

Regent's Park College

Harassment & Bullying Policy



Introduction

1. This policy applies to all members of the College, including all employees, workers, students, fellows, volunteers and all contractors and visitors to the college. The policy covers harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying and victimisation.
2. The College is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity, and maintains a working, learning, and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all members of the College community are respected. The College expects all members of the College community, its visitors, and contractors to treat each other with courtesy and consideration.
3. The College does not tolerate any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation by its members or by third parties. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. The law also requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their workers¹.
4. The aims of the College as reflected in this Policy are to:
 - a. promote a positive environment in which people are treated fairly and with respect;
 - b. make it clear that harassment, bullying and victimisation are unacceptable, recognising that those behaviours may cause harm, physically or emotionally, and that all members of the College have an active role to play in creating an environment free from harassment, bullying or victimisation;
 - c. provide a framework of support for staff and students who feel they have been subject to harassment, bullying or victimisation, and
 - d. provide a mechanism by which complaints can wherever possible be addressed appropriately and in a timely way.
5. Those in positions of authority, such as senior Officers of the College, managers, and members of the Governing Body, have formal responsibilities under this Policy and are expected to familiarise themselves with the Policy on appointment. All managers have a duty to implement this Policy and to take reasonable steps to ensure that harassment, bullying and victimisation do not occur in the areas of work for which they are responsible; and that if they do occur, any concerns are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately under this Policy and the relevant Procedures.

Definitions

6. **Harassment** is defined as unwanted conduct meeting one or more of the following criteria:
 - a. a **course of conduct** 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; in this context, harassment includes causing a person alarm or distress where this is not a reasonable course of conduct in the particular circumstances.²

¹ Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act

² Summarised from Protection from Harassment Act 1997 section 8(1), (3) & (4).

- b. unwanted conduct of a **sexual nature** that has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment,³ or;
 - c. unwanted conduct of a **sexual nature** or related to **gender reassignment** or **sex** that has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment and because of the alleged victim’s **rejection of or submission** to the conduct the alleged perpetrator **treats the alleged victim less favourably** than they would have done had the alleged victim not have rejected or submitted to the conduct⁴;
 - d. unwanted conduct relating to a **protected characteristic** (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy; maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation), that has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.⁵ This definition applies whether the person possesses the characteristic, is perceived to have it, or is associated with someone who does.
7. **Bullying** may be characterised as unwanted behaviour that is either: offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting, or an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone.
 8. When deciding whether harassment or bullying has occurred the intentions of the alleged perpetrator and the perception of the alleged victim, including the extent to which that perception is in all the circumstances reasonable, will be taken into account.
 9. **Harassment** and **bullying** can be either face to face or through other forms of communication, including but not limited to written communications and communications via any form of digital media. It can be verbal and/or physical. It can be direct to the person concerned or to a third party.
 10. This policy covers employee behaviours which occurs in the following situations:
 - a. A work situation
 - b. a situation occurring outside of the normal workplace or working hours which is related to work e.g. working lunch or social event with colleagues;
 - c. outside of a work situation but against a colleague or other person connected to the College, including on social media;
 - d. incidents occurring outside of work—including against non-colleagues—if they are relevant to an employee's suitability for their role.
 11. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or otherwise intoxicated, is not an excuse for harassment or bullying.
 12. **Victimisation** in a College context means subjecting someone to detrimental treatment because they have done, or you believe that they have done or may do, one of the following:
 - a. made an allegation of harassment, bullying or discrimination;
 - b. indicated an intention to make such an allegation;
 - c. assisted or supported another person in bringing forward such an allegation;
 - d. participated in an investigation of a complaint;
 - e. participated in any disciplinary hearing arising from an investigation, or;

³ Summarised from Equality Act 2010 section 26(2).

⁴ Summarised from Equality Act 2010 section 26 (3)

⁵ Summarised from Equality Act 2010 section 26(1).

- f. taken any other steps in connection with this Policy.⁶
13. Freedom of speech and academic freedom are central tenets of College life as set out in our [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#). Exposure to any of the following is unlikely to amount to harassment:
- a) the content of higher education course materials, including but not limited to books, videos, sound recordings, pictures;
 - b) statements made and views expressed by a person as part of teaching, research or discussions about any subject matter which is connected with the content of a higher education course;
 - c) vigorous academic debate when conducted respectfully and without violating the dignity of others or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

However, in some cases otherwise-lawful speech can amount to harassment if the time, place, and/or manner of its expression interferes disproportionately with the rights of others.

Reasonable management/criticism of work or the commencement of internal college procedures are not within themselves a form of bullying or harassment.

