

Anti Bullying & Anti Harassment Policy

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Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction..... 3
- 2 Purpose..... 3
- 3 Scope..... 3
- 4 Aims..... 3
- 5 Statement..... 4
- 6 Procedures..... 4
- 7 Responsibilities..... 6

1 Introduction

Oxford Business College recognises that bullying and harassment can seriously damage working and social conditions for students. This policy and its procedures represent a significant commitment to achieving a positive environment where personal dignity and integrity is respected and bullying, and harassment are understood by all as not to be tolerated.

2 Purpose

The purpose of the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy is to foster a positive, inclusive, and respectful learning and working environments for all members of the university community, including students, faculty, and staff. The policy seeks to prevent and address any form of bullying, harassment, or victimisation, ensuring that everyone at Oxford is treated with dignity and respect.

This policy demonstrates the commitment to promoting a culture of mutual respect, integrity, and empathy, where individuals can study, work, and interact without fear of being subjected to bullying or harassment. The policy outlines the expectations and responsibilities of all community members in maintaining a safe and supportive atmosphere, and provides clear guidance on recognising, reporting, and resolving incidents of bullying and harassment.

3 Scope

This policy is relevant with regards to all incidents of bullying and harassment that involves any member staff, any student or other stakeholders visiting or representing the College.

4 Aims

- 4.1 The College is committed to valuing diversity and will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying. Harassment is unlawful in many cases and individuals may be legally held liable for their actions. The College is committed to removing all types of discrimination including those based on:
 - 4.1.1 Gender (including transgender)
 - 4.1.2 Ethnicity
 - 4.1.3 Disability or Learning Difficulty
 - 4.1.4 Sexual Orientation
 - 4.1.5 Age
 - 4.1.6 Religion or Beliefs

- 4.1.7 Cultural Background
- 4.1.8 Marital Status or Family Circumstances
- 4.1.9 Trade Union Membership or Activity
- 4.1.10 Other Relevant Difference

It is the right of every staff member and student to work or study without fear of harassment, victimisation or bullying. The College recognises the problems associated with harassment/bullying and is committed to providing an environment where all individuals can function effectively, confidently and competently. Any complaint that is raised will be investigated promptly and appropriate action will be taken.

5 Statement

Every student, staff member and residential agreement holder has the right to be safe from bullying and discrimination. All of the above are responsible for creating a learning, social and living environment free from bullying, threat, harassment and intimidation. This policy will be supported by the Academic Misconduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and The Student Code of conduct. Any person alleging harassment will be provided with help and support throughout the process and will be protected from victimisation.

6 Procedures

All complaints of bullying or harassment will be addressed speedily and, if possible in the first instance, by following an Informal Procedure. This is likely to produce solutions that are effective and minimise embarrassment and risk to confidentiality. However, there may be occasions when the Informal Procedure is not adequate due to the nature of the allegation and a Formal Procedure is more appropriate.

6.1 Informal Procedure

There are various ways in which a student can deal with bullying or harassment, from simply asking for it to stop, to making an official complaint.

- 6.1.1 If a student, staff member or other stakeholder feels they are a victim of bullying or harassment, they should keep a written record of all the relevant incidents, including times, dates and if appropriate the names of any witnesses to the incident/s and any other information as detailed above.
- 6.1.2 If at all possible, the victim of harassment/bullying should tell the person that their behaviour is causing them offence and that they want the unacceptable behaviour to

stop. Frequently the individual can be unaware that their actions are inappropriate and that there could have been some misunderstanding or misinterpretation on either part.

