Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Policy Scope and Purpose

BIRD is committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all our students, and will take steps to prevent and deal with bullying of one individual or group in BIRD's community by another. All members of BIRD community should be treated with dignity and respect so that they can fulfil their personal potential in a professional working and learning environment.

This policy applies to all BIRD students, staff, visitors, and anyone acting or working on behalf of the conservatoire.

The purpose of the policy and procedure is to encourage a culture where bullying does not occur, and to outline the steps that can be taken to deal with any issues of bullying and prevent their occurrence.

Normally, it is expected that an individual who is experiencing any form of bullying will raise a complaint themselves either informally or formally, or anonymously if they don't wish to disclose their name and make a formal complaint. However, where another student becomes aware of bullying against another student and/or staff, they may also want to raise a formal complaint. It does not matter that the person making the complaint it is not the person being bullied.

2. Legal Framework

Bullying and harassment are unacceptable on moral grounds. There are legal requirements to address bullying and harassment. Further information on relevant legislation can be found below:

Equality Act 2010

Protection from Harassment act 1997

3. Related Policies

- Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Student Disciplinary Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Appeals Procedure
- Student Complaints Policy

4. Aims

4.1. Promote a Safe and Inclusive Environment

- Ensure all students, staff, and visitors feel safe, respected, and valued.
- Foster a culture of kindness, empathy, and mutual respect.

4.2. Prevent Bullying Behaviours

- Educate the community about what constitutes bullying, including physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying.
- Encourage proactive measures to prevent bullying before it starts.

4.3. Provide Clear Reporting Procedures

- Establish accessible, confidential, and supportive channels for reporting bullying incidents.
- Ensure all reports are taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

4.4. Support Affected Individuals

- Offer emotional and practical support to those affected by bullying.
- Provide access to counselling, peer support, and restorative practices.

4.5. Hold Individuals Accountable

- Ensure appropriate consequences for bullying behaviour, aligned with BIRD's disciplinary policies procedures.
- Promote accountability and opportunities for behavioural change.

4.6. Educate and Raise Awareness

- Deliver training for students and staff on bullying prevention, conflict resolution, and respectful communication.
- Raise awareness that the difference between bullying and the expression of lawful views lies in the intent, delivery, and impact of the communication.

4.7. Monitor and Review

- Regularly assess the effectiveness of the policy through feedback, incident tracking, and review meetings.
- Update the policy as needed to reflect best practices and evolving challenges.

5. Definition

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but it can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Non-verbal conduct includes postings on social media outlets. Bullying may include, by way of example:

- Shouting at, being sarcastic towards, ridiculing or demeaning others.
- Physical or psychological threats.
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision.
- Inappropriate and/or derogatory remarks about someone's performance.

- Abuse of authority or power by those in positions of seniority.
- Deliberately excluding someone from meetings, communications, rehearsals, or presentations without good reason.

6. Reporting Incidents of Bullying

Students who have experienced, or those who have witnessed incidents of bullying are encouraged to make a disclosure to BIRD.

Reports can be made through:

- Email: reportandsupport@birdcollege.co.uk
- Speak to an advisor: In person or by letter to the Learning and Wellbeing Officer or Dean of Students.
- Anonymously: Report + Support Form

Students who speak to an advisor will be given information on reporting options and support available so that they can make an informed decision on what happens next.

Any member of the BIRD community should feel comfortable about coming forward to make a complaint. Prior to take any action, an individual may wish to keep a log of the instances of bullying they believe they have been subject to. It is important to record the date, time, and location of the incident, what was said/done and by whom, the context of those words/actions, how it made the individual feel, and what action was taken (if any).

Before making a report, a student who believes they are being bullied may want to try to resolve the situation informally. This is optional, students do not have to attempt informal resolution first, and can make a report at any time.

