



**University of Brighton**

**Student Bullying and Harassment Procedure**

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# 1. Introduction

This procedure is intended for students who believe they may be experiencing bullying, harassment or victimisation at the university. A separate reporting procedure exists for staff, which can be accessed through the university’s [Human Resources](#) webpages.

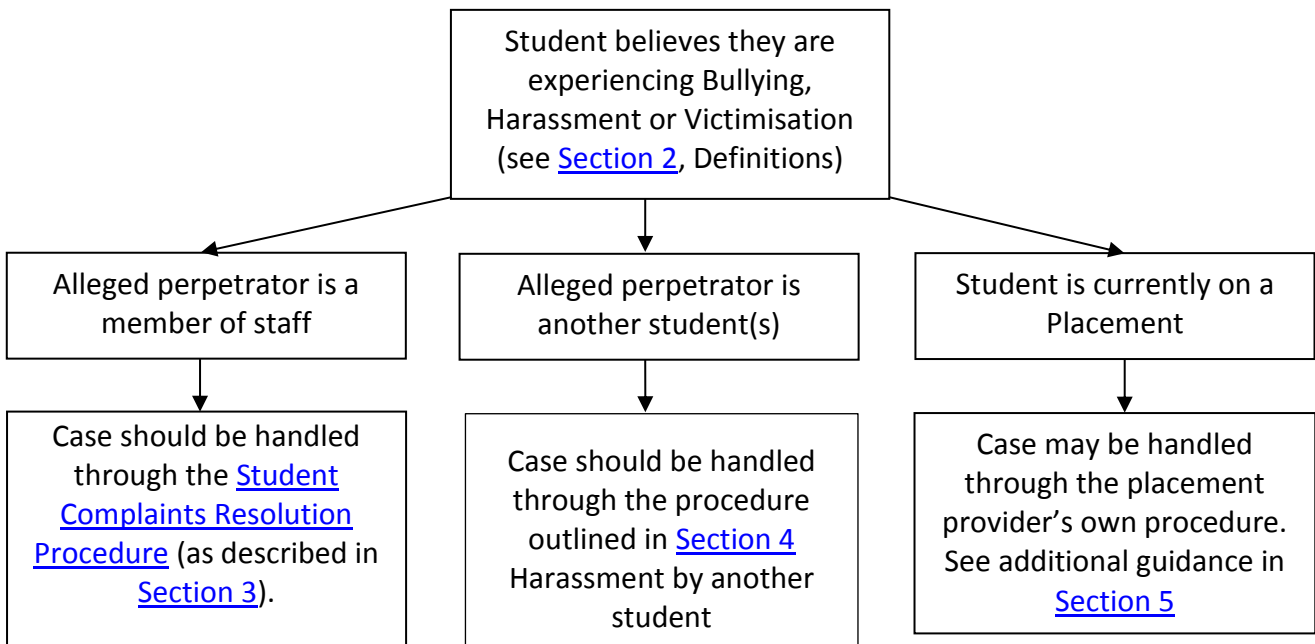
The university takes all reports of bullying and harassment extremely seriously, as outlined in the Harassment and Bullying Policy. This policy can be found in the university’s Student Contract on the [university website](#) and on the university’s [Equality and Diversity](#) webpages.

This procedure has been developed in accordance with the principles outlined in the [Student Charter](#) and through consultation with students, the Students’ Union and university staff.

## 1.1 How to use this procedure

Section 2 of this Procedure outlines relevant definitions for behaviours that constitute Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation as well as guidance on positive behaviours. Sections 3 and 4 describe the systems in place to enable students to resolve and report issues. Section 5 gives responses to Frequently Asked Questions relating to the university policy and procedure.

This flowchart outlines the procedures for students to report cases of bullying, harassment or victimisation.



## 1.2 Support for students

Support is available from a variety of sources for students experiencing bullying and harassment and for students who are accused of bullying and harassment. This support can be accessed at any stage of the procedure.

Students wanting guidance on the definitions of bullying and harassment and the reporting procedures may choose to consult the Student Experience and Equalities Manager. They can discuss the procedural options available and provide information about sources of support. The

Student Experience and Equalities Manager can be contacted at [equality@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:equality@brighton.ac.uk) or telephone 01273 642160.

