

## **Sense College - Operational Strategy**

### **Learner Anti-Bullying**

### **Information and Process**



## Outcomes

This strategy sets out the approach taken by Sense College to preventing and tackling incidents of bullying behaviour of college learners and supported people, with a view that:

- Everyone should be able to learn in an environment that is free from bullying of any kind, in which they feel safe and supported;
- Learners, staff and visitors should feel safe and know how to raise bullying concerns;
- Learners, staff and visitors should feel confident that bullying concerns will always be taken seriously;
- Learners, staff and visitors should know how to report any concerns they have;
- The response to bullying incidents must be reasonable, proportionate and consistent.

Bullying between staff is covered by the separate Sense document HR031 Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure (May 2021).

For the college learner anti-bullying strategy to be effective, it is important that staff are clear about its purposes and understand the processes.

Sense College aims to establish and maintain a tolerant, bully-free environment for all its members. We believe it is important that all members of the college community feel safe and are able to achieve their full potential.

In addition, such a culture supports the personal and social development of the people we support. Everyone must play their part to enable the safety and happiness of others within the college. It is only by everyone working together that we will achieve this aim.



## Who is this strategy is for?

- The individuals Sense supports
- All College Staff
- Families and carers
- Visitors to the college
- Governors

## What is this strategy about?

Sense College encourages positive behaviour and respect for others. Bullying behaviour will therefore not be tolerated. Everyone (including learners, staff and visitors) has a right to feel safe and happy.

This document sets out how Sense College will go about applying the principles and processes to create a safe and secure environment for all.

This strategy sets out everyone's responsibilities and provides information about the types of bullying which can occur.



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## Introduction

### Underpinning Philosophy and Principles:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group – either physically or emotionally.

**Preventing and Tackling Bullying DfE 2013; updated July 2017 (Appendix 1)** has been produced for head teachers/principals, staff and governing bodies. The document was produced to help schools prevent and respond to bullying as part of their overall behaviour strategy/policy. It outlines, in one place, the Government's approach to bullying, legal obligations and the powers schools/colleges have to tackle bullying and the principles which underpin the most effective anti-bullying strategies in schools. It also lists further resources through which school staff can access specialist information on the specific issues that they face. This document, although aimed at schools, is also relevant to colleges.

Anyone can be bullied at any time. Bullying can take place:

- Between learners;
- Between learners and staff;
- Between staff;
- Between staff and learners;
- Between family members or carers and learners;
- Between visiting professionals or members of the public and learners or staff;
- Between learners and family members or carers.

The Department for Education have also provided advice for both education staff and parents relating to cyberbullying – bullying whilst online. (See **Appendix 2** and **Appendix 3**)

Further information about recognising bullying can be found within the Sense College document **Information about Bullying (Appendix 4)**.



## Practice

### Part One: Recognising Bullying

Bullying, in general, will aim to hurt another person through cruel, offensive and insulting behaviours. Bullying and harassment means any unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated or offended and may include physical acts of aggression or other forms which are less obvious to those around. It often manifests itself in what is known as low level abusive behaviour.

Bullying behaviour may need to be reported through the safeguarding process in accordance with the relevant Sense safeguarding policy and procedure. This may also require the intervention of the law enforcement agencies.

Some of the ways in which bullying may occur are listed below: (This list is not exclusive)

- Verbal – threats, insults, nasty teasing, name calling, taunting;
- Physical – assault, hitting, damage to belongings;
- Relational – malicious gossip, social exclusion;
- Sexual or sexist bullying;
- Communication methods such as the written words or pictures;
- Stealing or taking money or possessions;
- Harassment (unwanted conduct which violates a person's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment);
- Cyber bullying (using information and communications technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones, social media and the internet, to deliberately upset or offend someone else);
- One individual bullying another individual or a group of individuals;
- A group bullying an individual or another group;
- Face to face bullying;
- Indirect bullying (bullying through another person/3<sup>rd</sup> party).



