SWC

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Anti-Bullying Policy for Students

Policy Owner:	Head of Quality & Student Engagement
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SWC

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1. Policy Statement

1.1 South West College takes the view that no form of bullying, including online bullying, should be tolerated, recognising that bullying is not a normal part of growing up and can ruin lives.

1.2 If a student feels safe at South West College and in a supportive environment, they are in a much better position to stay healthy, remain safe, enjoy and succeed, make a positive contribution and achieve general well-being.

1.3 Early identification of students at risk can help Colleges, enabling them to develop more effective strategies for responding to, and preventing, incidents of bullying. South West College recognises that some students may be more vulnerable, therefore it is vital that SWC is alert to recognising potential instances of bullying. Deteriorating attendance, poor punctuality, lack of progress and diminishing achievement are some of the behaviours that could indicate that a student is vulnerable and already suffering from the effects of bullying.

1.4 Students with learning or communication difficulties may not understand, or may have difficulty in explaining that they are being bullied. It is important, therefore, that members of staff and students at the College should look out for signs of bullying and act if they suspect that a student is being bullied.

1.5 Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. It can lead to serious, prolonged emotional and psychological damage for an individual.

1.6 Those who perpetrate the bullying can also experience emotional harm, and the impact on parents and College staff can be significant. South West College takes complaints of bullying seriously and students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when incidents of bullying are reported. All complaints related to bullying will be treated promptly. Wherever possible, an individual's confidentiality will be protected in respect of any complaint of bullying.

1.7 The College will always seek to work with the bully (bullies) to change their

behaviour. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. The college has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. There is often an underlying reason for bullying behaviour. Support may be required to enable a bully to change his/her behaviour. Breaking patterns of behaviour and expectations of other students and staff may make him/her a victim to others. Bullies wishing to reform will be encouraged to seek help and advice from the Inspire counselling service, Personal Tutor and/or SWC Learning Mentor.

2. Policy Aim

2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that the South West College maintains a learning environment which is safe, secure and harmonious, in keeping with appropriate guidelines for the promotion of good relations as outlined in the Code of Practice for Students for Equality and Diversity.

3. Policy Objectives

3.1 The objectives of the policy are:

- To be proactive in relation to the prevention of all forms of bullying, including those motivated by prejudice, and in response to any incidents of bullying;
- To establish procedures to safeguard the well-being of all students of South West College;
- To provide a safe and happy learning environment, integral to achieving the wider objectives of College improvement;
- raising attainment;
- improving attendance;
- promoting equality and diversity;
- ensuring the well-being of all members of the College community;
- To permit students to make a positive contribution and achieve general well-being in a caring environment; and
- To ensure all staff are aware of and vigilant to potential bullying and the steps they should take when bullying occurs or when complaints of bullying arise.

4. Policy Scope

4.1 This Policy applies to all students enrolled at South West College regardless of course level or discipline.

4.2 This Policy does not apply where a student has engaged in any form of bullying of an employee or member of contract staff of the College. Such cases will be subject to the disciplinary procedures associated with the College's Dignity at Work Policy.

5. Definition of Terms Used in this Policy

5.1 Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment are subjective experiences and can take many forms. Bullying often involves an imbalance of power. Some people may feel they are being bullied or harassed when there is no intention from others to cause them distress. Such perceptions of bullying and harassment should be taken seriously.

5.1.1 Bullying

Bullying is any unsolicited or unwelcome act by an individual or a group of people which hurts, humiliates, intimidates or undermines the self-esteem and confidence of an individual or group of people and which may cause them to suffer stress.

5.1.2 Bullying can occur face to face, via e-mail, text, social networking sites, telephone, in writing, in graffiti/posters, display or circulation of offensive materials/books or via a third party.

5.1.3 Motives for bullying and harassment can be related to: race, religion, culture, appearance, health, gender, unwanted sexual behaviour or comments, special educational needs (SEN), disability, home circumstances or sexual orientation (homophobic).

5.1.4 Harassment

Any unwarranted behaviour which is offensive, demeaning or threatening.

5.2 Cyber-bullying

5.2.1 Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, which is intended to harm others.