The Students' Union Student Support Service offers independent advice and support regarding cases of bullying and harassment, including representation. As an independent body, the Students' Union is able to offer this representation in cases that involve staff as well as students. They can also provide support and information to students who find themselves accused of harassment and bullying. For further information please contact [studentunionsupport@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:studentunionsupport@brighton.ac.uk) or see [www.brightonsu.com/goodadvice/support/](http://www.brightonsu.com/goodadvice/support/)

Student Support and Guidance Tutors (SSGTs) are located in all Academic Schools at the University. SSGTs are not academic tutors but are there to help students with issues that may be impacting on their time at University. They are able to discuss issues of bullying or harassment in a confidential way with students and to offer support and guidance. Although SSGTs cannot offer representation, they are well placed to advise students as where to go for more help and information and can support them through the process. Please see [www.brighton.ac.uk/ssgt](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/ssgt) for more information.

The Student Advice Service in Student Services is available to provide advice and support in cases which involve other students. As part of the university, this service is limited in the support it can offer in cases that involve staff, although they will signpost students to more appropriate sources whenever required. Please see [www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/contacts/index.aspx](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/contacts/index.aspx) for more information.

The Counselling and Wellbeing team are available in Student Services to provide confidential personal and emotional support on an individual basis to all students who are involved in cases of bullying and harassment. Personal support can also be given to students regarding incidents of harassment that involve individuals from outside the university community (e.g. for issues such as domestic violence). Information about the service can be found at [www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-student-life/health-and-wellbeing/need-to-speak-to-someone/index.aspx](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-student-life/health-and-wellbeing/need-to-speak-to-someone/index.aspx)

## **2. Definitions**

Harassment and bullying can have a serious detrimental effect on the health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by it, and on the working, learning and living environment.

These negative behaviours undermine the core values of the university, which aim to create a stimulating and supportive learning and working environment, to promote equality of opportunity and to value diversity. These behaviours may also constitute unlawful discrimination.

All students and staff at the university are bound by its code of conduct and subject to disciplinary action where clear breaches are shown, such as in the case of bullying or harassment. This is true irrespective of where incidents take place – whether on university premises or elsewhere.

The policy also covers actions which do not take place face-to-face but through mediums such as social networking sites, emails, other correspondence, text messages, etc.

The university recognises its equal duty of care both to the accuser and the accused, and allegations will not be presumed proved until properly investigated using the appropriate complaints or disciplinary procedures.

### **2.1 Harassment**

Under the Equality Act (2010), harassment means unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

People can be subjected to harassment on a wide variety of grounds, including in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender identity/reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity (where interpreted as discrimination)
- Race (including ethnic origin, nationality or skin colour);
- Religion and belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual Orientation

More information about harassment in relation to the above protected characteristics can be found in the [Appendix](#) to this document.

Harassment may consist of a single incident or a pattern of behaviour which continues after an objection is made.

An individual does not need to belong to a group themselves in order to bring a complaint if they feel someone's behaviour was inappropriate and violated the dignity of that group. For example, someone could still complain that a homophobic remark was used even if they were heterosexual.

Harassment can also take place on the basis of perception or association. An individual can bring a complaint if they experience harassment because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic that they do not actually have, or because they are associated with a person with a protected characteristic. For example, an individual can bring a complaint if they are harassed because their partner has undergone gender reassignment, or because they need to take time out of work to care for an elderly or disabled relative.

It is not the intention of the alleged harasser that determines whether harassment has occurred, but whether it is considered unacceptable to the complainant. It may be deliberate or unintentional, and differences of attitude or culture and the misinterpretation of social signals can mean that what is perceived as harassment by one person may not seem so to another.

Where conflict arises in this definition, harassment will be defined by whether the behaviour is unacceptable by normal standards.

