

Dealing with Abusive Behaviour Policy and Procedures

Introduction

This Policy should be seen as part of UKCE's other policies concerned with discipline and behaviour. The welfare of all students is paramount, and this is especially the case for under 18s. UKCE's principal aim is to foster an atmosphere in which abusive behaviour is not tolerated and is seen to be inappropriate and wrong. It is UKCE's responsibility to counter abuse not only at the College, but outside it, such as in accommodation, or during College-related activities or events.

It is important that staff, students, visitors and UKCE accommodation providers are aware of the reporting procedures below for abusive behaviour, encouraged to report incidents and that they are fully supported to do so.

Further responsibilities include treating complaints of such behaviour seriously, being sensitive to personal feelings and perceptions and ensuring complainants are not victimised as a result of making a complaint.

Any student, staff member or visitor who feels unhappy or threatened should not regard it as a private or personal problem but should seek the help of a Welfare Officer, a friend, teacher or staff member.

It is the duty of everyone who sees an instance of abusive behaviour – actual or potential – to act to stop it peacefully, and later report it to a Welfare Officer. This duty applies to all students and staff members.

Definitions

Abuse is defined as *“the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten, upset or frighten anyone.”*

Abusive Behaviour may consist of the following, but is not limited to:

- Verbal abuse
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Actual or threatened violence
- Damage to personal property

The following actions also constitute abusive behaviour:

1. Deliberate unkindness or any action that causes hurt or upset will not be tolerated from any student, staff member or visitor.
2. It is a form of abusive behaviour to write notes, make phone calls or send electronic messages that are offensive, hurtful, annoying or worrying.

3. Abusive behaviour can also include Cyberbullying: the use of information technology to repeatedly harm or harass other people in a deliberate manner, e.g. sending, forwarding or posting harmful material using a cell phone or the internet. Cyberbullying can also take place in the workplace or on company websites, blogs or product reviews.

4. Students, staff members and visitors have a right to privacy of property and personal information in school. It is dishonest and can be a form of abuse to go into another person's pocket or bag, read a private document or electronic message.

Procedure

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

1. If abusive behaviour is suspected or witnessed, a clear account of the incident must be reported to a Welfare Officer or the Academic Counsellors who must deal with it immediately.
2. The Welfare Officer/s or Academic Counsellor/s will interview everyone who was involved and will further record the incident.
3. Parents, guardians and/or agents will be kept informed, where necessary.
4. Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned. This may lead to permanent exclusion from the course and any other services (e.g. accommodation). No refund or alternative arrangements will be made.

The appropriate and proportionate response to incidents of abusive behaviour is dependent on the circumstances of each incident.

Consequences of committing abusive behaviour:

In order to maintain a welcoming environment, the school will take the following steps with anyone acting against school policies:

- **Step 1:** Meeting with a Head of Academic Delivery/Welfare Officer/Academic Counsellor to establish the wrongdoing and assess the need to change student's / staff member's behaviour. The accused will have to sign a code of conduct. Everything mentioned during this meeting will be recorded, and a copy of the record will be sent to the accused.
- **Step 2:** If student's / staff member's behaviour does not improve, he or she will have to attend a second meeting with Welfare Officer/Academic Counsellor. If the accused is a staff member, their line manager will also attend this second meeting. This time a written warning will be issued and sent to the accused.
- **Step 3:** If student / staff member continues to break any of the rules mentioned above, they will receive a dismissal letter and will be asked to leave the school.

In extreme circumstances, the college will ask the person to leave with immediate effect. In any of the above circumstances, no refund will be given if the accused is a student.

Students, staff members or visitors who have been a victim of abusive behaviour will receive full support from UKCE by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with the Welfare Officer/s
- if a staff member, directing them to the Employee Assistance Program if they feel the need to talk to a professional
- offering continuous support and reassurance
- working on restoring self-esteem and confidence
- taking measures to ensure no further abusive behaviour occurs

The accused student, staff member or visitor will also receive full support from UKCE by:

- being given the opportunity to discuss the events
- discovering why s/he became involved
- establishing the wrongdoing and the need to change behaviour
- advising and supporting him/her to seek professional help, if a staff member than directing them to the Employee Assistance Program
- if s/he is a student, inform parents, guardians and/or agents to help change the attitude, where necessary
- if s/he is a staff member, informing their line manager to help change the attitude, where necessary. Should the offence be of a serious nature, disciplinary procedures will be followed.

Reviewed on 4th February 2025

Reviewed annually or more often as required