



ALL SOULS COLLEGE

HR POLICY

BULLYING & HARASSMENT

Trinity Term 2025

All members of the All Souls College community, its visitors and contractors are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. This requires freedom from behaviour by colleagues and other members of the College that can reasonably be interpreted as bullying or harassment, and access to redress if such behaviour does arise. It also means standards of everyday behaviour that contribute to an environment in which mutual respect and individual dignity are maintained.

Bullying and harassment can take many forms, some of which are unlawful under the Equality Act 2010, but whatever form it takes it will not be tolerated.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains up to date and in order to monitor its effectiveness.

1. Bullying and harassment

Behaviour can constitute bullying or harassment where: it creates an intimidating, hostile and degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; or it violates the dignity of a member of the College community on the grounds of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics). Individual or accumulative acts of bullying and/or harassment can seriously undermine the dignity, confidence, and work satisfaction to such an extent that it has an effect on job performance, and general happiness both inside and outside work.

2. Scope

We deplore all forms of bullying and harassment and seek to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all members of the college. This includes Fellows, employees, workers, agency workers, volunteers, contractors, visitors and guests in all areas of our College, including any other sites.

3. Definitions

3.1. Bullying

Bullying can be described as unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is either:

- Offensive, intimidating or insulting,

- An abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone.

So behaviour can be bullying even if it does not relate to a protected characteristic. Bullying behaviour can be harassment if it relates to a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation under the Equality Act 2010).

3.2. Harassment

Under the Equality Act 2010 there are three types of harassment:

- Harassment related to protected characteristics,
- Sexual harassment,
- Less favourable treatment as a result of harassment.

3.3. Harassment related to a protected characteristic

This is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Unwanted conduct may occur as a one-off incident or repeated behaviour, and can include:

- spoken words,
- banter,
- written words,
- posts or contact on social media,
- imagery,
- graffiti,
- physical gestures,
- facial expressions,
- mimicry,
- jokes or pranks,
- acts affecting a person's surroundings,
- aggression, and
- physical behaviour towards a person or their property.

3.4. Sexual harassment

This is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Examples can include:

- sexual comments or jokes,
- displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photos,

- suggestive looks or leering,
- propositions and sexual advances,
- making promises in return for sexual favours,
- sexual gestures,
- intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life,
- sexual posts or contact on social media,
- spreading sexual rumours about a person,
- sending sexually explicit emails or text messages, and
- unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing.

Please refer to All Souls College Sexual Harassment Policy which can be found on the [College intranet](#).

3.5. Less favourable treatment for rejecting or submitting to unwanted conduct

This occurs when:

3.5.1. someone is subjected to unwanted conduct:

- of a sexual nature,
- related to sex, or
- related to gender reassignment.

3.5.2. the unwanted conduct has the purpose or effect of:

- violating their dignity, or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, and
- they are treated less favourably because they submitted to or rejected the unwanted conduct.

3.6. Other types of harassment

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 includes a separate type of harassment in addition to the types under the Equality Act 2010. This is behaviour that causes alarm or distress but is not necessarily related to a protected characteristic. It includes stalking and can be a criminal offence.

4. **Detrimental behaviour because of an association with a protected characteristic**

So bullying and harassment are not necessarily associated with a protected characteristic. Even when they are associated with a protected characteristic, they may not be based on the fact that a colleague belongs to a particular group, but simply because the individual has been singled out for such treatment or associates with someone of a protected characteristic.

For example, this would include claiming someone is gay when they are not or making fun of someone who has a disabled relative. The bullying and harassment may take the following forms, though again this is not intended as an exhaustive list:

- Limiting or withdrawing verbal communication,
- Isolating a colleague by unfriendly behaviour,
- Behaviour designed to belittle or produce anxiety in a colleague,
- Unreasonable scrutiny of work,
- Unreasonable criticism of work, and adopting double standards in expectations of work performance,
- Unreasonable denial of leave and/or special leave requests,
- Unreasonable denial of requests for flexible working,
- Work or staff social activities that deliberately exclude a colleague,
- Jokes or inappropriate humour at the expense of a colleague.

5. Standards of work behaviour

- Courtesy towards colleagues,
- Consideration and understanding of the work demands of colleagues,
- Maintaining a temperate tone, and temperate language, in all verbal and written communication with colleagues,
- Avoidance of the use of foul language,
- Awareness of language and conduct which have the potential to offend a colleague,
- Obtaining the express or implied permission of a colleague before adopting familiarity in conduct or language.

6. Circumstances which are covered

This policy covers behaviour which occurs in the following situations:

- a work situation;
- a situation occurring outside of the normal workplace or normal working hours which is related to work, for example, a working lunch or social event with colleagues or other members of the college;
- outside of a work situation but against a colleague or other member of the college, including on social media;
- against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to their suitability to carry out the role.

