

Student Behaviour and Professional Standards Policy FE

DATE: 2025-2028

Accessibility Statement

If you have any learning difficulty, disability or health problem, that means you are unable to use the policy and procedure in the way laid out in this document, or you may require additional support to help you with the process, please contact the College to discuss how the process can be adjusted to support your needs. Should you require this guide in an alternative format please contact the College.

Document Control

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Contents

CONTENTS	2
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES.....	3
3. PURPOSE	4
4. SCOPE.....	5
DEFINITIONS/TERMINOLOGY	5
5. RESPONSIBILITIES	9
6. BEHAVIOUR OUT OF COLLEGE	9
7. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES (SEND) INCLUDING STUDENTS WHO HAVE EDUCATIONAL HEALTH AND CARE PLANS (EHCP'S)	10
8. MISCONDUCT	11
9. STUDENT RIGHTS.....	12
10. ASSOCIATED POLICIES	12

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Hereford College of Arts is committed to providing an environment that supports learning and promotes the health, wellbeing and professionalism of students and staff within its creative community. We are proud of the high standards of the behaviour on our sites and our students embrace being part of a safe and happy creative community. Students feel comfortable to report incidents of poor behaviour and are aware that they can share information in person or via teams/via Studentnet at any time should they need to raise a concern.
- 1.2 We ask for our students to embrace the key HCA Values of being inventive, curious, individual, collaborative and brave. We work to provide a safe College where students feel included in every aspect of College life, are comfortable to share their opinions, feel happy with their peers, are treated with courtesy and respect and their contribution to the learning process is valued. Hereford College of Arts recognises that when students display good behaviour and take responsibility for their learning, they contribute to an overall positive atmosphere within the College that ultimately supports success and achievement.
- 1.3 The College will therefore not tolerate bullying and harassment in any form and will take firm and decisive action to protect the interests of its students whenever incidents are identified.
- 1.4 Hereford College of Arts sets high expectations regarding the standards of behaviour for all its students which are clearly set out in the FE Student Handbook and Student Charter.
- 1.5 The College works hard to provide a safe and happy environment for learning; unacceptable behaviour that threatens to disrupt this will not be tolerated.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Hereford College of Arts understands that the first step to modelling good behaviour is leading by example. This means that all staff, volunteers, and visitors to the College must act professionally, responsibly and with integrity.
- 2.2 Hereford College of Arts believes that in conjunction with behaviour boundaries and sanctions, good support systems, praise, and rewards for good behaviour are an important part of building an effective learning community.
- 2.3 Hereford College of Arts will ensure that discipline is consistent across the College for FE students so that behaviour boundaries and sanctions are clear to all and are applied fairly, proportionately and without discrimination, taking into

account Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as well as any additional challenges that some vulnerable students may face.

- 2.4 Hereford College of Arts recognises that disruptive behaviour can often be an indication of unmet social/emotional needs. Any formal response to a student's behaviour will always consider any causal factors that are influencing those behaviours; however, the boundaries of respect and tolerance apply to all. In such cases, early intervention is essential to reduce the need for any subsequent action or exclusion. In this situation the Safeguarding and Prevent manager/Wellbeing Mentor may consider a multi-agency assessment that goes beyond the student's educational needs.

3. PURPOSE

- 3.1 The purpose of this Policy is to set out the standards and expectations of behaviour within the College, and to support staff when challenged by unacceptable behaviours. The policy outlines the behaviour expectations we have of our students' and others' behaviour and the associated consequences of failing to meet those expectations.

- 3.2 This policy incorporates the principles outlined in HCA Student Charter whereby students undertake to;

- Treat their fellow students, staff and physical environment of the college with respect
- Promote a positive and inclusive culture with zero tolerance to bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct
- Attend college and actively engage with the education offered by attending and taking part in all sessions to the very best of their individual abilities
- Drive the creative life and direction of the college and Herefordshire community
- Students are strongly advised to not take holidays in term time, any essential absences (medical appointment or a funeral for example) should be signed off in advance by the course/curriculum leader
- Take responsibility for managing their own learning: actively engaging in private study, and participating fully in group learning activities to the best of their individual abilities
- Submit assessed work by stated or differentiated deadlines, actively participate in feedback
- Make prompt payment of charges made by the institution
- Act as a representative for Hereford College of Arts in words and deeds
- Uphold core British values: tolerance, mutual respect, individual liberty, the rule of law and democracy
- Follow Health and Safety procedures

- 3.3 The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Promote a safe, healthy, creative and professional environment in which teaching and learning can take place and in which staff, students and visitors feel comfortable
- Explain the College's approach and to ensure a consistent response to any incidents involving aggressive or unacceptable behaviour, bullying and harassment, drugs and alcohol or any other misconduct
- Outline the College's restorative approach to incidents and conflict.