14. Harassment and bullying can take a variety of forms. **Appendix A** sets out a non-exhaustive list of examples of such behaviours.

Support

15. Members of the College community who feel that they have been subjected to harassment, bullying or victimisation or have witnessed such behaviour or who are the subject of an allegation of such behaviour can find welfare support and/or support and advice on the options available to them from a variety of different sources. **Appendix B** sets out a list of resources and the various sources of support available.

Application of this Policy

Reporting:

16. **Harassment, bullying and victimisation** are serious forms of **misconduct**. Members of the College community who consider that they have been subject to harassment, bullying or victimisation or have witnessed such behaviour are encouraged to make a **report**. For reports relating to the behaviour of:

a student of the College –report to the **Dean**;

a member of College Staff – report to the **HR Manager/Manager**;

a College Fellow – report to the **Principal**;

a guest of a student of the College - report to the **Dean** in the first instance;

a third party – report to the **Director of Operations**;

an alumnus – report to the **Principal**.

If possible, the report should include:

- a) the name of the harasser;
- b) the nature of the alleged harassment;
- c) the dates and times when the alleged harassment occurred;
- d) the names of any witnesses; and

⁶ Summarised from Equality Act 2010 section 27, translated into actions that might arise in a College context.

e) any action already taken to stop the alleged harassment.

No one bringing a complaint will be victimised for having done so.

University Procedures:

17. Incidents of harassment that occur within a University context will normally be dealt with under University procedures and policy. This includes alleged harassment by students of a college other than Regent's Park, in which case a report can be made to the Proctors. Advice and support on how to make a report to the Proctors can be provided by the College Harassment Advisors. For matters relating to a member of University staff who is not linked to the College please consult the University [Harassment Policy/Procedure](#).

College Procedures:

18. Where the responsible officer or manager judges a report to raise sufficient grounds for investigation, the College will investigate and if necessary take action. This will take place under the **appropriate College Procedure**. For reports relating to the behaviour of:
 - a student of the College – [Student Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedure](#);
 - a member of College Staff – **Employee Disciplinary Procedure** in the Employee Handbook;
 - a College Fellow - **Employee Disciplinary Procedure** in the Employee Handbook;
 - a third party – the underlying principles of the employee disciplinary process will be followed when addressing third party misconduct.
19. Wherever possible, the College will be guided by the wishes of those who have been subjected to alleged harassment in determining whether or not to begin formal procedures and in general will only usually investigate if they have received a report. However the College reserves the right to investigate and where necessary take action in the absence of a report from the person who has been subjected to alleged harassment or where they do not wish any action to be taken in certain circumstances (for example, where the alleged behaviour indicates a risk to others in the College community).
20. Any employee found to have engaged in harassment, sexual harassment, or victimisation—whether directed at College members or third parties—will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination. When deciding on the level of disciplinary sanction to be applied we will take into consideration aggravating factors such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague.

Informal Resolution:

Where appropriate and where the alleged victim wishes, reports of harassment, bullying or victimisation may be resolved informally without recourse to formal investigation or other procedures. Advice may be sought from the College Harassment Advisors. Members of staff may choose to raise concerns during their regular communication with their manager who will listen and take any concerns seriously.

Precautionary Measures:

21. Where necessary, the College may also implement precautionary measures to ensure the safety of those involved or others on the College site. These may include (but are not limited to) precautionary measures under the [Safeguarding Code of Practice](#), or suspension or action short of suspension under the Employee Disciplinary Procedure as set out in the Employee Handbook.
22. To remedy a complaint about third party sexual harassment, the College will immediately investigate, take steps to protect and support the victim and take action against the perpetrator (e.g. banning, terminating contracts, issuing a warning, reporting criminal acts to the police).

Complaints:

23. A member of the College community who is dissatisfied with the College's actions regarding a report of alleged harassment, bullying or victimisation may make a complaint under the [Student Complaints Procedure](#) (unless the complaint is more appropriately dealt with through another college procedure) if the person who is dissatisfied is a student of the College; or raise a grievance under the [Grievance Policy and Procedure](#) (unless the complaint is more appropriately dealt with through another college procedure) if the person who is dissatisfied is a member of College staff.
24. No action will be taken against someone making a report of harassment, bullying or victimisation which proves to be unfounded if the report is judged to have been made in good faith. However, if someone is deemed to have known or to have reasonably been expected to know that a report was unfounded, the allegation of harassment, bullying or victimisation may be judged to be vexatious or malicious, and disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the relevant procedure.

