



## **Harassment, Bullying and Sexual Misconduct Policy**

### **Purpose**

This policy sets out how RHCas prevents and responds to harassment, bullying and sexual misconduct. It reflects the Office for Students' Statement of Expectations (Condition E6) and our statutory duties, including safeguarding, equality and diversity, and freedom of speech.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to:

- All students, staff, contractors and visitors of RHCas.
- All locations and contexts where members of our community interact, including on campus, off campus and online.

### **Statement of Commitment**

We are committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment, free from harassment, bullying and sexual misconduct. We will:

- Take all disclosures seriously and act promptly.
- Provide appropriate support to complainants and respondents.
- Uphold lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom while protecting individuals from harassment and misconduct.

## **Definitions**

### **Harassment**

Unwanted behaviour, whether verbal, non-verbal, physical, written, online or via social media, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This may relate to (but is not limited to) sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, disability, religion or belief, age or any other protected characteristic.

### **Bullying**

Persistent, offensive, intimidating or malicious behaviour that undermines, humiliates or injures the recipient.

### **Sexual Misconduct**

All forms of unwanted sexual behaviour, ranging from verbal remarks and sexual comments to non-verbal conduct, sexualised images, unwanted touching or physical contact, coercion, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any behaviour of a sexual nature that takes place without consent. It also includes behaviour that abuses or exploits a position of power, trust or authority for sexual purposes.

### **Freedom of Speech**

We have particular regard to and place significant weight on our legal duties to uphold lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom. Nothing in this policy restricts lawful expression of views. Allegations under this policy are assessed based on behaviour and impact, not on lawful free speech.

### **Intimate Personal Relationships between Staff and Students**

- Intimate personal relationships between staff and students where a direct supervisory, teaching, pastoral or decision-making relationship exists are prohibited.
- Pre-existing relationships must be declared to the College Manager immediately so that appropriate measures (e.g. removal from decision-making roles) can be implemented.
- Both staff and students must sign the relationship declaration form.
- Outside these situations, intimate relationships between staff and students are strongly discouraged because of the risks of perceived or actual conflicts of interest.

## Reporting and Handling Incidents

- **Reporting routes:** Students and staff can report incidents via the Vice Principal or directly to the EDI Officer or College Manager
- **Initial response:** All reports are triaged promptly, risk-assessed for safeguarding and either referred for informal resolution or formal investigation.
- **Investigation:** Formal investigations are carried out by our trained investigators. Disciplinary panels are convened as necessary and follow clear timeframes.
- **Confidentiality:** All parties' information is handled sensitively and confidentially, consistent with safeguarding and data protection law.

## Support for Students

We provide appropriate support to all parties:

- Complainants receive immediate support from the student wellbeing and safeguarding team, access to specialist services, advice on reporting to police, and regular updates.
- Respondents (alleged perpetrators) are offered guidance on the process, a named contact person, and access to counselling or mental health support where appropriate.
- Protective measures (such as no-contact orders, alternative accommodation or study arrangements) may be put in place to safeguard all involved.

## Training

- **Staff:** All core staff receive annual safeguarding and "Responding to Disclosures of Harassment and Sexual Misconduct" training. Investigation officers complete specialist training on interviewing, evidence gathering and trauma-informed practice.
- **Students:** Additional workshops are offered to student leaders and volunteers who may receive disclosures.

## **Communication and Accessibility**

- All policies and procedures are published prominently on Moodle and our website under “Respect, Safety and Wellbeing.”
- Students are informed about this policy during induction and through ongoing communications, posters and the student portal.

## **Capacity and Resources**

- We maintain a core team of trained staff within our safeguarding and wellbeing team.
- We monitor the number and nature of cases annually to assess whether additional capacity is required.
- Where necessary, we will bring in external investigators or collaborate with other providers or specialist organisations to ensure sufficient capacity and expertise.

## **Monitoring and Review**

We review this policy annually, considering feedback from students and staff, legal updates, sector guidance and the prevalence of incidents to ensure it continues to make a significant and credible difference to protecting our community.

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