4. SCOPE

4.1 This Policy applies to:

- **Applicants**
- **All FE courses and programmes, including short courses.**

4.2 This policy applies on College premises, College transport, educational visits and off site enrichment, work experience arranged by Hereford College of Arts or any other College related activities.

DEFINITIONS/TERMINOLOGY

i. Aggressive Behaviour

Hereford College of Arts will take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure a safe place in which to learn and work for all its staff and students acknowledging that every employee has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and that assaults on staff or other students (including verbal assaults) are not acceptable. The College therefore expects everyone to treat each other with courtesy and respect and value the contribution each makes to the learning experience.

Aggressive behaviour can include, but is not limited to, derogatory or foul language, taunting or name calling (including on social media and online platforms), physical obstruction or unwanted close proximity. Behaviours that are considered unacceptable (in person, over the telephone or online) and will not be tolerated include:

- Verbal abuse
- Any form of aggressive behaviour or language
- Shouting at members of Hereford College of Arts staff
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, e.g. standing very close to them
- The use of aggressive hand gestures, shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Threatening behaviour
- Swearing towards or in reference to another person

- Physical interaction such as pushing or shoving, hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking, hair pulling, spitting
- Verbal or physical aggression, including body language between or towards staff or students

Any staff or students who are the victims of violence, threatening behaviour and abuse will be fully supported by the HCA People or HCA Wellbeing as appropriate.

ii. **Assault**

Encompasses any intentional and violent physical conduct and includes verbal abuse as well as threats of and attempted assault.

iii. **Bullying**

Hereford College of Arts recognises that bullying and harassment can have potentially damaging effects on students not only in terms of their potential to reach their academic ability but also in their social and personal lives.

Bullying can be understood as behaviour that is repeated and intended to hurt physically or emotionally. Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or the abuse or misuse of power (which does not always mean being in a position of authority) through means intended to undermine, humiliate, or denigrate a person. It is often aimed at certain people because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation or any other aspect such as appearance or disability.

It is not necessary for a person to object to a behaviour for it to be unwanted. Bullying can affect adults and children. Staff need to be aware of the signs that someone may be being bullied even if they have not disclosed it. Hereford College of Arts will therefore not tolerate bullying and harassment in any form and will take firm and decisive action to protect the interests of its students whenever incidents are identified.

Signs that may indicate that someone is being bullied include but are not limited to:

- Isolating themselves
- Suddenly doing less well at their course work
- Anxiety and nervousness that wasn't displayed previously
- Missing money and possessions
- Bruises, cuts and marks that cannot be explained
- Name calling and teasing, including taunts about sexual orientation
- Taunting or mocking
- Making offensive or threatening comments either verbally, online or via text or social media
- Unsubstantiated or malicious gossip
- Stealing from the victim or hiding possessions
- Physical violence, such as kicking, hitting and pushing
- Coercion

- Isolation or exclusion from group activities
- Public humiliation, control or gaslighting
- Persistent unjustified criticism
- Having responsibilities or decision-making powers withdrawn without good reason or explanation.

iv. Cyber-Bullying

Any form of bullying which takes place online or through smartphones and tablets. It is important to recognise that cyber bullying can easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 which states that electronic communications which are indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim would be deemed criminal.

This is also supported by the Communications Act 2003 which states that electronic communications which are grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing, or false, used again for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another could also be deemed as criminal behaviour.

v. Drugs

For the purposes of this policy, the term ‘Drugs’ refers to:

- All illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (as amended) and all psychoactive substances (incorrectly called “legal highs”) as described in the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 and all legal drugs, including alcohol, volatile substances which can be inhaled, including amyl nitrite or poppers, and all over the counter medicines and prescribed medicines used or offered for supply in a manner other than as prescribed.

vi. Drug Paraphernalia and searches

Drug Paraphernalia may include but is not limited to drugs containers, grinders, cigarette papers, balloons or canisters, vapes, pipes, tin foil, needles, syringes, bongs, small mirrors, spoons, short plastic straws, stills, tubes of glue, bottles or aerosol cans with hardened glue, sprays or paints or chemical odours.