## Possible Signs of Bullying

This following list demonstrates changes that can be seen in an individual. This list is not exhaustive, but could, in certain circumstances indicate bullying is taking place:

- Changes in mood/behaviour;
- Increased anxiety;
- Lowered self-esteem;
- Unexplained bruising/marks (may recur);
- Avoiding a person/group of people or situation;
- Over anxious to please;
- Short of money;
- Broken or missing possessions;
- Anxious about social media posts/messages;
- Sudden lack of enthusiasm for interests/hobbies;
- Nightmares, difficulty sleeping;
- Headaches, stomach ache, feeling sick;
- Sudden incontinence;
- Self-harm.

Signs that someone may be involved in bullying behaviour towards someone else could include:

- Suddenly having unexplained money;
- Being in possession of someone else's property;
- Trying to be alone with someone;
- Appearing to exercise undue influence over someone's decision/choices/actions;
- Speaking 'for' someone;
- Changes in mood/behaviour;
- Sudden and/or surprising changes in friendships;



This list is not exhaustive and there may be another explanation. Unwanted behaviour which causes someone to feel bullied may not be intentional, but will still require appropriate input to change. If a member of staff allows or condones bullying, it is a safeguarding issue.

Sense College recognises that bullying can occur in the workplace and that staff may also become the victims of bullying. Sense College does not condone bullying in any form; and anyone who feels they are a victim, or who has witnessed something which may be bullying, should report the matter to their line manager or another senior member of staff. Their concerns will be taken seriously and referred to the appropriate Sense policies and procedures for information on how the matter will be dealt with. Staff can also contact a manager or advisor from HR (Human Resources department) for help and support.

## Part Two: Tackling Bullying

### How to report bullying

Learners need to feel safe and confident that their story will be heard. They may:

- Report incidents of bullying to their support worker, educational coordinator, personal tutor, or any member of staff they feel comfortable talking to;
- Contact their mentor or advocate;
- Talk to their parents, family members, carers or social workers;
- Demonstrate in other ways that they are unhappy and don't feel safe.

Anyone can report bullying to the college. Not all learners will recognise that they are being bullied, or have been the victim of bullying. Some are not able to raise their concerns using formal communication methods. Staff must be vigilant for signs which could indicate bullying may be taking place, even if the learner is unable to make a complaint or report what is taking place for themselves.



## What happens next

If bullying is reported or observed, the member of staff to whom it has been reported to should:

- Take steps to ensure the learner is safe;
- Make time to listen calmly to the learner who has been bullied, using effective listening techniques;
- Ensure they do not lead the learner (e.g. did 'x' do this?);
- Make a note of the bullying incident using the '**Potential Bullying Incident Report Form**' (**Appendix 5**);
- Inform the Education Services Manager (ESM) or in his/her absence, the Vice Principal for Safeguarding, Behaviour and Learner Wellbeing (VPSBLW) / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or a member of the College Senior Management Team (SMT);
- Try to determine how the learner who has been bullied would like the situation resolved.

When speaking to the learner, staff should consider:

- Whether or not they are familiar with the learner's preferred method of communication;
- If the location where the communication takes place is appropriate (e.g. is the learner comfortable, will s/he be able to hear/see/communicate with you etc?);
- If it is appropriate to introduce the topic. Time should be taken to discover what has happened and clarify what the learner has communicated, as well as consideration given to whether or not the meeting should be drawn to a close if the learner is becoming upset;
- If the learner has been given the time to think about what is being asked of them and then time to respond appropriately;
- Sometimes a staff member may use a care file note to report a concern that a learner may be a victim of bullying behaviour, especially if the learner is unable to formally communicate this for themselves;
- It may become apparent from behaviour report forms and/or care file notes, that bullying may be occurring. This should be brought to the attention of the Deputy



Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), usually the Education Services Manager (ESM) in each centre.

The DDSL will inform the DSL/Vice Principal (SBLW) of the incident both verbally and in writing; copying in the Principal and Executive Principal. The DDSL in conjunction with the Vice Principal (SBLW), DSL or another member of the SMT, will make a decision about what is to happen next, which will include one or more of the following:

- Completion of an initial fact find;
- Safeguarding the learner who has experienced bullying and identifying sources of support for the learner where appropriate;
- Referral for Positive Behaviour Support from a Behaviour Support Adviser, as appropriate;
- Provide support for both the person who has experienced bullying and the person who has carried out the bullying behaviour;
- Agreeing an action plan to stop the bullying behaviour, with the agreement and consent of both parties;
- Notifying appropriate external agencies e.g. Local Authority, Education & Skills Funding Agency, Local Safeguarding Board;
- Commencing an investigation (if appropriate) and appointing an investigating officer;
- Undertake an investigation into the facts of the situation, making recommendations for action as appropriate;
- Working with the perpetrator to ensure that they learn from the experience and modify the bullying behaviour, possibly through multi-agency support;
- Increasing awareness about bullying across the college and/or resource centre.
- In extreme cases where the perpetrator has mental capacity and there is persistent bullying, the college may consider exclusion, in which case the Sense College Exclusion Strategy will be applied.