6.1. Trying to Resolve the Situation Informally

Many concerns are resolved this way, and confidentiality will be maintained unless otherwise agreed. Trying informal resolution first is not a requirement to make a report, and a student can report the matter at any point instead of, or after, trying these steps.

A student who believes that they are being bullied could consider the following options:

- Discuss the problem with the alleged bully. The discussion should involve giving one or more examples of the unacceptable/unwanted behaviour and agreeing how the behaviour should change in the future.
- Write to the alleged bully, outlining the unacceptable/unwanted behaviour, with example(s) and ask for a change in behaviour.

Where a student instead makes a report, including by speaking to the Dean of Students or the Learning and Wellbeing Officer, BIRD will decide the appropriate next step under the Initial Consideration stage of the Student Disciplinary Policy (Section 8)

6.2. Making a Formal Report

Formal reports made by a student against student(s) or staff should be made by completing this form. Submitting this form constitutes making a report for the purposes of the Student

Disciplinary Policy, and is considered under that policy's Initial Consideration stage (section 8). From this point, the matter is dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Policy (sections 7-12), which may include precautionary action under section 7 of that policy where necessary.

7. Appeals

Please refer to the Appeals Procedure for further information.

8. Unwarranted Complaints

BIRD treats genuine complaints seriously; however, the possibility of malicious, vexatious, spurious, or frivolous complaints is recognised. Any complaints identified as such, via an investigation, will be treated seriously and BIRD may respond with the appropriate disciplinary procedures. A complaint put forward on insufficient grounds and with the intention of causing harm to an individual can be in itself a form of bullying.

9. Victimisation

Those making complaints of bullying should not be subject to any form of less favourable treatment as a result of making a complaint. This also applies to those who have been cleared of bullying following an investigation, and individuals giving evidence in support of a complaint.

10. Available Support

10.1. Internal Support

Both students who disclose incidents of bullying and students allegedly engaging in unacceptable behaviour will be provided with appropriate support. Students can access support of the Wellbeing Team by emailing wellbeing@birdcollege.co.uk. Depending on the individual circumstances, BIRD may provide counselling support, and academic support in relation to decisions about engagement/attendance, assessments, accommodation, continuation, suspension or cessation of study.

External Support

- The National Bullying Helpline: 0845 22 55 787 (Open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday), admin@nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk
- Young Minds: Offers advice and support
- Citizens Advice: provides some information on bullying and harassment
- Victim Support: for all victims of crimes (including Anti-Social Behaviour and harassment)
- StreetSafe | Metropolitan Police: StreetSafe is a service that allows you to report safety concerns in public places, on your way to or back from the campus, without giving the Police your name (anonymously). This includes issues like poorly lit streets, abandoned buildings, or vandalism, as well as instances where you feel unsafe due to someone following or verbally abusing you.

11. Document Control

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Related documents:	• Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure • Student Disciplinary Policy • Staff Code of Conduct • Student Code of Conduct • Equality and Diversity Policy • Safeguarding Policy • Appeals Procedure • Student Complaints Policy		
Documents replaced:	N/A		
Notes:	The Anti-Bullying Policy needed to be reviewed following approval of the new Student Disciplinary Policy. The following changes were made: • Removal of the “informal and formal routes” and replace it with “trying to resolve the situation informally” and “making a formal report”. • Fixed inconsistency: The Anti-Bullying Policy used the term "Formal Complaint," submitted by "completing this form." But the Student Disciplinary Policy doesn't have complaints or complainants, its defined terms are "Reporting Party" and "Reported Party," and its process starts from "on receipt of a report" (section 8, Initial Consideration). "Complaint" is term owned by the Student Complaints Policy, which explicitly states that bullying is out of scope and dealt with under the Anti-Bullying Policy instead. The issue was resolved by changing “formal complaint procedure” to “making a formal report”. • Added reference to the Initial Consideration stage of the Student Disciplinary Policy (section 8). • Added reference to section 7 - precautionary action of the Student Disciplinary Policy.		