Some examples of harassment include (but are not limited to):

- Offensive or derogatory remarks, gossip or jokes;
- Obscene gestures or language;
- The display or electronic transmission of offensive pictures graffiti or other visual material
- Physical contact (ranging from touching to serious assault), to which a person has not consented, or which they have not been given the opportunity to reject;
- Intrusion by pestering, including through the use of text messaging, email or other telecommunications;
- Following, stalking or spying on people;
- Pressing people to accept unwelcome invitations;
- Obtaining sexual or other favours through threat or by making promises;
- Isolation or non-cooperation and exclusion from social activities;

Harassment can also involve micro-aggressions. These are defined as:

*"Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group."*  
(D.W. Sue 2010)

## **2.2 Bullying**

Bullying is persistent offensive, malicious, intimidating, insulting or humiliating behaviour, often associated with the misuse of power or position, which aims to undermine the confidence and self-esteem of the recipient.

Bullying is not dependent on the position of an individual within the organisation, since power may be interpreted in social terms as much by the formal structure. For example, a manager may be bullied by a member of their team; a lecturer may be bullied by a student in their class.

However, legitimate activities associated with student assessment, teaching or getting a job done will not in themselves constitute bullying, provided that they are carried out in a way that respects others, are justified by the working relationship or are part of a programme for improving student performance.

Some examples of bullying include:

- Verbal and/or physical intimidation;
- Ignoring, patronising or ostracising;
- Setting arbitrary or unachievable workloads in an unreasonable manner, and making threats associated with failure to achieve;
- Excessive supervision;
- Public reprimand, ridicule, sarcasm or humiliation
- Posting offensive comments on social networking sites or in other media;
- Sending offensive text messages or emails
- Intentionally blocking a person's training, learning or development opportunities.

### **2.3 Victimisation**

Victimisation occurs when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination or harassment, or because an individual thinks that they are doing or may do these things.

Some examples of victimisation include:

- Excluding someone from social situations following a complaint or rumour;
- Denying someone the opportunity to participate in a project, social event or apply for a placement opportunity because they are perceived to be a 'troublemaker';
- Lowering a student's assessment results because they have made or supported a complaint.

### **2.4 Physical violence, sexual violence and hate crime**

A number of serious incidents which constitute a criminal offence go beyond the scope of this procedure, for example, physical violence, sexual violence and hate crime.

Sexual violence and abuse is any behaviour of a sexual nature which is unwanted and takes place without consent or understanding. This could include rape, sexual assault or any kind of verbal, emotional or physical abuse. Anyone can be a victim of sexual violence, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

The university has developed an information sheet for students who have experienced sexual assault: [staff.brighton.ac.uk/ss/Documents/Sexual\\_assault\\_disclosure\\_information.pdf](http://staff.brighton.ac.uk/ss/Documents/Sexual_assault_disclosure_information.pdf) The document includes information about a student's options for reporting the incident to the police (including the option of not reporting the incident to the police – it is the student's decision) as well as sources of support available at the university and in the local community.

Hate crimes are any crimes that are targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or transgender identity. This can be committed against a person or property. A victim does not have to be a member of the group at which the hostility is targeted. In fact, anyone could be a victim of a hate crime. Further information about different types of hate crime can be found at [http://report-it.org.uk/what\\_is\\_hate\\_crime](http://report-it.org.uk/what_is_hate_crime)

If a student has been the victim of hate crime, they can contact the [Police](#) directly or via a [third party organisation](#).

Students can also report incidents of physical violence, sexual violence or hate crime to a member of staff at the university. This could be someone in their academic department, Halls of Residence, the Student Services office (01273 642895) or one of the university's two assigned police officers: PC Lee Cook and PC Gaynor Martin. Students can speak to the Police Liaison Officers without their query becoming an official complaint to the Police. They can also speak to the Police Liaison Officers anonymously (for example, over the phone without giving their name) if they wish. PC Lee Cook can be contacted on 07947 722924 or [L.cook2@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:L.cook2@brighton.ac.uk) and PC Gaynor Martin can be contacted on 07921 459005 or [G.Martin2@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:G.Martin2@brighton.ac.uk)

If a student has concerns for their personal safety or that of others, it is important that they report the situation to someone in authority at the university, and/or the Police as appropriate, and as soon as possible.