Where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student/s may have an illegal or unauthorised drug (including alcohol) staff will encourage the individual/s to hand the item/s over voluntarily, where possible in the presence of a second member of HCA staff. Where the individual refuses, the DSL/DDSL or member of staff authorised by them may exercise their statutory power to search the student/s or their possessions, without consent. (Education and Inspections Act 2006 (s93) Education and Inspections Act 2006 (legislation.gov.uk) Staff may search property, for example, a student’s coat,

bag, if they believe that drugs might be stored there. Prior consent will always be sought and individuals will be made aware that if consent is refused then HCA staff may wish to proceed with a search.

vii. Fighting

Verbal or physical interaction between one or more individuals with the intention of emotional and/or physical harm.

viii. Harassment

Any conduct that is unwanted by the recipient, or any conduct which affects the dignity of any individual, or group of individuals including cases where the recipient is not offended or not present. Harassment may include bullying behaviours and be repetitive, or an isolated occurrence against one or more individuals. Harassment that is related to age, gender, race, disability, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment (i.e. a protected characteristic of the individual/s) is a form of discrimination and is illegal under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

Harassment may take any of the following forms;

- Physical harassment - unwanted contact (e.g. unnecessary touching), assault or gestures, intimidation or aggressive behaviour
- Verbal harassment - unwelcome remarks, suggestions and propositions, malicious gossip, jokes and banter which are based on a person's individual characteristics
- Non-verbal harassment - offensive literature or pictures, graffiti, social media comments and computer imagery, isolation or non-cooperation and exclusion from social activities

We believe that every student has the right to learn in an environment that is free from bullying and harassment. Any student alleging bullying or harassment will be provided with help and support throughout the process and will be guarded against victimisation.

HCA is a professional learning/work environment and students should treat it as such. General conduct for students should include;

- Students MUST wear their college lanyard (unless they are specifically asked to remove them for safety such as in workshops/during a performance)
- Students are expected to dress appropriately for their learning
- If students misuse their phones during college time, staff will ask for phones to be put away for the session/day (in bag, staff offices etc)
- Students are expected to be thoughtful and respectful in their use of language, materials and resources and personal conduct.

- Deliberate or repeated breaches of the Student Behaviour and Professional Standards Policy will be taken very seriously and may lead to withdrawal from the course of study.

Differences of attitude or culture and the misinterpretation of social signs can mean that what is perceived as bullying by one person may not seem so to another. The defining features are, however that the behaviour is unwanted and seen as offensive by the recipient, or affects their dignity.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 All members of Hereford College of Arts community have a responsibility to contribute to Hereford College of Arts being a welcoming and comfortable place to learn and work. They also have a responsibility to uphold the standards of behaviour as outlined within this Policy and report any instances where standards are not being adhered to.
- 5.2 All members of Hereford College of Arts community are responsible for creating a learning environment that is free of bullying, threat, harassment and intimidation. All members of the Hereford College of Arts community are responsible for reporting incidents promptly so that they can be addressed appropriately and in a timely manner.
- 5.3 All students have a responsibility to treat all other students, staff and visitors with respect and dignity and to ensure that their own behaviour does not cause offence to others.
- 5.4 Staff members have a responsibility to ensure that they carry out their duties in a manner that is firm and authoritative but takes care not to demean, devalue or intimidate students.
- 5.5 Course/Curriculum leaders have responsibilities in supporting the principles within this policy specifically around supporting students, providing education and guidance where behaviour-related issues have become problematic.
- 5.6 The Vice Principal (Further Education) is additionally responsible for maintaining the student's standard of behaviour and intervening when these standards are contravened, as outlined in the Support and Challenge Procedures.

6. BEHAVIOUR OUT OF COLLEGE

- 6.1 Students are expected to uphold the reputation of Hereford College of Arts even when they are not on College premises and this policy will therefore apply in any of the following circumstances:

- Taking part in any College-organised or College-related activity;
 - travelling to and from the College
 - in some way identifiable as a student at the College
- Or where the behaviour;
 - could have repercussions for the orderly running of the College
 - poses a threat to another student or member of the public;
 - could adversely affect the reputation of the College.