Confidentiality:

25. All parties involved in a matter (including any witnesses who may be interviewed as part of any investigation, or other members of the College community supporting any of the parties) should maintain the confidentiality of the process. Where possible, those involved in advising complainants should seek the consent of the individual for the onward disclosure of relevant information to those with a clear need to know. Where such consent is not forthcoming, the person entrusted with the information should make it clear that, in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to disclose the information.

Preventative Actions

26. The College will provide training to all staff and students on sexual harassment to ensure there is a clear understanding of, amongst other things, what sexual harassment is and how it may occur, that it will not be tolerated, expected levels of behaviour, how they can report any incidents of having been sexually harassed or having witnessed it and that acts of harassment will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure potentially resulting in dismissal.
27. All levels of management will be trained on implementing this policy including preventing and managing sexual harassment and the procedure to follow if an allegation is reported.
28. The College will carry out risk assessments to identify potential risk factors for sexual harassment and take prompt, reasonable action to minimise those risks.
 - a. The College will provide clear communication to third parties that sexual harassment of its staff and students is not acceptable. This will include signage in relevant areas of college and wording in supplier documentation. To prevent sexual harassment from occurring, we will attach signage to the walls of areas within the workplace where third parties are present to warn that sexual harassment of our staff is not acceptable;
 - b. inform third-party suppliers of our zero-tolerance sexual harassment policy within our supplier documentation.

Responsibilities

29. The Governing Body has overall responsibility for this Policy and for ensuring that the College takes all reasonable steps to promote and maintain an environment where neither harassment, bullying or victimisation is tolerated.
30. Responsibility for the operation and application of this Policy is delegated to the Dean in respect of the conduct of student members; to the Principal in respect of the conduct of Fellows of the College; and to the HR Manager in respect of the conduct of employees of the College.
31. The College's Risk and Regulatory Compliance Committee, reporting into the Governing Body, is responsible for:

- a. overseeing the actions in respect of this Policy of those to whom responsibility under this Policy has been delegated, and;
 - b. receiving assurance and reporting on the application and effectiveness of this Policy for onward reporting to Governing Body.
32. All members and employees of the College are responsible for familiarising themselves with and adhering to this Policy.

This Policy will be subject to regular review by the Risk and Regulatory Compliance Committee reporting into Governing Body.

APPENDIX A

This Appendix provides examples of behaviour which are not likely to amount to harassment and bullying as well as examples that *may* amount to harassment or bullying under this policy.

The following are key points to note:

- **The examples of behaviour provided are illustrative only and this list is non-exhaustive.**
- **Those referring to this list should refer specifically to the policy in the first instance when considering if a matter falls within this policy. The policy sets out the those who the policy applies to, the different means by which the behaviour can take place and other factors that will be taken into account such as the intention of the alleged perpetrator and the perception (and the reasonableness of that perception) of the alleged victim.**
- **Help, support and guidance can be sought from a variety of sources to assist in determining if a matter falls within the Policy (see Appendix B) for further information.**

Examples of behaviour that would *not* amount to harassment or bullying:

The following are unlikely to fall within this policy:

- Receiving constructive and reasonable criticism from your line manager.
- Reasonable criticism by a tutor (or another student in a tutorial context) of a student's work.
- The commencement of an internal college procedure e.g. student or staff disciplinary.

Examples of behaviour that *may* amount to harassment:

Repeated behaviour:

- Repeatedly making unwanted calls, messages, or emails.
- Sending a threatening message to more than one person.
- Repeatedly sending someone threats of violence or harm.
- Following or watching someone repeatedly, in person or online.
- Repeatedly sending graphic content, such as violent or hateful images, to someone.

Related to protected characteristics:

- Jokes or derogatory comments about someone's disability.

- Verbal and physical threats, or intimidating behaviour linked, for example, to gender reassignment, sex or sexual orientation.
- Sending memes mocking another person's religion to that person.
- Repeatedly questioning an individual's qualifications or right to be on a course or in a position at work based on aspects of their background, such as their gender, ethnic or racial identity.
- Consistently excluding someone from group work due to perceived religious, cultural, or gender differences.

Sexual:

- Standing unnecessarily close to someone or staring at them in a way that feels uncomfortable or intimidating.
- Sending unwanted sexual messages that are humiliating, disrespectful or aggressive.
- Displaying or sharing pornographic or sexual images, or other sexual content.
- Making repeated sexual comments about someone's body or appearance.
- Unwanted physical contact, for example, placing a hand on someone's thigh, lower back, or shoulder.
- Note that sexual interaction that is invited, mutual or consensual is not sexual harassment because it is not unwanted. However, sexual conduct that has been welcomed in the past can become unwanted.