## **2.5 Appropriate behaviours**

Behaviours that constitute harassment and bullying should not be confused with appropriate management or teaching practice or reasonable social interaction between individuals.

Examples of appropriate behaviours include (but are not limited to):

- Following university procedures in investigating or addressing issues raised by staff or students
- Making decisions about students based on merit (taking into account relevant diversity factors such as study patterns, disability and caring responsibilities)
- Reasonable academic discussion or debate, including about issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Activities designed to promote equality of opportunity or encourage positive relations between different groups of students
- Being aware that people come from different backgrounds and cultures, and acknowledging and respecting differences between people

### **3. Harassment by a member of staff**

Complaints of Harassment where the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff are handled through the Student Complaints Resolution Procedure.

This procedure is part of the University's Student Contract and can be found on the University's website: [staff.brighton.ac.uk/reg/acs/docs/Student-Complaints-Resolution.pdf](http://staff.brighton.ac.uk/reg/acs/docs/Student-Complaints-Resolution.pdf)

Further information on how to raise a complaint can be found at [www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-studies/student-policies-and-regulations/index.aspx](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-studies/student-policies-and-regulations/index.aspx)



## **4. Harassment by another student**

Complaints of harassment where the alleged perpetrator is another student are handled through the process below.

While the university encourages informal local resolution wherever possible, it is not necessary for students to attempt each stage of the process chronologically. For example, if a serious case of harassment is suspected, it may be appropriate for an individual to report the incident through the Formal Complaint Stage straight away.

### **4.1 Personal resolution stage**

Where appropriate, individuals should consider ways in which they can resolve the situation themselves, by making it clear that they find the behaviour offensive and want it to stop. Options to consider include:

- Speaking to the person responsible for the behaviour;
- Writing to the person;
- Challenging the person accompanied by another student;
- Asking another student to speak to the person on their behalf.

If the allegation is very serious (for example, sexual harassment) or the individual feels too unsafe or uncomfortable to make contact with the person responsible for the behaviour, they should pursue a local resolution or formal complaint instead.

### **4.2 Local/informal resolution stage**

If the situation does not improve following an attempt at personal resolution, if the individual finds it impossible to raise the issue personally, or if the allegation is more serious, the complainant should contact someone with whom they feel able to discuss the situation. This could be:

- Their lecturer or course leader
- Their personal tutor
- Their Head of Department, Head of School or Dean
- Their Student Support and Guidance Tutor (based in their school)
- A member of staff from the Student Advice Service (in Student Services)
- A member of Accommodation staff
- A Students' Union representative
- The Student Experience and Equalities Manager (in Student Services)

The individual may choose to be accompanied by a Students Union representative or another student at a meeting with one of the above people.

The focus at this stage continues to be on facilitating a local resolution, and will not in itself result in any further formal internal investigation or disciplinary action.

Action taken by the person receiving the complaint is likely to include approaching the alleged harasser to give them the opportunity to give their perspective on the situation. The alleged harasser may be accompanied at any meeting by a Students Union representative or another student.

The university does not have a formal mediation service. Where appropriate, the possibility of involving someone with mediation skills may be considered. For further information, please contact the Student Experience and Equalities Manager.

Members of staff who are asked to facilitate this stage of the procedure may wish to familiarise themselves with the various services provided by Student Services. Information can be found on the [Student Services area of staffcentral](#).

### **4.3 Formal complaint stage**

Where informal resolution is not appropriate (for example because of the seriousness of the allegations), or is not requested, or where the outcome has been unsatisfactory, an individual may bring a formal complaint.

In the case where the complaint relates to an incident within university halls or managed accommodation, the student should write to the Assistant Head of Accommodation.

In all other cases, the student should write to their Head of School in the first instance. Postgraduate research students should write to the Dean of the Doctoral College.

[Brighton Students' Union Student Support Service](#) is available to help students when drafting letters of complaint. Guidance about what details should be included in a 'formal complaint' letter can also be found in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) at the end of this document. Where a formal complaint is submitted, the person about whom the allegations have been made will be informed of the nature of the complaint.