- 6.1.3 Where the behaviour was unintentional, a swift and clear indication that the behaviour is unacceptable may well be enough.
- 6.1.4 Before an alleged victim decides to take any action, they may wish to discuss the matter with someone who can offer advice and counselling. This may be by accessing the staff as outlined in Responsibilities. In any event a person who has complained of bullying/harassment will be offered appropriate support and counselling/mentoring and asked to sign the Student Pre-Counselling Declaration (Appendix 1).
- 6.1.5 If a student feels uncomfortable confronting the person they are making allegations against directly, or talking to them has had no effect, they may want to talk the situation through with someone else like a friend, teacher or member of Student Support. This can sometimes give the student the confidence to deal with the situation.
- 6.1.6 Where a person indicates a preference to discuss the matter with a person of the same background, for example gender, race, religious belief etc, the College will endeavour to accommodate such a request where possible.
- 6.1.7 A student may want the support of one of the above to either accompany them when speaking to the individual or alternatively speak to them on their behalf. Every effort will be made to achieve an informal resolution.
- 6.1.8 If however, the Informal Procedure above fails to produce a resolution or if the bullying/harassment is considered too serious, either by the complainant or the individual giving advice and guidance, to be resolved informally, the student will be advised that an appropriate Investigating Officer trained in counselling techniques will be appointed in order to advise on how to progress with the matter. This is in order that the person will be able to assess the severity of the case and advise the student on how to progress.
- 6.1.9 In most cases it would be hoped that the situation could be resolved informally. The Investigating Officer will explore all possible options with the complainant and their representative. There may, however, be situations when the Investigating Officer will advise the complainant to raise a formal complaint without further exploring informal resolutions.

6.2 Formal Procedure

While some cases of bullying/harassment may be resolved by a direct approach to the alleged bully/harasser, some cases will inevitably be incapable of resolution within the Informal Procedure.

- 6.2.1 Those cases that are incapable of a successful resolution or are too serious to consider resolution by means of the Informal Procedure will be referred to an appropriate Investigation Officer.
- 6.2.2 In order to initiate the Formal Procedure, the student/staff must make a formal complaint, ideally although not always in writing.
- 6.2.3 This should be addressed to the Head of Student Support & Welfare or the Lead Safeguarding Officer in the first instance, or HR Manager. The letter should include the name of the alleged harasser/bully, the nature of the alleged harassment/bullying, dates and times of when the incidents occurred, names of any witnesses to the incidents and any action which has already been taken to attempt to stop the bullying/harassment.
- 6.2.4 The student/staff will receive a written acknowledgement to their formal complaint within 5 working days of its receipt.
- 6.2.5 A preliminary investigation will be arranged, as soon as is reasonably practicable, which will be appropriate to the nature of the complaint.
- 6.2.6 The Investigating Officer will be a member of management unconnected with either the complainant or the alleged bully/harasser and of an appropriate level to ensure that the investigation is independent and objective.
- 6.2.7 The student/staff member may be accompanied by a relative, friend or supporter at any meetings throughout the Formal Procedure.
- 6.2.8 Although the investigation may require the student/staff to recount details of specific incidents, they will not be asked to do so unnecessarily or repeatedly.
- 6.2.9 The alleged bully/harasser will be made aware of the allegation as soon as the formal complaint has been received. Depending upon the severity of the complaint, it may be necessary to separate the parties involved.
- 6.2.10 This will then be dealt with in line with the College Student code of Conduct and disciplinary policy for student-on-student cases, or by the Staff Handbook, for instances of alleged staff on staff bullying.

7 Responsibilities

- 7.1 Records should be kept of any incident and the ensuing investigation and outcomes. A log should be kept of all incidents which are reviewed by the Chief Academic Officer and/or Executive Principal on a termly basis with a view to:
 - 7.1.1 Assessing the effectiveness of the approaches adopted to dealing with bullying incidents;
 - 7.1.2 Identifying any patterns in instances of bullying, and identifying suitable strategies to address these in order to reduce the incidences of bullying

Appendix 1

Pre-Counselling Declaration

Name:

Date:

I understand and accept that no details of my discussion with the counsellor will be passed on to any member of OBC staff or students, or any third party outside the College, unless the counsellor feels I may pose a significant risk to my own health or safety, or the health and safety of others. In this instance the counsellor may contact a relevant member of staff (e.g. Head of Academics, principal, first aider) or third party (eg. GP, police, dedicated helpline). In the case that the counsellor feels contact with others is required, he/ she will inform you in writing via email.

Student Signature:

Counsellor Signature:

Additionally, some students may prefer to have some details of their contact with the counsellor communicated to their tutors and Head of Academics to be considered alongside their academic progress. In this instance, all information will be kept confidential by those who have been informed.

I am happy for the following reason, and no further details, to be passed on to my tutors **and/ or (select one)** Head of Academics to be considered alongside my academic progress:

- Personal issues
- Family issues
- Health issues
- Financial issues
- Reason not disclosed

I do not want any information or acknowledgement of my discussion with the counsellor to be passed on to my tutors and Head of Academics.

Student signature:

NOTES: