

**ANTI-BULLYING,
HARASSMENT &
SEXUAL
MISCONDUCT
POLICY**

Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy

Policy/Procedure Owner: Board

Date Approved: 3 July 2025

Next Review: July 2028

Responsibility for Review: Support for Learners Group

Policy Review Frequency: 3 years

Applicable to staff: Yes

Applicable to students: Yes

Publish on College website: Yes

Consultation:

Undertaken with:	Yes/No:	Date:
Board/Committee	Board Q & S	3 July 2025 19 June 2025
ELT		
CMT		
Unions		
Students		
Employees		
Employers/Stakeholders		

Any Associated Documentation, for Reference:

Student e-handbook. Positive Behaviour Framework, Behaviour Charter, Staff Behaviour Code, Fitness to Practice

ELT SIGN-OFF: Marie Haworth, Vice Principal Quality, Teaching, Learning & Learner Support

1. Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 Preston College is committed to fostering a learning and working environment that is safe, respectful, and inclusive for all students, staff, and visitors. This policy supports our compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and the Office for Students (OfS) Condition of Registration E6: Harassment and Sexual Misconduct. We uphold a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct, including online and digital behaviours.
- 1.2 All individuals at the College have the right to be treated with dignity and to learn and work in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or intimidation, regardless of their age, race, sex, gender identity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity status, or personal circumstances.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all members of the College community, including students, staff, visitors, contractors, and partners. It covers behaviour on and off campus, including online activity, where such behaviour impacts another member of the College or brings the institution into disrepute.
- 1.4 In the event that it does occur, students are encouraged to voice their grievance so that incidents can be dealt with promptly according to the procedures set out in this policy. Students will be fully supported when any bullying or harassment is reported.
- 1.5 Students who are being bullied or are aware of another student being bullied should follow the procedures set out in this policy. Staff who are made aware of student(s) being bullied or harassed for any reason should also follow the College procedure. This Policy also applies to students who bully and harass members of staff.
- 1.6 The Anti-bullying, Harassment Policy and Sexual Misconduct Policy is directly linked to the Positive Behaviour Framework and the College Behaviour Charter to ensure a robust response to any incident of bullying or harassment.
- 1.7 Preston College may apply the Anti-bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy where a student's behaviour outside of College impacts negatively on members of the College community or brings the College's reputation into disrepute. This will include any incident on public transport or online.
- 1.8 Preston College also operates a zero-tolerance approach to any Hate Crime or incident and will deal with any occurrence as an example of Serious Wrongdoing in line with the Positive Behaviour Framework. We will also report the matter to the relevant authorities, as appropriate.

2. Definitions of Bullying and Harassment

2.1 Harassment

- 2.1.1 Under the Office for Students definition harassment is:

- A course of unwanted conduct which causes a person to feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated, or offended. This includes harassment based on protected characteristics and sexual harassment, which involves unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.
- This can be in person, written or online

2.2 Bullying

Bullying is described as offensive, malicious, insulting or intimidating behaviour. Bullying is often an abuse or misuse of power intended to undermine, humiliate, belittle or injure the recipient. College

2.3 Hate Crime/Incident

2.3.1 A Hate Crime is defined as “Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; or religion or perceived religion; or sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation or transgender identity or perceived transgender identity.”

2.3.2 Examples of hate crimes include – physical assault; verbal abuse; criminal damage; harassment and online abuse.

2.3.3 A Hate Incident is “Any non-criminal act which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice” based on the protected characteristics of race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender.

2.4 Sexual Misconduct (Sexual violence or sexual harassment)

2.4.1 Sexual violence is rape, sexual assault, assault by penetration, child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, image-based abuse, grooming or sexual harassment.

2.4.2 Sexual harassment is “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, and the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating another person’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them”.

2.4.3 Harmful sexual behaviour is problematic, abusive and violent behaviour that is developmentally inappropriate and may cause distress or developmental damage.

3. Examples of forms of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

3.1 Harassment (including sexual) and bullying can take many forms. Examples of unacceptable behaviour can include:

- Offensive songs, remarks, jokes, emails, gestures or noises, including remarks of a sexual nature
- Display of offensive or sexual images, publications and graffiti
- Unwanted touching or physical contact or advances for example, deliberately brushing up against someone or touching them inappropriately
- Offensive or sexual remarks about a person’s appearance or clothing

- Offensive remarks about a person's sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs, marital status or age
- Sending sexually explicit messages or images
- Asking intrusive questions about someone's sex life
- Shouting abuse or intimidating language
- Spreading rumours, allegations or gossip
- Excluding or ignoring an individual
- Intrusion by pestering, spying or stalking
- Punching, kicking or the use of any other form of violence
- Taking videos and pictures of an individual without consent
- Cyber-bullying; defined as the sending or posting of harmful, cruel or offensive text or images by email, internet, social networking websites or any other form of digital communication.

3.2 The actions listed above must be viewed in terms of the distress they cause the individual. It is the perceptions of the recipient that determines whether any action or statement can be viewed as bullying.

4. Definition of Cyber Bullying

4.1 Cyber bullying is "bullying which takes place using communication technology, such as social media, text messages, apps, chats, emails and other forms of communication". It is typically – repeated behaviour; intended to hurt, humiliate or intimidate; and carried out via digital platforms like phones, computers or tablets.

5. Types of cyberbullying

- 5.1 Harassment - This is the act of sending repeated, offensive messages to a person to intimidate or upset them. This includes sending threatening texts or emails.
- 5.2 Denigration – This is the spreading of false or harmful information about someone to damage their reputation. This includes posting lies or edited images online.
- 5.3 Flaming – This is when someone is purposely using really extreme and offensive language and getting into online arguments and fights. They do this to cause reactions and enjoy the fact it causes someone to get distressed. This includes heated comment threads on social media.
- 5.4 Impersonation – This is when someone will hack into someone's email or social networking account and use the person's online identity to send or post vicious or embarrassing material to/about others. This includes the creation of fake profiles to post inappropriate content.
- 5.5 Outing and Trickery – This is when someone may share someone's private or embarrassing information or images without their consent. This includes tricking someone into revealing secrets and forwarding to others or posting screenshots of private messages.
- 5.6 Cyber Stalking – This is the act of using digital means to stalk or repeatedly harass someone, sending messages that include threats of harm, harassment, intimidation, or

engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for his or her safety. The actions may be illegal too depending on what they are doing.

- 5.7 Exclusion – This is when others intentionally leave someone out of a group such as group messages, online apps, gaming sites and other online engagement, and mock them for it.

6. Intimate Personal Relationships

To preserve professional boundaries and prevent conflicts of interest or abuse of power, intimate personal relationships between staff and students are strongly discouraged. Where such relationships exist or develop, they must be declared to the Vice Principal (Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support) for appropriate safeguards to be implemented. Failure to disclose such relationships may result in disciplinary action.

7. Training and Support

All staff will receive mandatory training on preventing and responding to harassment, bullying, and sexual misconduct. Students will be provided with guidance on respectful conduct and reporting processes. The College ensures access to appropriate support for all parties involved, including pastoral support, academic adjustments, and counselling services.

8. Procedures for Students

- 8.1 During induction you will be required to agree and sign a learner agreement. This will confirm your agreement to the College's commitment to a zero-tolerance response to any incidents of bullying or harassment. Failure to comply with this learner agreement will result in behaviour sanctions.
- 8.2 If you feel you are being bullied or harassed, tell a Student Manager, Lecturer, Curriculum Leader, a member of Student Services or any other member of staff.
- 8.3 The member of staff will refer you to the appropriate Director of School who will take a written statement from you. The College has a Positive Behaviour Framework which may be used against the alleged bully/abuser.
- 8.4 If action is to be taken against the alleged bully, they will be interviewed separately.
- 8.5 Where appropriate the College will create a plan with the alleged victim to highlight increased ways to stay and feel safe at College, this may include access to additional resources and support.
- 8.6 If you are under 18 or a vulnerable adult, the College may inform your parents/carers of what has happened in line with your agreed contact. Where appropriate and for safeguarding purposes the College may contact parents and carers without consent and only in the best interest of safeguarding the student.
- 8.7 Confidential counselling sessions are available through Student Services if you would like additional support to help you manage the incident.

- 8.8 If the bullying is happening online, the College can support you to block the person and report them to the appropriate authority, i.e the online platform or the police.
- 8.9 Staff should refer to the Staff Behaviour Code for guidance on professional boundaries, reporting responsibilities, and disciplinary procedures.”

9. Reporting, Investigation and Outcomes

- 9.1 All community members are encouraged to report incidents of harassment or misconduct. Reports may be made to Student Services, line managers, safeguarding officers, or through anonymous reporting routes (e.g. via the College’s online reporting tool, available on the College App). All reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly, following principles of natural justice.
- 9.2 Investigations will be impartial and confidential, with both complainants and respondents kept informed. Appropriate action, including disciplinary measures, will be taken where misconduct is found. Outcomes and support measures will be communicated clearly to those affected, including any ongoing risk management.

10. Monitoring & Evaluation

- 10.1 All incidents of bullying will be recorded centrally by Student Managers. The effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy will be monitored by the Support for Learners Team on behalf of the Executive Leadership Team on a regular basis, recommending changes where necessary.
- 10.2 Data from monitoring and feedback will be reviewed annually and used to update the policy if necessary.
- 10.3 This policy is reviewed every 3 years or sooner if legislative or regulatory changes occur. Historical versions of this policy will be maintained and available upon request. Any updates will be communicated to students and staff, and included in training materials and student handbooks.