



## Bullying and Harassment Policy

### 1. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- a) prevent harassment and bullying at the Academy;
- b) provide a safe and supportive environment;
- c) provide a sensitive, fair and effective means of dealing with complaints;
- d) provide victims of harassment with guidance and support.

### 2. Scope

The policy applies to all students of the Academy, whether at the Academy (on campus and/or in a virtual/online environment associated with the Academy) or on secondment/placement with an external organisation.

### 3. Definition

- 3.1 Harassment and/or bullying is behaviour that is intended to diminish a person's status or worth. It is conduct which is unwanted by the recipient and is viewed as offensive, intimidating or hostile.
- 3.2 The Academy recognises that bullying and harassment can have a profound effect on peoples' lives, for example by causing humiliation, isolation, interfering with the victim's work/academic studies, causing stress, anxiety, fear or, in extreme cases, physical illness.
- 3.3 Individuals can be subjected to harassment or bullying in a variety of ways. Sometimes the unwanted behaviour can be related to a protected characteristic. For example, a victim's:
  - a) skin colour, race, ethnic origin, nationality;
  - b) gender, sexual orientation, marital status;
  - c) physical, mental ability or disability;
  - d) age, size, personal appearance;
  - e) real or suspected infection with communicable disease.
- 3.4 The Academy also recognises that harassment can also take several forms in addition to overt comments and actions and including subtle and nuanced acts (microaggressions), exclusion from conversations or being exposed to objectionable (in the view of the recipient) material.
- 3.5 The Academy does not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying, regardless of whether such behaviour is related to a protected characteristic or not.

### 4. Interpretation

Behaviour which is welcomed and reciprocated is not harassment. Differences in attitudes, background, culture and misinterpretation of social signals could mean that what is perceived by one individual may not seem so to another. The critical feature is that the conduct is unwanted, offensive and intimidating to the recipient. The experience of the complainant will determine whether further action is necessary.

### 5. Management responsibility

In addition to their general responsibilities, staff with management responsibilities are expected to set standards of acceptable behaviour by always treating others with respect and promoting a working environment where unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated.

## **6. Staff and student responsibility**

- 6.1 Everyone has a responsibility to ensure they do not incite, perpetrate or condone any form of harassment or bullying within their place of work or study. If any behaviour, considered as harassment or bullying, cannot be resolved on an informal basis, or which continues following a request to stop, it will lead to disciplinary action.
- 6.2 Bullying and harassment may constitute a criminal offence. The Academy will actively support students that wish to report cases to the police. Nonetheless students are not required to report incidents to the police for them to be considered by the University, but where they are, Academy processes may be paused pending criminal investigation.

## **7. Advice and support**

Students may seek confidential advice and support from their teachers, the Senior Management team or the Academy's Counsellor at any point if they feel they believe they, or someone they know, are a victim of bullying or harassment. Advice and support given will be done so in the strictest of confidence.

## **8. Who should report incidents?**

Students and/or staff members who witness any incidents should report them to the class teacher or to the Principal. The Academy does not accept anonymous incident reports.

## **9. How does Sharpe Academy deal with incidents?**

### **Step 1 – Prevention**

Our first aim is to prevent bullying before it ever occurs. Students are taught they should always self-evaluate their words and their actions. In our experience, a person who do not possess the full information about a situation can sometimes cause distress to staff members.

### **Step 2 – Investigation**

If bullying is reported to us then we will investigate the incident. This will involve talking to the parties involved and speaking to anyone who may have witnessed the event.

### **Step 3 – Action**

Once all the facts regarding the event have been gathered, we will put in place a plan of action. This may involve:

- a discussion between both parties, making sure an apology is made where appropriate;
- removing a student from a class for a specified period of time;
- suspending a student from the Academy for a specified period of time;
- permanently excluding a student from Sharpe Academy

If a satisfactory conclusion cannot be reached through informal communication between both parties, the Complaints Procedure should be followed.