On receipt of a formal complaint, the Head of School or Head of Department to whom the complaint was made, in liaison with the Registrar and Secretary, will arrange for the complaint to be dealt with by one or more members of University staff of appropriate seniority who were not involved in the subject of the complaint and who have had no previous involvement in the matter.

The appointed member(s) of staff, known as Investigating Officer(s), will normally meet with the student complainant to ascertain the extent of the complaint. They will then carry out appropriate investigations. The investigation will comply with principles set out to ensure swift, objective and appropriate consideration of the circumstances, and will focus on the facts of the complaint.

Both the complainant and the person about whom the complaint has been made may be accompanied at any meeting by a Students' Union representative or another student.

The Investigating Officer(s) will make recommendations (via the Head of School or Head of Department to whom the complaint was made) to the Registrar and Secretary regarding action to be taken, which may include disciplinary action under the Student Disciplinary Procedure: [staff.brighton.ac.uk/reg/acs/docs/2016-17\\_Student\\_Contract\\_Student-Disciplinary-Procedure.pdf](http://staff.brighton.ac.uk/reg/acs/docs/2016-17_Student_Contract_Student-Disciplinary-Procedure.pdf)

Both the student who made the complaint and the student against whom the complaint was made will be notified of the outcome of these investigations in writing usually within 20 working days. If it is not possible to complete the investigation within this time, they will be informed of the delay.

If either the complainant or the person about whom the complaint has been made feel that a formal investigation involving them has not been dealt with to their satisfaction, they may raise their concerns in writing to the Registrar and Secretary.

Within this letter, the student should specify the reasons why they believe their complaint should be reviewed, and this would normally fall within one or more of the following categories:

- i) New facts have come to light which were not previously available
- ii) Information submitted was not considered
- iii) The resolution proposed was disproportionate to the outcome of the investigation

On receipt of the request for review, the Registrar and Secretary or nominee will decide either:

- i) to uphold the complaint
- ii) to establish a Review Panel or
- iii) that there are insufficient grounds for further review.

The student who has made the appeal will be notified of this decision in writing, usually within 20 working days.

## **5. Harassment experienced whilst on placement**

Occasionally a situation may arise where a student believes that they are experiencing bullying or harassment whilst on placement.

In these instances, a student is advised to make use of local systems or policies within the host organisation/employer in the first instance. Often placement students will be able to access an organisation's staff policy and a local/informal resolution will be possible.

Where academic schools take responsibility for finding placement opportunities for students, part of the arrangement process will involve assessing workplace policies and practices to ensure that they meet the minimum legal requirements. It may also be helpful for Schools to keep records relating to any reports of harassment to identify if there are recurring issues that need further addressing.

A student may therefore wish to inform their university placement tutor or personal tutor of the situation as it arises, so that appropriate support can be made available from the university. This may include an informal discussion with a placement supervisor to check what policies are in place and what action will be taken, or it may include mitigation of any influence held by an alleged harasser over the student's final grading for the placement (to prevent victimisation).

In the absence of a local policy that protects a student from harassment (for example where placements take place with small organisations or overseas), it is suggested that a member of university staff could provide the host organisation with a copy of the university policy and suggest that an appropriate resolution is sought.

Further guidance for staff handling complaints of harassment relating to placements is also available from the university's Legal Adviser or Student Experience and Equalities Manager on request.

If a student withdraws from placement on the grounds of a case of harassment, they may still be required to meet any work-based course requirements. The university will do everything it can to support students in making alternative arrangements for this, but cannot guarantee that alternative placement opportunities will always be available. It is therefore suggested that any student wishing to withdraw from a placement speaks to their university placement coordinator, course leader or personal tutor as soon as possible.

## 6. Frequently Asked Questions

### **What should I do if I fear for my personal safety or the safety of someone else?**

If you have concerns for your personal safety or that of others, it is important that you report the situation to someone in authority at the university, and/or the police as appropriate. This may mean telling someone in your academic department, Halls of Residence or contacting the Student Services office (01273 642895), or by calling 999. The university also has two assigned police officers: PC Lee Cook can be contacted on 07947 722924 or [L.cook2@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:L.cook2@brighton.ac.uk) and PC Gaynor Martin can be contacted on 07921 459005 or [G.Martin2@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:G.Martin2@brighton.ac.uk)

Violent physical crimes and crimes of a sexual nature are taken extremely seriously by the university. The decision whether to report the crime to the police will generally be the student's decision alone and will be respected. However, in some cases members of university staff may report serious cases to the police on behalf of a student, even if consent has been refused, because they judge that there is a duty of care to the student or other students who may be at risk.