Less favourable treatment:

- Less favourable treatment could include, for example, being excluded, criticised or ignored e.g: excluding someone from normal work or study related conversations after they have previously rejected an unwanted sexual advance.

Examples of behaviour that *may* amount to bullying:

- Constantly putting someone down and giving them unfair criticism in a work or study setting.
- Excluding someone from events or study groups.
- Putting humiliating, offensive or threatening comments or photos on social media.
- Mocking someone because of their socio-economic background.

APPENDIX B

The following provides examples of sources of support and advice available to members of the College community. Support and advice are available to:

- Those who feel they have been subjected to harassment, bullying or victimisation;
- Those who have witnessed harassment, bullying or victimisation;
- Those who are the subject of an allegation of harassment, bullying or victimisation

Support is available to:

- Provide support and advice on the options available;
- Provide welfare support.

Advice & Support for Students:

If you feel you have experienced harassment, bullying or victimisation there are a number of people who are available to help and assist you by clarifying the options open to you assisting you throughout the resolution of your concerns, whether formally or informally:

College Tutors, College Welfare Advisors, Harassment Advisors and Dean

- For someone who can listen to concerns, signpost formal or informal routes to resolution and signpost to welfare support contact:
 - Head of Welfare and Welfare Lead: welfare@regents.ox.ac.uk
 - Harassment advisors: names and contact details can be found under "College Welfare information" on this web page: [Student Welfare |](#)
- For welfare support as well as referrals to the University or external sources of welfare advice and support contact:
 - Head of Welfare and Welfare Lead: welfare@regents.ox.ac.uk
- For advice on how to make a formal complaint under the College's Procedure or under the University Procedure (if the person complained about is from another college) contact:
 - Head of Welfare and Welfare Lead: welfare@regents.ox.ac.uk

Peer Support

In addition to the above there are options for informal discussion with the following:

- [Peer Support](#)
Link to the University Website providing information on how peer support at Oxford works and how you can contact and find different peer supports be that college, departmental, divisional as well as coffee ambassadors, peers of colour, rainbow peers, peers of faith and disability diversity peers.
The names of College Peer Supporters can be found on the Welfare Notice Board outside Helywys Hall.
- [Oxford SU Student Advice Service](#)
Advice and information service exclusively available to Oxford Students.

University Harassment Advisors Network

- [Harassment Advisor Network | Equality and Diversity Unit](#)

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Oxford University Counselling Service

- [Oxford University Counselling Service](#)

University Sexual Harassment Advice & Support Service

- [Oxford University Sexual Harassment & Violence Support Service](#)
A safe space to be heard, with advisors offering free support and advice to any current student impacted by sexual harassment or violence.
- [The University ISVA Service](#)
Independent of a student's college or department. Can support as an advocate if reporting sexual violence to their college, the Proctors Office or police. Information on the criminal justice process as well as support.
- [Supporting Students at Oxford: Preventing and Responding to Harassment and Sexual Misconduct | University of Oxford](#)
Single source of information for students on preventing and responding to harassment and sexual misconduct

External Resources

- [Further Support | University of Oxford](#)
A number of organisations locally and nationally providing specialist support to individuals affected by sexual harassment.

Advice & Support for Staff:

Non-Academic Staff who feel they have been harassed, bullied or victimised can raise this/seek advice from:

- Line Manager
- HR Manager (human.resources@regents.ox.ac.uk, 01865 288158)
- Principal (via principals.assistant@regents.ox.ac.uk) (if conflict in reporting to above)

Academic Staff who feel they have been harassed, bullied or victimised can raise this/seek advice from:

- Senior Tutor (Charles.read@regents.ox.ac.uk, 01865 288221)
- HR Manager (human.resources@regents.ox.ac.uk, 01865 288158)
- Principal (via principals.assistant@regents.ox.ac.uk) (if conflict in reporting to above)

University Harassment Advisors Network

- [Harassment Advisor Network | Equality and Diversity Unit](#)
A network for staff who feel they have been harassed or bullied. Use this to locate your local advisor.

External Resources

- [Further Support | University of Oxford](#)
A number of organisations locally and nationally providing specialist support to individuals affected by sexual harassment.
- [Responsible Bystander | Equality and Diversity Unit](#)
Information and training on bystander intervention and how to support others safely. No formal steps are needed to speak with someone.

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Accused of harassment/bullying/victimisation:

The above resources are all available as well for those accused of harassment, bullying or victimisation. See also:

[University Reported Student Support](#)

A confidential specialist support service for students who are subject to an allegation of harassment or sexual misconduct.

NOTE: if both the reporter and the subject of a report both seek welfare support and advice the welfare team/human resource lead will make sure that an advisor is available for both people and that confidentiality is preserved.