are emailed the situation prior to discussion at a later staff meeting)
- arrange relevant staff training
- determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems
- keep the DSL updated on any issues

Class Teachers will:

- be responsible for liaising with the Head over all incidents involving pupils in their class
- be involved in any agreed strategy to achieve a solution
- while on duty, patrol all areas of the school, keeping a watchful eye on pupils, particularly individuals and groups that have been identified as involved with harmful and abusive behaviour.
- first point of contact with parents

Procedures for dealing with Incidents

- Any reported incidents will be investigated and dealt with immediately.
- Incidents are recorded in the Behaviours Log by the Deputy Head and recorded on Sims by staff.
- It is vital that everything that happens is recorded in a clear factual way.
- Every effort should be made to resolve the problem through mediation and counselling of both parties.
- If a child has suffered some kind of harmful and abusive behaviour then, after consultation with the Head, the Deputy Head informs the child's parents and contacts the parents of the child carrying out the harmful and abusive behaviour.
- Care is taken to keep all parents informed throughout the investigation.
- When the allegations involve harmful and abusive behaviour by a teacher, the procedure laid down in 'safeguarding policy' should be followed.

Sanctions

Sanctions will vary depending on the seriousness of the incident. Examples of sanctions are verbal warnings with discussion about the incident, detentions, informing the parents (see behaviour management policy). Suspension or exclusion may be necessary in cases of more serious and persistent harmful and abusive behaviour.

Senior School

The Director and Assistant Director of Pastoral Care will:

- be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems
- ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help all pupils involved.
- keep the Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead informed of incidents.
- arrange relevant staff training to raise awareness, so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known (that we should aim to resolve and prevent problems) and sources of support are available, perhaps through specific staff training on issues.
- determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems

Heads of House/Year and the Sixth Form Management team (Pastoral Leaders) will:

- be responsible for ensuring that the school's positive strategies are put into practice
- know the school's procedure and deal with any incidents that are reported

Form Tutors will:

- be responsible for liaising with Pastoral Leaders over all incidents involving pupils in their form
- be involved in any agreed strategy to achieve a solution
- take part in the harmful and abusive behaviour (anti-bullying) programme in the PSHEE course as appropriate

Procedures for Dealing with Incidents

- If harmful and abusive behaviour is suspected or reported the incident will be reported to the relevant form tutor and the Pastoral Leaders. It will be investigated and dealt with initially and immediately by the teacher approached in consultation with the relevant pastoral leader. If a racial element to the harmful and abusive behaviour, including bullying, is suspected the Director or Assistant Director of Pastoral Care must be informed immediately.
- The form tutor will record the details of the incident and inform the relevant Pastoral Leader who will interview all the relevant parties and make a record, including adding the relevant names to the harmful and abusive behaviour issues register.
- It is vital that everything that happens is carefully recorded in a clear factual way.
- Every effort should be made to resolve the problem through mediation and counselling of both parties.
- The Pastoral Leader and Form Tutor will determine, in consultation with the Director or Assistant Director of Pastoral Care, the appropriate strategy to combat the harmful and abusive behaviour.
- Both parties will have the option of meeting with a peer mentor. Where appropriate the child who carried out the harmful or abusive behaviours may be required to meet with a peer mentor on a specified number of occasions.
- In the first instance, it is important to make it clear to the child that revenge is not appropriate and to the other child, that their behaviour is unacceptable and has caused distress.
- Parents will be kept informed by the Pastoral Leader, Director or Assistant Director of Pastoral Care.
- Where judged necessary, staff teaching the children will be informed.
- Any sanctions/consequences against the child (ren) will be determined by the relevant Pastoral Leader in consultation with the Director or Assistant Director of Pastoral Care.
- When the allegations involve harmful and abusive behaviour by a teacher, the procedure laid down in 'Child Protection Procedures' should be followed.

Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our Complaints Procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that any concerns about harmful and abusive behaviour, including bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled (The Complaints Procedure explains how to complain to Ofsted).

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