The university has developed an information sheet for students who have experienced sexual assault: [staff.brighton.ac.uk/ss/Documents/Sexual\\_assault\\_disclosure\\_information.pdf](http://staff.brighton.ac.uk/ss/Documents/Sexual_assault_disclosure_information.pdf) The document includes information about a student's options for reporting the incident to the police as well as sources of support available at the university and in the local community.

### **Should I make an informal or formal complaint?**

The university takes allegations of bullying and harassment very seriously and will seek as swift and just a resolution to each situation as possible.

In dealing with complaints, the university's focus will be on informal and local resolution wherever possible. This is because, by resolving issues locally, all parties involved in the complaint are much more likely to be satisfied with the outcome and matters may be resolved more quickly.

An individual has the opportunity to make a formal complaint at any stage, and is not obliged to pass through the personal and local resolution stages prior to this, although this would be strongly recommended unless the allegation is very serious.

If the allegation is very serious (for example, sexual harassment) or the individual feels too unsafe or uncomfortable to make contact with the person responsible for the behaviour, they should generally pursue a formal complaint rather than a personal or local/informal resolution.

A number of serious incidents which constitute a criminal offence go beyond the scope of this procedure, for example, physical violence, sexual violence and hate crime. Students can report incidents of physical violence, sexual violence or hate crime directly to the police or to a member of staff at the university. This could be someone in their academic department, Halls of Residence, the Student Services office (01273 642895) or one of the university's two assigned police officers: PC Lee Cook and PC Gaynor Martin.

### **How can I challenge the person at an informal level?**

Some cases of bullying and harassment arise out of misunderstandings, personality clashes, or misplaced humour rather than by the deliberate actions. You may find that talking to the person

about their behaviour is enough to stop it from continuing. However, this may not always be appropriate – for example, in cases of sexual harassment or any situation where you feel physically unsafe.

If you decide it would be appropriate to challenge the person about their behaviour and would like moral support, ask a friend or a member of staff if they can accompany you to talk to the individual. They may help to calm the atmosphere and to give you more confidence.

Think about what you are going to say in advance, and practise with someone beforehand if you think this will help. It may be helpful if you can think of a specific incident about which you would like to challenge them. When discussing the situation, try to be clear and specific:

- Tell them exactly what you found unacceptable
- Describe how it made you feel
- Explain what you want them to do – or stop doing – in the future

Be prepared to listen to their side of the story too. They may have interpreted some of your behaviour negatively, and so it can be helpful to have an honest conversation so that you can reach an agreement about how things should change in the future.

If the person tries to laugh off your challenge, tell them that you're being serious and make it clear to them their behaviour is unacceptable and that the university has a clear policy on Bullying and Harassment. Be aware that if you have caught the person off guard, it may be natural for them to be defensive at first. You may need to give them some time to reflect and their behaviour may still improve even if they can't see your point of view at first.

If, after speaking to them, their behaviour still does not improve, then you may wish to consider more formal ways of reporting the situation.

### **What should I do if I'm accused of bullying or harassing someone else?**

The university has a duty to investigate all reported incidents of bullying, harassment and victimisation thoroughly. However, the university also recognises its equal duty of care both to the accuser and the accused, and allegations will not be presumed proved until properly investigated using the appropriate complaints or disciplinary procedures.

Students who have been accused of harassment have a right to be informed of the complaint and will be given the opportunity to state their own case.

They should take the following action:

- Make sure that they read the [Harassment and Bullying Policy](#), the Student Bullying and Harassment Procedure, or the [Staff Harassment and Bullying Guidance and Procedure](#) which set out what can be expected at each stage of the procedure for dealing with the complaint.
- Avoid contact with the person who has made the accusation, unless this is absolutely necessary, for example on work, teaching or study matters. If contact would normally be inevitable or unavoidable, the person accused should seek advice from their Personal Tutor or Head of School. It may be appropriate to have a third party present where it is necessary to hold work-related meetings.

