



RADLEY

## **Positive Working Environment**

**May 2025**

Radley College is committed to creating a harmonious and safe working environment, which is free from harassment and bullying and in which every employee is treated with respect and dignity. Radley College strives to ensure that the different experiences, abilities, and skills of each individual are valued by others. Inappropriate behaviour should be challenged. It is Radley College's intention to encourage everyone to behave in a proper and professional manner at all times.

Harassment or bullying causes stress, anxiety and unhappiness to individuals, creates an unpleasant working environment and may be unlawful. This can reduce efficiency and may ultimately have an impact on the way in which services are delivered. For these reasons it is important that Radley College, as an employer, and individual employees strive to achieve a working environment which is free from this type of behaviour.

You may be an individual or part of a group that receives the unwanted attention. Harassment, bullying or victimisation may be a one-off incident or it may be a series of incidents. Your dignity at work can be affected by inappropriate behaviour, which causes offence, whether it is intentional, or not.

Radley College is committed to ensuring that individuals do not feel apprehensive because of their race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership and age or as a result of being subjected to any inappropriate behaviour.

All employees can expect to be:

- treated with dignity, respect and courtesy
- able to work, free from unfair treatment, bullying, harassment or victimisation
- valued for their skills, abilities and experiences

All employees are expected to:

- familiarise themselves with the content of this policy
- treat all employees with dignity, respect and courtesy
- contribute towards a positive and professional working culture
- challenge or report unacceptable behaviour
- be mindful of others when expressing views
- cooperate with investigations into harassment and bullying

Breaches of this policy will be considered unacceptable behaviour and will be treated as misconduct, which may include gross misconduct warranting dismissal. All employees must comply with this policy.

Radley College is committed to dealing with any issues quickly, positively and confidentially if and when they occur.

It is important to remember that while employees may make comments outside work, for example on social networking sites, Radley College may use such evidence in investigations on bullying and harassment matters.

### **Definition of Harassment**

Harassment is unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Unlawful harassment may also involve conduct of a sexual nature and this is covered in a separate College policy. Protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, are race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and age.

Harassment may take many forms. It can range from extreme forms such as violence to less obvious actions such as persistently ignoring someone. The following, though not an exhaustive list, may constitute harassment:

- unwanted physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault
- unwelcomed sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
- verbal and written harassment (including via email, text message and social media) through jokes, teasing or “banter”, offensive language, gossip and slander, or letters
- sharing inappropriate images or videos
- using racist slang, phrases or nicknames
- isolation or non-cooperation, or exclusion from social activities
- intrusion by pestering, spying, following etc

Employees may also be subject to harassment from third parties such as clients, suppliers, the general public etc where interaction with those third parties is a part of their role.

### **Bullying behaviour**

Although there is no legal definition of bullying, it is described as repeated inappropriate, offensive behaviour, which is often an abuse of power or position. It can be direct or indirect, either verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work.

The following examples may constitute bullying:

- threats, abuse, teasing, gossip or practical jokes
- humiliation and ridicule either in private, at meetings or in front of clients
- name calling, “banter”, insults, devaluing with reference to age or physical appearance
- setting impossible deadlines
- imposing excessive workloads
- making unjustified criticisms
- excessive monitoring
- removing responsibilities
- allocating menial or pointless tasks
- withholding information
- refusing requests for leave, holiday or training

It should be noted that it is the impact of the behaviour which is relevant and not the motive or intent behind it.

### **Employees’ Responsibilities**

All employees have a responsibility to help create and maintain a working environment that respects the dignity of employees. Employees should be aware of the serious and genuine problems which harassment and bullying can cause, and ensure that their behaviour is beyond question and could not be considered in any way to be harassment or bullying. No one should practise or encourage such behaviour and should make it clear to all concerned that they find it unacceptable. Employees should also support colleagues if they are experiencing harassment or bullying and are considering making a complaint. You should alert a Head of Department or HR to any incidents to enable the College to deal with the matter.

### **Managerial Responsibility**

Heads of Departments and supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that harassment or bullying does not occur in work areas for which they are responsible. They are committed to the elimination of bullying and harassment and must be vigilant in preventing acts wherever possible.

HoDs also have a responsibility to explain the policy to their staff and take steps to promote it positively. They will be responsive and supportive to any member of staff who makes a complaint, providing full and clear advice on the procedure to be adopted, maintaining confidentiality in all cases and ensuring that there are no further problems or any victimisation after a complaint has been raised or resolved.

## **Procedure for Dealing with Alleged Harassment or Bullying**

Complaints can be made both formally and informally. Whichever route employees decide to take (and the decision will always be theirs) employees will be offered guidance and assistance at every stage to help them resolve the problem as soon as possible and to stop the harassment.

If employees are comfortable doing so, in the first instance, they should ask the person responsible to stop the behaviour, explaining that they feel uncomfortable in the way they are acting. Speaking directly to the person at an early stage will often be sufficient to stop the behaviour. If employees feel unable to do this, they may be able to ask their HoD or the HR department to do this on their behalf.

If employees decide to make a formal complaint they should do so through the grievance procedure as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. All complaints will be handled in a timely and confidential manner. They will be guaranteed a fair and impartial hearing and the matter will be investigated thoroughly. If the investigation reveals that a complaint is valid, prompt attention and action will be taken, designed to stop the behaviour immediately and prevent its recurrence.

Employees will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Retaliating against an employee for complaining about harassment or bullying is a disciplinary offence.

Whilst this procedure is designed to assist genuine victims of harassment or bullying, employees should be aware that if they raise complaints which are proven to be deliberately vexatious, they may become subject to proceedings under the disciplinary procedure.