

**Céim Eile, Templemore College of Further Education (TCFE)**

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

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| Policy Area | Schools |
| Document Reference number | See Attached |
| Version | To be inserted by HO |
| Document Drafted by | **Céim Eile, TCFE** |
| Date Adopted by TETB | To be inserted by HO |
| Reviewed/Amendment  |  Summer 2017 |
| Date Review/Amendment Adopted | To be inserted by HO |

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|  Anti-**Bullying Policy** |  |
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This policy reinforces the commitment of Templemore College of Further Education to the principle that all students have the right to attend college and learn in an environment free from incidents of harassment/bullying. This policy is in addition to the Code of Conduct already adopted by the Board of Management of the College.

The ETBs were established under and governed according to the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. Each ETB is a statutory body with its own corporate status.

**Introduction**

The objectives of this policy are:

To define bullying in the College.

To promote awareness of the issue among staff and students.

To provide an effective procedure for dealing with allegations of bullying.

**Anti-Bullying Statement**

At Templemore College of Further Education we strive to create the best environment for learning and for psycho-social growth and development of each student. As a caring community, we hold that all cruel and abusive behaviour, which is persistent and pervasive, is unacceptable and repugnant to the ethos of our College. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, may cause psychological harm and damages the educational process.

**Legal Background**

Bullying and Harassment is unlawful under the Health Safety and Welfare at Work Act 1989 and 2005. In addition, the Employment Equality defines the grounds under which claims of harassment can be taken: these are Sex, Marital, Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Disability, Age, Race and Membership of the Traveller Community.

**Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all students in the College irrespective of their status – full time or part-time.

**Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and on-going it is bullying.

Bullying in the College undermines student performance by resulting in poor morale, higher absenteeism, reduced productivity and can seriously harm learning and working conditions for students. It also undermines the confidence and dignity of the individual affected by it.

**Types of Bullying**

Physical aggression.

Damage to property.

Extortion.

Intimidation.

Verbal abuse.

Abusive telephone calls, text messages or e-mails.

Isolation.

Name calling.

Slagging.

Public humiliation.

Bullying of school personnel.

Cyber bullying.

Photo or video (being taken) without prior permission.

There are other behaviours which may be less obvious but are nonetheless subtle and manipulative and can gradually undermine the victims’ dignity and self-respect. While it may be difficult to articulate a complaint because it may involve a series of small seemingly innocuous incidents, this also constitutes bullying behaviour.

**What Bullying or Harassment is not**

The following behaviours do not constitute bullying;

Constructive and fair criticism of a student’s conduct or work.

**Tutor Behaviour**

A tutor may, unwittingly or otherwise, engage in, instigate or reinforce bullying behaviour in a number of ways:

Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning form of language when addressing a student; making negative comments about a student’s appearance or background.

Humiliating directly or indirectly, a student who is particularly academically weak or outstanding, or vulnerable in other ways.

Using any gesture or expression of a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any form of degrading physical contact or exercise.

**Responsibility**

Management will respond to complaints of harassment or bullying and will deal with all complaints in an expeditious and supportive manner. This policy aims to inform students of their rights and responsibilities. If someone experiences unwanted offensive treatment, and makes a complaint through the complaints procedure s/he will be protected from any victimisation resulting from the complaint. It is also the responsibility of all students and staff to make themselves familiar with this policy and procedures and to treat their colleagues with respect and dignity.

Breach of this policy on bullying and harassment can be grounds for disciplinary action from a verbal warning up to and including exclusion from the College for serious offences of intimidation and bullying.

***Procedure for dealing with allegations of Bullying***

The following procedure has been devised to deal specifically with allegations of bullying.

**Informal**

Any student who feels that they are being targeted or subjected to offensive, harassing or bullying behaviour should first try to make it clear to the alleged bully that their behaviour is unwanted. A victim of harassment or bullying should keep a record of such a request and document the alleged harasser’s response. If an alleged victim feels unable to confront the person or feels the incident(s) is of a serious nature they should approach a tutor, Course Coordinator/Deputy Principal/Principal.

The tutor should record the reported incident. The incident should then be reported to the Course Coordinator who will be in a position to decide on a course of action.

If a tutor is suspicious that a student is subject to bullying behaviour they are requested to record this and report it to the Course Coordinator who will be in a position to verify if other staff members also have concerns relating to the same individual. This will then lead to a formal investigation if deemed necessary.

**Formal**

When an alleged victim has been unsuccessful at resolving a complaint informally with the alleged harasser or their tutor/Course Coordinator/Deputy Principal/Principal, a formal complaint should be made in writing to the Principal/Chairperson of the Board of Management of the College.

Once a formal complaint has been received an investigation will be undertaken which will include separate interviews with both the complainant and alleged harasser and anyone identified as a witness to the behaviour.

An investigation committee will be established consisting of 2 senior college personnel.

All parties will be given an opportunity to state their case and are entitled to be represented at the interview in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Every effort will be made to safeguard confidentiality during the investigation.

The investigating committee will submit their finding to the Principal/Board of Management.

The complainant and the alleged bully will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.

**Post Investigation**

All incidents are recorded on a Bullying Incident Form. Such forms should be treated as confidential information and should be stored in a secure place and made available only to appropriate persons.

The offending students are informed that the incidents are being recorded. An official warning not to re-offend should be given.

In severe cases the Board of Management will become directly involved and the offending student may be suspended for an appropriate period of time. In extreme cases the student may be excluded from the College.

It would be counterproductive to humiliate or set out to make an example of an offender.

**Support for the Subject of Bullying Behaviour**

The subject’s self-esteem/self-confidence may have suffered. He/she may still be fearful of becoming involved in similar situations. He/she may be hurt, angry and confused. The subject will be offered regular and consistent support by the school Counsellor or staff member whom the student trusts.

**Help for the offender**

It would be counterproductive to humiliate or set out to make an example of an offender.

Interventions will be offered to the perpetrator to enable him/her to make necessary attitudinal and behavioural changes. It would be useful to find out why s/he is involved in such behaviour. However, the first step is to get the offender to realise that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and is causing distress.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

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| Submitted to Staff: |  |
| Submitted to Board of Management: |  |
| Submitted to ETB Board: |  |