

Single Comprehensive Source of Information – Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

This document summarises the colleges position regarding harassment and sexual misconduct. It is the 'single comprehensive source of information' required by the [Office for Students](#) registration [Condition E6](#).

The Office for Students (OfS) are the regulator for higher education in England. The Office for Students protect the interests of students by supporting a diverse and independent higher education sector.

All Higher Education students on courses across West Herts College group are required to read this document. Students on courses awarded by our university partners are also required to the read the guidance from each university partner.

For students on University of Hertfordshire courses:

<https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/supporting-our-students/student-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct>

For students on University of Huddersfield courses:

<https://www.hud.ac.uk/gov/harassment/>

The College maintains a zero-tolerance approach to certain behaviours and attitudes particularly those that:

- Pose a risk to the health and safety of students, staff or visitors
- Contravene the rights of individuals under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation
- Involve violent conduct, threats, harassment or any form of abuse whether physical, verbal or online

Further guidance can be found in the College [Managing Student Behaviour Policy](#)

Definitions:

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic such as

- Age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- race
- religion or belief
- sex or sexual orientation
- marital or civil partnership status
- pregnancy or maternity.

Harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment).

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that makes someone feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated. Sexual harassment can be a

one-off incident, and a sexist incident is any incident which is perceived to be sexist by the target or any other person.

Harassment includes inappropriate behaviours that create an intimidating, hostile environment that is humiliating and offensive. Harassment can include violence, threats, grooming or in other ways through words, texts, images in person or online.

Discrimination (including racial discrimination)

Discrimination means treating someone less favourably than someone else because of one or more protected characteristic. This can include their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity.

Discrimination can be [direct or indirect](#) and the impact on an individual can be significant. Examples of discriminatory behaviours can include:

- Inappropriate or offensive comments being made about an individuals' race
- Inappropriate or offensive comments made about an individuals' religion or cultural practice
- Inappropriate or offensive comments made about an individuals' gender, sexuality or disability

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct relates to all unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which covers but is not restricted to:

- Sexual harassment as defined by Section 26(2) Equality Act 2010
- Harassment as defined in section 1 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Assault as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Rape as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Physical unwanted sexual advances as set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission: [Sexual harassment and the law, 2017](#)
- Intimidation or promising resources or benefits in return for sexual favours as set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission: [Sexual harassment and the law, 2017](#)
- Unwanted conduct which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (as defined by the Equality Act 2010)
- Distributing private and personal explicit images or video footage of an individual without their consent as defined by the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (whether they are above or below the age of 18).

Reporting of incidents of Harassment, Discrimination or Sexual Misconduct:

Report it. SPEAK UP. SPEAK OUT.

If you have any concerns or need someone to speak to please use the contact details below:

At College:

- Speak to a tutor or member of student support

- West Herts College Email us at heretohelp@westherts.ac.uk
- Barnfield College Email us at heretohelp@barnfield.ac.uk

Or you can call:

- West Herts College - 01923 812122
- Barnfield College - 01582 569916

If you're not at College:

- Contact 101 for non-emergency/non-urgent matters
- In an emergency call 999

Support available

- College student support (8:30-5:00 Monday-Thursday, 8:30-4:30 Friday)
- 24/7 free access to Health Assured platform offering confidential support and guidance from qualified counsellors – 0800 028 3766 quote code: MHA197653
- Wisdom App to support wellbeing. The app offers ways to help improve physical and mental health. Once you have downloaded the app use the code MHA197653 to activate.

If you or others are at risk in an emergency situation call 999.

Services of support can be found on the College website:

[Student Support | West Herts College](#)

[Student Support | Barnfield College](#)

College Investigations of Incidents

West Herts College will investigate any incidents in line with the [Managing Student Behaviour Process and Procedure](#)

Training for students

All HE students complete the Report It modules on Canvas as part of the college induction which includes training on harassment and sexual misconduct. The training outlines themes around Consent and Healthy Relationships as well as how and where to **recognise, respond to and report** any inappropriate behaviour. Training for students also includes the 4 D's of Bystander Intervention, how you can safely intervene to keep yourself and others safe.

Maintaining Professional Boundaries

All students and staff are expected to maintain professional boundaries. This means behaving in an open and transparent way, ensuring contact is professional and conducted during usual business hours, via the institutions' communication channels (Microsoft Teams, work phone, email).

The [Employee Code of Conduct](#) provides employees with guidance on the professional standards of behaviour expected by everyone working at the West Herts College Group.

The Code of Conduct applies to all employees, casual workers, contractors and agency workers regardless of their position, role or responsibilities.

Training for Staff

Staff attend mandatory Safeguarding Training in addition to training on Sexual Harassment, Equality and Diversity and Challenging Unconscious Bias as part of the colleges wider corporate training for staff.

Staff teaching on university partner provision at the college are also signposted to university staff training.

Taking steps to protect students

The College actively seeks to protect students by providing the facility to report any incidents of harassment or sexual misconduct through the Report It function and all staff attend yearly CPD to ensure staff are aware of Safeguarding functions and expectations at the College.

Non-Disclosure

West Herts College will not use non-disclosure agreements for complaints involving harassment or sexual misconduct. This means the College will not stop or limit students from disclosing information about their experiences.

Freedom of Speech

The College Freedom of Speech and Expression policy sets out the rights and obligations inherent with the principals of freedom of speech, expression and academic freedom. The Policy reaffirms the College's commitment to protecting lawful freedom of speech for students, staff, and external participants, while also identifying the limited and clearly defined circumstances in which restrictions may be imposed to prevent violence, harassment or other activities which are unlawful or likely to cause a breach of the peace.

The Policy further outlines the College's responsibilities in relation to visiting speakers and external lettings.

[Freedom of Speech and Expression Policy](#)