5.2.2 Cyber-bullying can be as simple as continuing to send e-mail, texts, or posting social networking comments to someone (directly or indirectly) who has said they want no further contact with the sender. It may also include threats, sexual remarks, pejorative labels (i.e., hate speech), ganging up on victims by making them the subject of ridicule in forums, and posting false statements as fact aimed at humiliation.

5.3 Emotional

5.3.1 Ignoring, excluding, tormenting, insensitive jokes or pranks, damaging property belonging to another person, demanding money or property.

5.4 Physical

5.4.1 Pushing, kicking, prodding, hitting, punching or any other use of physical contact

5.5 Sexual

5.5.1 Unwanted physical contact or inappropriate sexual comments.

5.6 Discriminatory

5.6.1 Bullying behaviour because of, or focusing on, diversity issues such as race, sexuality, disability, age, transgender identity, religion or gender. This may include inappropriate language or taunts, gestures, graffiti etc.

5.7 Hate Crime

5.7.1 Hate crime is any offence committed against a person or property which is motivated by the offender's hatred of people because they are seen as being different.

5.7.2 People do not have to be a member of a minority community to be a victim of hate crime. Any incident where an individual or group of people are targeted because they are believed to be of a different race, religion/belief, sexual orientation, gender

identity or have a disability can be reported as a hate crime.

5.7.3 Any staff or student with a concern regarding a hate crime can report this to a college manager. These reports will be investigated and action taken accordingly including referral to the PSNI.

5.8 Duty of Care

5.8.1 Duty of Care related to the duty which rests upon an individual to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of a student involved in any activity or interaction for which that individual is responsible. Any person in charge of or working with students in any capacity is considered, both legally and morally, to owe them a duty of care.

5.9 Neglect

5.9.1 The persistent or significant neglect of a young person or vulnerable adult, or the failure to protect a young person or vulnerable adult from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

5.10 Physical

5.10.1 Physical injury to a young person or vulnerable adult whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

5.11 Sexual Exploitation

5.11.1 The sexual exploitation of a young person or vulnerable adult for an adult's or another young person's own sexual gratification; the involvement of young people or vulnerable adults in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or violate normal family roles.

5.12 Emotional

5.12.1 Persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child or vulnerable adult. This may include children, young people or vulnerable

adults witnessing cases of domestic violence.

5.13 Safeguarding

5.13.1 Providing a safe learning environment for students e.g. robust staff recruitment, policies, procedures, positive College atmosphere, effective teaching and pastoral support.

5.13.2 Protection by identifying students who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, e.g. by neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse. Support by taking appropriate action to see that such students are kept safe at the College.

5.14 Vulnerable Adult

5.14.1 Someone who is, or may be, unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation, for example: older people; people with mental health problems; disabled people; people with learning difficulties; people with acquired brain injury; people who misuse substances.

5.15 Young Person

5.15.1 A person under 18 years of age.

5.16 Student Safeguarding Assistant

5.16.1 Trained Officers on each Campus that all referrals must be made to.

5.17 Lead Designated Officer

5.17.1 Ensures student safeguarding policy and procedures are in place and that Student Safeguarding Officers are supported.

5.18 Students

5.18.1 A person who has registered with the College for a programme of learning.

6. Student Responsibilities

6.1 Every student has the right to learn in an environment which is free from bullying. Likewise, every student has a responsibility to help to maintain a learning environment in which the dignity of every student is respected in accordance with

the College's obligation to promote good relations. This obligation is detailed in the aforementioned Commitment to Equality and Diversity as found in the Student Handbook.

6.2 Students are expected to show respect towards peers, members of College staff and visitors.

6.3 Students should discourage bullying and support members of their peer group who may endure treatment which could be defined as bullying. Any student who is aware of any incident of bullying should alert a member of staff to enable the College to deal with it.

7. Management and Employee Responsibilities

7.1 All levels of management within the College have a responsibility to oversee the implementation of this policy and make efforts to promote a good and harmonious learning and working environment which is free from bullying and take appropriate action in accordance with the appropriate College procedure should they become aware of incidents of bullying.

