Student Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Procedure

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Approval:	TCG Board of the Corporation
Version Date:	September 2019
Approved Date:	September 2019
Next Review:	September 2024

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1.   Purpose

Trafford College Group (TCG) is committed to our students' right to learn in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and bullying. This procedure is in accordance with the principles and responsibilities set out in the Group's Safeguarding Policy.   The TCG's Safeguarding Policy can be viewed on the website.

The Education Act 2010 requires colleges to comply with the public sector equality duty. This Procedure takes those requirements into account.

Bullying and harassment is totally unacceptable. TCG will challenge bullying and harassment in all their forms and take quick clear and decisive action to protect students.

TCG is committed to creating an environment which supports employees and students to report and challenge bullying and harassment and which encourages positive intervention to prevent the occurrence of bullying and harassment.

2.   Scope

This Procedure is intended to address issues arising between students. Other accusations of bullying are dealt with as follows:

- Employees accused of bullying students are referred through the Complaints Procedure.

- Employees accused of bullying employees are referred through the Staff Bullying and Harassment Procedure.

- Students accused of bullying employees are referred through the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

This Procedure applies when students are on College premises; on College transport; or on College related activities off site. TCG will also take action where behaviour can be linked to College; could bring the Trafford College Group in to disrepute and / or could endanger employees and students.

Other related TCG Policies and Procedures are as follows:

- Student Behaviour Policy
- Student Learner Improvement Procedure (LIP)
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Equality and Diversity Policy

3.   Roles and Responsibilities

Governors:

The TCG Governing Body is responsible for ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place to provide an environment that respects all individuals and where any concerns/ complaints with respect to bullying and harassment are dealt with effectively and where students feel safe in reporting such concerns.

Leaders and Managers:

- The Assistant Principal: Student Experience and Support is responsible for reviewing, updating and implementing the procedure.

- The Head of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring anti-bullying and equality training is delivered to staff.

- Assistant Principals, Directors, Heads of Studies and relevant Middle Managers have a responsibility to investigate allegations thoroughly and to seek to resolve conflict.

- Pastoral and support colleagues have responsibility to support students through any investigation into an allegation of bullying and / or harassment.

All Employees:

- Being familiar with the Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Procedure and aware of the requirement to report bullying and harassment.

- Taking action in line with this procedure should they witness acts of bullying or harassment; or are approached in confidence by students being bullied or harassed; or by students who have witnessed such actions.

- Treating all students with dignity and respect, ensuring their own conduct does not cause offence or misunderstanding; and challenging behaviour or the use of language which could cause offence.

- Role modelling behaviours which promote mutual respect and tolerance in line with the Trafford College Group's values

All Students:

- Following the Student Code of Conduct.

- Being aware of the Anti-Bullying and Anti-harassment Procedure.

- Reporting incidents of bullying and harassment.

Parents / Carers:

Trafford College Group expects parents and carers to contact the Group if they know or suspect their child is being bullied or is bullying others. This should be reported to the relevant Course Tutor, Pastoral Support Mentor of Head of Department / Middle Manager.

4. Definition of Bullying

Although there is no legal definition of bullying TCG interprets bullying as a deliberately hurtful behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time and where those being bullied may have less power than the bully. Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Bullying can take many forms, can cause stress and have an emotional impact.

Bullying can be:

- Direct – physical, verbal, non-verbal.
- Indirect – cyber-bullying, e-bullying, texting.

Bullying often relates to differences, real or perceived. Specific areas of bullying can include appearance, ability, health, family/home circumstances and social class.

5. Definition of Harassment

Under the Equality Act 2010 harassment is the "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual" The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

6. Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is an invasion of privacy at all times and may also involve criminal acts with the misuse of telecommunications to cause alarm or distress. Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group, or an individual, using electronic forms of contact repeatedly, over time, against a victim (who cannot easily defend him/herself). Example of cyber-bullying include the posting of threatening, abusive, defamatory, or humiliating material.

7. Prevention

The Trafford College Group is committed to establishing a culture of tolerance and positive engagement so that bullying and harassment are prevented. The Group aims to promote a common understanding of:

- What constitutes bullying and harassment

- The measures the Group takes to prevent bullying and harassment

- The intervention and support available when bullying and harassment are reported.

The involvement of students in prevention is essential. In managing its anti-bullying and anti-harassment strategies, TCG will engage with students through student representative forums and the pastoral support structure.

8. Peer on Peer (child on child) Abuse

All employees staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer-on-peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying)

- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm

- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault

- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse

- Up skirting, typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm

- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)

- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

9.   Intervention

All reports of bullying and harassment will be taken seriously and addressed as quickly as possible. The priority is to support those being bullied or harassed. TCG determines the nature and extent of the bullying/harassment and takes actions appropriate to the circumstance.

In summary, once a report of bullying/harassment is received, the appropriate employee will meet with the individual/(s) being bullied/harassed to discuss the circumstances and severity of the bullying/harassment and how TCG intends to proceed. It may be appropriate to involve parents / carers at this stage.