7. What to do if you or another member of the College community is subject to bullying or harassment

The college is committed to ensuring that there is no harassment or bullying in the workplace. Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated as a disciplinary matter, although every situation will be considered on an individual basis and in

accordance with the principles of the grievance and disciplinary procedures, a copy of which is available on the college intranet or from the HR department.

7.1. Informal complaint

Staff, Fellows and other members of the College wishing to seek informal resolution should approach their line manager, Head of HR, HR Officer or Diversity Fellows or Diversity Officer (our Harassment Advisors) to ask for help in achieving an informal resolution of the problem. Alternatively, you can report instances by visiting <https://faceup.com/c/ilsdnzqb>. At no time should they feel obliged to approach an alleged harasser.

In some situations, it may be appropriate to ask the parties to consider entering into a mediation process. Although mediation may be attempted at any time before or after a formal investigation, it may be particularly helpful if it is considered at an early stage before the formal procedure is invoked.

We recognise that complaints of bullying and harassment can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate to raise the issue through our normal grievance procedure. In these circumstances you are encouraged to raise such issues with one Diversity Fellows or Diversity Officer (our Harassment Advisors) as a confidential helper.

7.2. Formal complaint

Where the informal approach fails or if the bullying or harassment is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of the Head of HR as a formal written complaint and your confidential helper can assist you in this, if required. Alternatively, you can report instances by visiting <https://faceup.com/c/ilsdnzqb>. If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment so that the written complaint can include:

- the name of the alleged harasser;
- the nature of the alleged harassment;
- the dates and times when the alleged harassment occurred;
- the names of any witnesses; and
- any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment.

On receipt of a formal complaint we will take action to separate you from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place.

This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged harasser to another work area or suspension with contractual pay until the matter has been resolved.

The person dealing with the complaint will invite you to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough

investigation. You have the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by your confidential helper, trade union representative or another work colleague of your choice and you must take all reasonable steps to attend. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter.

On conclusion of the investigation, which will normally be within ten working days of the meeting with you, the decision of the investigator, detailing the findings, will be sent in writing to you.

You have the right to appeal against the findings of the investigator in accordance with the appeal provisions of the grievance procedure.

8. Disciplinary action

If the decision is that the allegation is well founded, the harasser will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedures. An employee or Fellow who receives a formal warning or who is dismissed for harassment may appeal by using the relevant appeal procedure.

When deciding on the level of disciplinary sanction to be applied, we will take into consideration aggravating factors such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague.

If you bring a complaint of bullying or harassment you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, if it is concluded that the complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent, disciplinary action will be taken against you.

9. Third party harassment

Third party harassment occurs when one of our community is subjected to harassment by someone who is visiting College. This includes visiting students, visiting academics, suppliers, members of the public. Third party harassment of members of our community will not be tolerated.

Should you be subjected to third party harassment, you are encouraged to report this as soon as possible to HR. Any potentially criminal acts will be reported to the police, and we will share information relating to the incident with other parties as appropriate.

ANNEXE A: SOURCES OF ADVICE

The sources of advice set out below are available to:

- those who believe that they may be being harassed, and who wish to discuss any concerns in confidence;
- those who have been told that their conduct is perceived as harassing.

The University's Harassment Advisory Service is available to staff. It comprises a network of around 460 voluntary advisors, supported by the University's Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU). Each department and college is expected to have at least two advisors, one man and one woman. Their details will be featured on noticeboards and websites, and those experiencing or accused of harassment are encouraged to contact their local advisor for support.

If a local advisor is not available or it would not be appropriate to contact them (for example, if the individual were a close colleague or manager or supervisor) the central Harassment Line will provide details of another advisor, in confidence. Contact: harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk.

The role of a harassment advisor is to listen non-judgementally to individuals' concerns and provide them with support by:

- Guiding them through this Policy and relevant procedures, clarifying the options open to them and assisting them to resolve the matter informally where possible;
- Where requested, supporting them through the resolution process, whether formal or informal;
- Dealing with all cases with the utmost confidentiality except where there is an unacceptable risk to a student, a member of staff or to the institution; and
- Referring them to another advisor where necessary or to other agencies or support systems as appropriate.

Harassment advisors do not:

- Approach the alleged harasser in an attempt to mediate or resolve the matter;
- Act as a representative or advocate; or
- Act as a party to any formal stage of the complaint process, except in the role of providing support.

Full details may be found at edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/harassment-advice.

Members of staff may also contact local trade union representatives for support – details may be found at: hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/joint-committees-and-staff-representation.

Other sources of general help, and information on how the Harassment Service is monitored and evaluated, can be found at: edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/harassment-advice