6.2 Hereford College of Arts cannot be responsible for student behaviour when students are out of College, but will endeavour to investigate any incident which is reported to the College, where feasible, and to provide appropriate support. The College will always co-operate with the police in any investigation of incidents which are thought to involve students of Hereford College of Arts.

ix. Contact with Parents and Carers

- 6.3 Parents and carers will be encouraged to communicate with Hereford College of Arts if they have a concern about a student's behaviour.
- 6.4 For the majority of students in further education, their parents and carers play a big part in ensuring that the student takes responsibility for their own behaviour and conduct in College. Where appropriate, parents and carers will be invited to work with the College to support their dependent's learning. This includes informing Hereford College of Arts of any special educational needs or personal factors that may result in their dependent displaying certain behaviours.
- 6.5 Parents and carers will usually be asked to attend meetings at Hereford College of Arts with staff to discuss any behaviour issues and to support any behaviour improvement contracts that are put in place. Parents and carers will usually be contacted in agreement with the student, but in some circumstances, this may be without consent.
- 6.6 Staff will work with parents and carers to understand the needs of the student and any specific behaviours.

7. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES (SEND) INCLUDING STUDENTS WHO HAVE EDUCATIONAL HEALTH AND CARE PLANS (EHCP'S)

- 7.1 Hereford College of Arts recognises its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 in respect of students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).
- 7.2 All students identified with SEND are covered under this behaviour policy, we recognise that these students often require support which is different from, or

in addition to, that required by their peers in order to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to all students.

- 7.3 For students identified as having SEND who present with challenging behaviour, we will work with the student, their parents/carers, and external agencies, where appropriate, to implement effective support strategies. This may include completing a risk assessment where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all.
- 7.4 All strategies will be monitored and reviewed regularly, in line with the principles set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2015), Section 6: The Graduated Approach – Assess, Plan, Do, Review.

8. MISCONDUCT

- 8.1 Misconduct means inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour which breaches the principles outlined within this policy.
- 8.2 Some examples of behaviours which are unacceptable to Hereford College of Arts are given below for guidance purposes. These are examples only and the list is not exhaustive. It is important to understand that even minor breaches may be treated as serious misconduct if they are persistent or repeated.
- 8.3 The following behaviour is regarded as completely unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action and possible exclusion, behaviours are including but not limited to;
- Persistent verbal abuse to staff or other students
 - Physical abuse to/attack on staff or other students
 - Indecent behaviour
 - Deliberate damage to property
 - Misuse or supply of illegal drugs or other substances
 - Theft
 - Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
 - Sexual abuse or assault
 - Carrying an offensive weapon
 - Arson
 - Hate Speech
 - Behaviour that falls under the PREVENT agenda
 - Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the student's behaviour

Hereford College of Arts has a proactive approach to the management of learners. It is not an expectation of Hereford College of Arts for staff to physically intervene with any student, no matter what the situation is or the level of potential provocation. De-escalation should always be the initial approach in managing any such situation. Should a member of staff make a professional judgement that leads them to believe no other action is acceptable in such a situation, they do so under their own risk and must take a personal responsibility for any ensuing consequence.

9. STUDENT RIGHTS

- 9.1 Students have the right to a fair hearing and to have any accusations made against them investigated without any prejudgement.
- 9.2 Students have the right to be able to make allegations without the risk of being disadvantaged, disciplined, discriminated against or victimised in any way.
- 9.3 Retaliation against, or victimisation of a student for making an allegation or complaint is likely to be considered an offence. Malicious accusations of bullying deliberately made to get another student or students into trouble will not be tolerated and will be likely to be considered an offence. Instances of bullying and harassment will be treated as misconduct, potentially gross misconduct and will be dealt with according to the relevant procedures.
- 9.4 The College's FE Support and Challenge Procedure provides details on how to deal with any incidents.

10. ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- 10.1 Drugs Policy
- 10.2 FE Student Support and Challenge Policy (Procedure)
- 10.3 Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- 10.4 Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy
- 10.5 Freedom of Speech Policy
- 10.6 Prevent Policy