- Make notes relating to any incidents that have occurred involving the person making the allegation of harassment, and be prepared to respond to questions relating to these incidents.

Students who have been accused of harassment or bullying can also access support and representation from the [Students' Union Student Support Service](#), as well as personal and emotional support from the [Counselling and Wellbeing Service](#). Please see [Section 1.2](#) for further information about support available to students.

### **I think my friend is being bullied/harassed. What should I do?**

If you have concerns about how one of your friends is being treated, the first step to take is to talk to them, describe what you have noticed and see how they respond. It may be that they have interpreted events differently and are not bothered by a situation. Alternatively, they may have been avoiding confronting someone and will welcome your support in deciding how to tackle the issue.

It is important that you let them decide what they would like to do, but you can help them by telling them about the different options available. You can point them in the direction of [Student Services](#) or [Students' Union Student Support Service](#) if you feel they would benefit from talking to someone about events in more detail.

If they want to address the issues informally, you could offer to support them by accompanying them and/or by helping them to rehearse what they are going to say.

If they choose to raise a formal complaint, you may be able to support their case by describing the events that you have witnessed to the investigating member of staff.

If you have concerns for their, or anyone else's, personal safety then it is important that you report the situation to someone in authority, either to a member of staff within the university and/or to the police.

### **What do I do if it involves someone who isn't a UoB student or member of staff?**

All members of the university community are bound by the standards of behaviour outlined in the Harassment and Bullying Policy. This applies both within an academic and a social context.

However, if the perpetrator is someone who is not associated with the university, it can be more difficult for the institution to take action, since normal disciplinary policies would not apply.

Instead, students may find that these behaviours are covered by other areas of legislation. For example, if bullying or harassment occurs within the workplace, individuals would be covered by employment legislation and any employer policies.

More generally, harassment may be referred to as [Hate Crime](#) and can be reported directly to the [Police](#) or via a [third party organisation](#). The Police should always be contacted if there is a personal safety issue involved.

If harassment and/or bullying occurs within private accommodation, the university may not be able to intervene directly, but the Accommodation Service may be able to offer advice regarding contracts and tenancy issues and whether it is possible to sub-let or find housing elsewhere. Please

see [www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-student-life/finding-a-new-home/index.aspx](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-student-life/finding-a-new-home/index.aspx) for more information. They can also provide help with community liaison if you are experiencing issues with your neighbours. Further information about the Community Liaison Team can be found at [www.brighton.ac.uk/about-us/contact-us/community-liaison-team/index.aspx](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/about-us/contact-us/community-liaison-team/index.aspx)

In all these cases, the university is able to provide personal and emotional support, to talk through any issues and discuss different ways forward. The Counselling team offer free, one-to-one appointments throughout the year and have offices at each site of the university. The [Counselling and Wellbeing Service](#) can also signpost to external support organisations that specialise in domestic violence, sexual assault, etc.

### **I'm being bullied/harassed by university students, but in social situations rather than on my course. Does the policy still apply?**

The university expects students to treat each other, staff members and members of the public with dignity and respect at all times, regardless of whether they are engaged in university activity, on- or off-campus, or online.

Therefore any incident involving students would be covered by the Harassment and Bullying Policy and these procedures would apply when challenging behaviours.

### **I'm being bullied or harassed online, by email, text or social media. What can the university do?**

Bullying and harassment doesn't have to be face to face, it can also occur through other media including text messages, emails, the internet and social media sites. Offensive or degrading comments made through any of these media would fall under the remit of the Student Bullying and Harassment Procedure.

Additionally, the university has rules and regulations about how its IT systems are used. This means that students who are found to have used university computer equipment or networks to distribute offensive materials may also receive disciplinary action. Further information can be found in the university's [IT Regulations](#).

In cases where you notice that comments or remarks have been shared through electronic means, it can be helpful if you record details of what has been shared/said. This can be done by taking copies of social networking pages (by holding down the Ctrl + Prt Scr buttons and then copying this image into a Word document or Paint file), or by keeping copies of text messages and emails.