This list is not exhaustive.



## Follow up actions

After a bullying incident has been reported and actioned, the DDSL should:

- Consult with the 'victim' about further action and take their wishes into account;
- Monitor the situation, in a way agreed with all parties;
- Record any further bullying incidents and action taken;
- Report back to the victim;
- Follow up discreetly;
- Pass any concerns about a learner to other staff who may be teaching them, when safe to do so;
- Raise awareness and empathy for 'looked after' learners and those who are carers to reduce the bullying they experience;
- Liaise with Residential Care Managers on anti-bullying initiatives for learners in care.

The college will use a bullying incident as a learning opportunity for everyone.

A **Flow Chart** is provided in **Appendix 6**, which gives a simple overview of the process undertaken by the college when an allegation or suspicion of bullying is noted.

## **Part Three: Effects and Approaches**

### The effects of bullying

Learners achieve the best results when they feel safe, motivated and happy. Bullying can have a serious, negative effect on learning.

All bullying is serious, but cyberbullying can make learners feel particularly vulnerable as it may be more easily hidden.

The psychological effects of bullying should not be underestimated – bullying can lead to long term extreme distress, depression and even suicide.



Bullying behaviour may be learned or copied. If not stopped, being bullied may lead to a bullied person starting to bully others and a culture of bullying can develop.

### A holistic approach to preventing bullying

Sense College upholds and promotes the Fundamental British Values (FBV) of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for, and tolerance of, those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

Sense College strives to ensure that:

- The contribution of all learners is valued;
- All learners should feel secure and able to contribute appropriately;
- Stereotypical views are challenged and learners are taught to appreciate and view differences in others positively; whether arising from race, age, religion/belief, culture, gender, sexuality, ability, disability or other reasons;
- All forms of bullying and harassment are challenged;
- Learners are supported to develop their social and emotional skills;
- The curriculum includes social and emotional aspects.

Sense College complies with Sense policies and procedures which seek to ensure that staff feel safe in the workplace too and this is covered in the Sense HR31 Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure (May2021) which is for all Sense employees.

## **Part Four: Explanation for Learners**

Sense College has produced a leaflet that can be used to provide learners with information about anti-bullying – see **Anti-Bullying Information for Learners (Appendix 7)**.

Staff should explain the information contained within this document in a way that learners can understand, which might include using pictures or other alternative methods of communication (as many learners at the college do not use formal communication).



However, if learners are able to understand the formal Anti-Bullying Strategy, they should be given this full document.

If alternative formats of this document are required, a request can be made to the college Principal.

## **Part Five: Support and Intervention**

### Support for the targeted learner

Depending upon the nature of the incident, targeted learners may need support following a bullying incident. This could involve:

- Personal Tutor/Mentor support;
- Counselling;
- Involvement of other agencies such as the local Safeguarding Board;
- Specific group work interventions around confidence and self-esteem to develop their social and emotional skills.

The DDSL, with SMT support, will liaise with the relevant individuals and action any requirements following on from the anti-bullying process.

### Support for the alleged perpetrator

The alleged perpetrator may need support to stop the bullying behaviour. Depending on the nature of the incident, this could involve:

- Personal tutor/mentor support;
- Counselling
- Input and support from external agencies and partner organisations
- Support from family and carers
- Targeted learning activities



These lists are not exhaustive. Each case must be addressed individually to determine the best actions.

### Interventions

The organisation's approach to intervention is to support and resolve each case on its own set of circumstances and to respond accordingly.

However, the goals of any intervention should always be the same:

- To make the targeted person feel safe;
- To stop the bullying and change the bully's behaviour;
- To make clear to everyone that bullying is unacceptable;
- To learn lessons from the experience that can be applied in future.