7.2 All employees, members of both academic and support staff, have a responsibility to assist in ensuring that the learning and working environment is one in which colleagues and students are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

7.3 All members of staff of the College should:

- Endeavour to promote a good and harmonious working and learning environment; in line with the College's policy on Good Relations and Cultural Diversity for staff.
- Ensure that students are aware of the College's Anti-Bullying Policy for Students by explaining the policy and taking steps to promote awareness of the procedure for dealing with complaints of bullying.
- Be supportive and responsive to any student who makes an allegation of bullying and also to the person who has an allegation made against them, maintain appropriate level of confidentiality and seek to ensure that there are no further problems of bullying whilst a complaint is being dealt with or after it

has been resolved.

- Be alert to unacceptable behaviour and take appropriate action per the College policy, liaising with other members of staff as appropriate.

7.4 In the interest of maintaining good relations within the College community all employees of the College should engage positively in any strategies which the College may employ to prevent bullying, such as awareness raising campaigns, training or other initiatives.

8. Contacts

Senior Management	**Extension No**
Celine McCartan (Chief Executive)	Ext 5204
Padraig McNamee (Director of Curriculum)	Ext 5205
Ciaran McManus (Director of Development & Support)	Ext 2316
Sharon McGrath (Director of Corporate Services)	Ext 2296

Campus Managers	**Extension No**
John Moss (Omagh)	Ext 5212
Padraig McNamee (Cookstown)	Ext 5205
Sharon McGrath (Erne)	Ext 2296
Ciaran McManus (Skills Centre)	Ext 2316
Chris Evans/ Paul Eagleson (Dungannon)	Ext 3730 Ext 5351

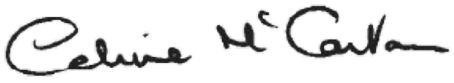
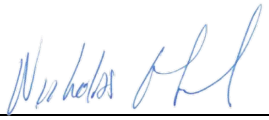
Safeguarding Lead/Student Engagement and Support Manager	**Extension No**
Sharon Pritchard (Enniskillen)	Ext 2308

Student Engagement and Support Officers	**Extension No**
Dermott Feely (Enniskillen)	Ext 2225
Judith McCusker (Omagh)	Ext 5526
Sharon Watters (Dungannon)	Ext 3614

Equality Officer	**Extension No**
Siobhan Gorman (Omagh)	Ext 3692

9. Review

9.1 This Policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis.

Signed Principal and Chief Executive:	
Date:	04 November 2026
Signed Chair of the Governing Body:	
Date:	04 November 2026

Related Documentation

Title	Location	Owner
Student Disciplinary Policy	Gateway	Curriculum Director
Safeguarding Care and Welfare Policy	Gateway and SWC website	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Dignity at Work Policy	Gateway	Head of HR
Electronic Communications Policy	Gateway	Director of Corporate Services
Social Media Policy	Gateway	Marketing Manager
Code of Practice for Students for Equality and Diversity	Gateway	Curriculum Director

Change Log

Location	Change from deletion/addition	Change to
Throughout Document	Job Titles updated	

Communication

Who needs to know (for action)	Senior Management Team Heads of Departments Heads and Deputy Heads of Department Curriculum Managers Course Coordinators Campus Managers
Who needs to be aware	All staff and students

Communication Plan

Action	By Whom	By When
Upload to Gateway	Executive Support Officer	On approval
Circulation to key staff	Student Engagement & Support Manager	On approval

Document Development

Details of staff who were involved in the development of this policy:

Name	Role
Sharon Pritchard	Student Engagement and Support Manager
Brian McIlduff	Head of Quality & Student Engagement
Tom Bradley	Equality Officer

Details of staff, external groups or external organisations who were consulted in the development of this policy:

Name	Organisation	Date
Heads of Faculty	SWC	25/10/19
Centre for Excellence Managers	SWC	25/10/19
Student Engagement Officers	SWC	25/10/19
DCEO	SWC	25/10/19
ACEO	SWC	25/10/19

Approval Dates

Approved by	Date
Governing Body	04 November 2026

Document History

Issue no. under review	Date of review:	Persons involved in review	Changes made after review? Yes/No If Yes refer to change log	New Issue No.	If changes made was consultation required?	If changes made was Equality Screening required?
January 2020	November 2021	Sharon Pritchard	Yes	V2.0	No	No
V2.0	October 2024	Brian McIlduff	Yes	V3.0	No	No
V3.0	September 2026	Sharon Pritchard Brian McIlduff	Yes	V3.1	No	No