The relevant Head of Studies must be notified to ensure an appropriate level of action has been taken. When TCG believes that bullying/harassment has occurred, it will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the disciplinary/suspension processes. The disciplinary process takes into account the needs of vulnerable students including those responsible for bullying.

Anonymity cannot always be guaranteed as TCG has a duty to act to protect and safeguard students, but every effort will be made to deal sensitively with the issues and, wherever possible maintain anonymity. A safeguarding referral form will be completed by the member of staff who receives the initial bullying complaint. This referral form will be sent to the safeguarding mailbox (safeguarding@tcg.ac.uk) or the online form completed available from the safeguarding Hub accessible from the staff intranet homepage.

This safeguarding referral will be logged onto CPOMS and categorised as bullying for monitoring purposes linking all students involved in the allegation. The safeguarding team will assign the referral to the Pastoral Support Mentor/House Monitor and any other relevant members of staff to investigate the allegation and take appropriate actions. Any recorded evidence such as witness statements or screenshots must be uploaded to the CPOMS record by the pastoral team. A record must be submitted even in those circumstances where it is decided formal action is not appropriate. The submitted log will remain "active" until which point that the log can be closed following appropriate actions being completed. The Head of Studies for the departmental area will lead on the investigation alongside other relevant Heads of Study. The Pastoral and Safeguarding teams will support the investigation and ensure that CPOMS records are accurate. The safeguarding team carry out "case cleanses" throughout the academic year to ensure that "active" cases are being followed up appropriately and closed.

If the person making the allegation is dissatisfied about with how it has been dealt with, they have the right to appeal through the TCG Complaints Procedure.

10.   Anti-Bullying Help Lines and Organisation Web Sites

Help Lines:
Childline Phone: 0800 1111

NSCPCC Phone: 0808 800 5000

Family Links Phone: 0808 800 2222

Organisations / Web Sites:
Anti-Bullying Alliance www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) www.nspcc.org.uk

ChildLine www.childline.org.uk

Kidscape www.kidscape.org.uk

Family Lives www.familylives.org.uk

Restorative Approaches www.transformingconflict.org

Stonewall www.stonewall.org.uk

The Diana Award www.diana-award.org.uk

Internet Matters www.internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying

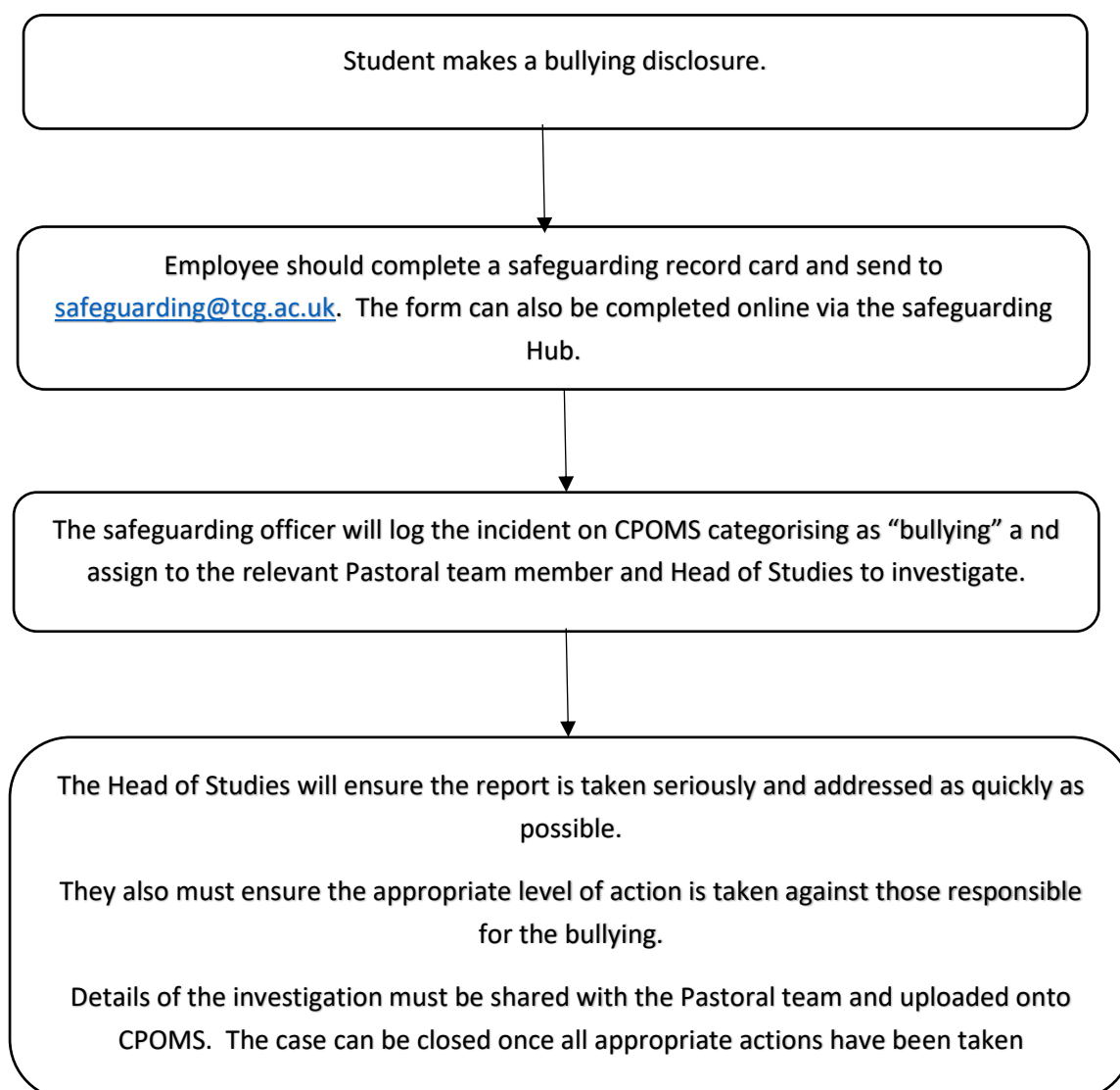The UK Safer Internet Centre www.saferinternet.org.uk