## **Part Six: Responsibilities**

Everybody has a responsibility to promote and embed this strategy and processes into daily college life.

### **Staff will:**

- Foster a supportive and caring environment at college;
- Follow the strategy and be vigilant about bullying incidents;
- Be mindful of the fact that bullying may not always be reported in a traditional way. It may be that a learner is unable to report bullying using formal communication. Staff should be vigilant and observe learners' behaviour in addition to other methods of communication;
- Follow the relevant procedures for documenting and reporting any incidents of bullying that they become aware of;
- Be supportive of other members of staff.



### **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads / Education Service Managers will:**

- Support staff who have queries about bullying and act on any reports of bullying, in accordance with this strategy and other relevant Sense policies and procedures;
- Provide leadership and by example, encourage good behaviour and respect, with the aim to prevent all forms of bullying among learners;
- Take appropriate action in conjunction with safeguarding responsibilities, report bullying to the Vice Principal (SBLW), Principal and Executive Principal verbally and in writing, and monitor patterns of incidents within their particular centre.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Vice Principal (SBLW), Principal and Executive Principal will:**

- Monitor bullying incidents in the college as a whole, by reviewing bullying data;
- Ensure that the Learner Focused Anti-Bullying Strategy and processes are implemented across all college sites and at all external venues used;
- Ensure that learning from incidents is applied consistently across the college.

### **Sense College Governors will:**

- Take steps to ensure that the college fosters a positive and supportive environment, in which everyone feels safe;
- Monitor the level of incidents of bullying and take appropriate steps to support college management in handling any such incidents.

### **Bystanders** (including other learners, family members, carers, visitors or any staff member, who knows or suspects bullying) **will:**

- Inform the relevant members of staff of their concerns;
- Inform the college if they have concerns over bullying of any learner attending college that they have contact with.



## Part Seven: Related Documents and Sources of Reference

Further internal sources of information to support this strategy and provide guidance and possible actions include:

- Sense College Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation Strategy
- Sense College Sharing Nude and Semi-nude Images Strategy
- OS11 Safeguarding Children and Young People – Procedure and Guidance
- OS11 Safeguarding Appendix, Safe Guide – What is Abuse?
- OS12 Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults – Procedure and Guidance
- Sense College E-Safety Strategy
- Sense Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- HR01 Staff Handbook
- HR02 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- HR05 Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- HR08 Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- HR09 Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure
- HR22 Social Media Policy
- OS02 Positive Behaviour Support Procedure and Guidance – Adults
- OS05 Positive Behaviour Support Procedure – Children and Young People

Wider reading and further information can also be found via the following external links:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Working Together to Safeguard Children – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- NSPCC – [www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/)
- CEOP – [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/)
- Education Against Hate - <https://educateagainsthate.com>



- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (from Sept 21) – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>
- Tackling race and faith targeted bullying face to face and online – [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/759004/Tackling\\_race\\_and\\_faith\\_targeted\\_bullying\\_face\\_to\\_face\\_and\\_online\\_-\\_a\\_guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759004/Tackling_race_and_faith_targeted_bullying_face_to_face_and_online_-_a_guide.pdf)
- Preventing and tackling bullying – [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/623895/Preventing\\_and\\_tackling\\_bullying\\_advice.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)



## Quality Assurance

Bullying incidents will be reviewed by the DSL / Vice Principal SBLW in the first instance and all incidents and complaints will be monitored by the Principal and Executive Principal.

If anyone is not happy with the way a bullying incident has been handled after alerting a member of staff to, or raising, an incident of bullying, they should contact a member of college SMT. In addition, individuals are directed to the **Sense CE01 Complaints Policy**, which is available on request or via the website.

This strategy and process will be reviewed:

- Annually, in line with the college document review cycle;
- After a serious bullying incident;
- Whenever there is a need.

## Conclusion

Sense College believes that by recognising, tackling and preventing bullying, the quality of provision can be significantly enhanced by raising standards, increasing learner confidence and achievements, as well as supporting staff to develop their practice.

*For Quality Assurance Use only:*

<i>Policy/Procedure:</i>	<b>Sense College Anti Bullying Strategy v08</b>
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<i>Date Live:</i>	<b>August 2021</b>
<i>Review Due:</i>	<b>August 2022</b>