

## Harassment Policy (Students)

**TYPE:** Policy and Procedure

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**PURPOSE:** To inform students and staff of our policy and advise them of procedures in relation to the harassment of students.

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**SCOPE:** This policy and procedure covers harassment of students either by other students or by members of staff. There is a separate procedure for employees experiencing harassment by students or other staff members.

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**RESPONSIBILITY:** The Vice Principal HR & Student Services is responsible for this policy. The Director Student Services is responsible for the monitoring of the policy.

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**LEGAL CONTEXT:** The Equality Act 2010

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### PUBLICATION:

**Staff Hub/Intranet:** (Y)

**Website:** (N)

**Student Hub:** (Y)

Reviewed By	Created	Last Reviewed and Approved	Next Review Date	Total Pages
Hilary Baird	June 2013	Feb 2017	Feb 2019	3
Adam Thomas	June 2013	Aug 2018	Aug 2019	3

## **Harassment Policy**

This policy and procedure covers harassment of students by other students, by members of staff or by visitors to Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford-upon-Avon College (hereafter referred to as the College).

### **The College's Commitment**

Every student member of the College has rights and responsibilities as set out in the Code of Conduct. The College is committed to maintaining an environment free from harassment, intimidation or offensive behaviour in any form, verbal or non-verbal and expects all students and staff to be treated with respect. The College defines harassment as unwanted conduct which is offensive to the recipient. It covers behaviour which is unsolicited, that is personally offensive, and that fails to respect the rights of others or fails to recognise the impact that such behaviour may have.

The College's established disciplinary procedures will be used, where necessary, in cases of discrimination or harassment affecting staff or students. Harassment of a person because of a protected characteristic (Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation) is unlawful and may become the subject of legal proceedings. Writing offensive graffiti is a criminal offence. Offenders are liable to prosecution and expulsion.

### **What is Harassment?**

It is behaviour which can take many forms and occurs on a variety of grounds and may be directed at an individual or group of individuals. It is not the intention of the perpetrator but the deed itself and the impact on the recipient which determines what constitutes harassment or unwanted conduct which is unwelcome to the recipient. Although aware that there can be social or cultural differences in behaviours, the College considers that it is the duty of each individual to be sensitive about the impact they have on the people around them, and that a lack of sensitivity in this respect could constitute harassment.

### **The College's Responsibility**

The College is committed to ensuring that all staff will work to eliminate harassment in the learning environment. They should be alert to physical and verbal harassment in their work area and deal with it immediately whether or not it is brought formally to their attention.

### **The College's Procedure**

If a complaint about harassment has been brought to the attention of staff it is their duty to ensure the following:

1. The appropriate procedures are followed.
2. Individuals who complain about harassment receive full support before, during and after complaints are investigated.
3. Any cases brought to their attention are treated in a sensitive and confidential manner.
4. To keep full notes of incidents and action taken.

Staff are expected to respond to any allegations of harassment.

When raising an issue the student may wish to follow either a formal or informal route as set out in the Complaints Procedure which is available on the Student Hub or by request from Student Services on each site.

As the perception of harassment can vary from individual to individual, in the first instance it should be made clear to the harasser that the behaviour is unwelcome and s/he should be asked to stop. In circumstances in which this is difficult or embarrassing for the individual the initial approach may be made by another student, member of staff or Student Voice representative.

### **The Informal Route**

The student may feel a more informal route should be taken. The objective here is to provide support to enable the student to raise the complaint and to decide on a course of action. Each case will be considered individually and every effort made to solve the problem at source.

**It is crucial that problems are raised and not suffered.**

Therefore, if a student is suffering harassment, s/he is advised to:

1. Keep a record of any incidents which occur.
2. Tell the harasser to stop if that's possible
3. Confide in a friend if it will help.
4. Contact a member of staff who can help – the Personal Tutor, the Student Enrichment Team, a Student Support Officer, a Safeguarding Officer, a Learning Coach, a Welfare Officer, the Student Counsellor, Director of Student Services, or any other member of staff who is available for informal, confidential discussions.
5. Discuss any formal or informal actions that can be taken

### **The Formal Route**

If the harassment continues and / or the student decides it is appropriate, the complaint can be raised in writing.

### **Handling Complaints**

Complaints will be investigated promptly and discreetly and appropriate support given to the complainant. Both the complainant and staff dealing with the issues are advised to keep a record of incidents and any actions taken. Whatever course of action is taken, the aim will be to make it clear to the offender(s) that the behaviour which led to it is not acceptable and must cease. Appropriate action will be taken under the student disciplinary procedure according to the nature and severity or repetition of the offence. Irrespective of how the problem is handled, formally or informally, staff should ensure that any subsequent action is not detrimental to the complainant or, if unproven, to the alleged offender. If the complaint proves to be malicious, disciplinary action may be considered about the complainant. Victimisation of either party will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

### **Appeals**

If any party to the case feels that it has been incorrectly handled it is open to the individual to appeal under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.