UK Council for Child Internet safety www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis

11.   Monitoring and Evaluation

The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Procedure is reviewed annually by the Leadership Team.

Data concerning incidents of bullying/harassment is presented to the Leadership Team on a quarterly basis and Safeguarding Committee on a termly basis for monitoring purposes.

Dealing with a Disclosure of a Bullying Incident

Student makes a bullying disclosure.

Employee should complete a safeguarding record card and send to safeguarding@tcg.ac.uk. The form can also be completed online via the safeguarding Hub.

The safeguarding officer will log the incident on CPOMS categorising as "bullying" a nd assign to the relevant Pastoral team member and Head of Studies to investigate.

The Head of Studies will ensure the report is taken seriously and addressed as quickly as possible.

They also must ensure the appropriate level of action is taken against those responsible for the bullying.

Details of the investigation must be shared with the Pastoral team and uploaded onto CPOMS. The case can be closed once all appropriate actions have been taken

12.   Preventing Bullying

Trafford College Group aims to prevent bullying before it happens. Listed below are examples of the strategies which we use:

• Full time students learn about respect and bullying, citizenship, equality, diversity and social justice in group tutorials. Within this framework and also throughout the curriculum there are opportunities to develop skills such as teamwork, empathy, resilience.

• TCG identifies students who are vulnerable and / or at risk of disengagement or underachievement through the Learner Improvement Procedure (LIP). These students are monitored closely so early interventions can be put in place to prevent issues from escalating.

• Students are encouraged to self-disclose sexual orientation, religion or belief so staff are aware of the potential for bullying. Staff will then watch out for any issues developing which could provoke a conflict.

• TCG works closely with external support agencies, such as Childline, NSPCC and Kooth.com and themix.org.uk

• All pastoral support colleagues receive the extended safeguarding training which covers in depth aspects such as cyber-bullying.

• Anti-Bullying Week, Equality and Diversity Month and Stay Safe Month are an established part of the TCG calendar.

• TCG works closely with local community police to gather intelligence of situations or incidents outside of college which may have a potential for conflict between students in College.

• Pastoral support colleagues use 'Mediation' and/or 'Restorative Justice' to resolve conflict and to build good relationships between students.

• Support colleagues work with specific vulnerable groups to develop resilience, communication skills and coping strategies.

• Expectations are made clear to students at induction and students sign the Student Charter Agreement.

• The 'Positive Engagement Process' encourages high standards of behaviour and serious breaches of the Charter are dealt with swiftly through the Disciplinary Process so students understand there are serious consequences for misconduct.

• TCG works in partnership with the Student Equalities Council and Student Representatives to seek advice and support; to help students share their voice and experience.

13.   Signs of Bullying

Bullying involves an imbalance of power; the person on the receiving end feels like they can't defend themselves. When students are bullied their lives are made miserable, they may suffer injury and will certainly lose confidence and self-esteem. In extreme cases they may even contemplate suicide. A student's change of behaviour or appearance may be an indicator that they are being bullied.

Attendance: A student may become frightened of walking to College, unwilling to use public transport, there may be increased absence, changes to their usual routine, improbable excuses given for absence.

Changes in character: Being bullied can cause a student to become withdrawn, anxious, aggressive, disruptive, unreasonable, nervous, and jumpy when a cyber-message has been received. They may start bullying siblings, stop using the internet or mobile phone, cry for no apparent reason or become tearful, lose things, ask for more money than usual and steal.

Changes in appearance: Young people often change their appearance. However sometimes this is a sign of being bullied especially if the student seems to be covering up cuts or bruises. Sometimes there is rapid weight loss, or weight gain, or the person stops eating. More obvious signs are torn clothes.

Often bullying goes unreported as victims may feel they are either somehow to blame or that the repercussions will make matters worse. It is important therefore for all employees, students and parents/ carers to work together to ensure students feel able to report bullying and to be supported when they do so.