You can also report the harassment to your internet service provider (ISP) or mobile phone provider as appropriate.

Childnet's website Digizen provides some further useful guidance on cyber-bullying:

<http://old.digizen.org/cyberbullying/>

### **What details should I include in a 'formal complaint' letter?**

When raising a case of bullying, harassment or victimisation, it can be helpful if you can provide details about what has happened so that the case can be investigated. One way of collecting this



information can be through keeping a diary of events as they happen, which may include things like:

- Date and time
- Location
- What happened
- Your feelings in relation to the incident
- What action you took
- Names of any witnesses

This can help to ground discussions and may assist the investigation process.

Students who feel that they have experienced harassment should be aware that a satisfactory resolution is more likely to be achieved if a complaint is made as soon as possible after the alleged incident(s). If some time has passed since the alleged incident occurred the university may consider that it is inappropriate to take disciplinary action.

### **Are complaints of Bullying and Harassment handled confidentially?**

The very nature of harassment and bullying means that, other than in very exceptional circumstances, a complaint would need to be named during any dealings with the alleged harasser or bully in order to enable them to understand the full nature of the complaint.

Confidentiality will be respected and maintained by anyone dealing with a complaint of harassment, unless there is an unacceptable risk to the complainant, another person or the institution. This aims to protect both those experiencing harassment and also those accused of harassment from malicious gossip. It would also be expected that those experiencing harassment would not broadcast the situation unnecessarily and this could adversely affect the outcome of their case.

While it may be appropriate for complaints to be raised initially by a Student Union representative or other 'third party', it should be acknowledged that progress in resolving the complaint could be severely limited unless the 'victim(s)' of harassment is able and willing to participate in the resolution process.

Individuals making a complaint of harassment will be protected from victimisation and retaliation.

### **What kind of punishment will someone receive for bullying/harassing another student or member of staff?**

Students and staff who have bullied or harassed other members of the university community (staff, students or visitors) may face disciplinary action in accordance with the student or staff disciplinary procedures, as appropriate.

Details of sanctions for students can be found in the Student Disciplinary Procedure: [staff.brighton.ac.uk/reg/acs/docs/2016-17\\_Student\\_Contract\\_Student-Disciplinary-Procedure.pdf](http://staff.brighton.ac.uk/reg/acs/docs/2016-17_Student_Contract_Student-Disciplinary-Procedure.pdf)

The university has a separate disciplinary procedure for staff which outlines how the university will deal fairly and consistently with members of staff who may have breached policies and/or

procedures (such as the Harassment and Bullying Policy), or behaved in an inappropriate or unacceptable manner at work.

**If disciplinary action has been taken against someone as a result of my formal complaint (see [section 4.3](#)), will I find out?**

In cases where disciplinary action is taken against a student or a member of staff, the student complainant will be told that their complaint was upheld. However, they will not be informed of the details of any disciplinary action taken against the other individual, for this could be deemed as private information under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

**Where can I find further support?**

### **Support at the university**

There are many different people at the university who can offer support and guidance in a case of bullying, harassment or victimisation:

The Student Experience and Equalities Manager ([equality@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:equality@brighton.ac.uk) or telephone 01273 642160) can discuss the procedural options available and offer support while the individual tries to resolve the problem.

[The Students' Union Student Support Service](#) can provide independent advice and support regarding cases of bullying and harassment, including representation.

[Student Support and Guidance Tutors](#) (SSGTs) are located in all Academic Schools at the University and can provide support and guidance to students experiencing issues with bullying or harassment. Students may also wish to access emotional support through the [Counselling and Wellbeing Service](#)

Students who are experiencing difficulties with a housemate, in either university halls of residence, or privately rented accommodation, may be able to access practical housing advice regarding housing contracts, rights and responsibilities from the [Accommodation Service](#). Tutors within university halls of residence may also be able to provide some informal mediation between groups of students if required.

The university has two assigned police officers who can advise student victims of physical violence, sexual violence, hate crime or other criminal offences. The Police Liaison Officers at the university are PC Lee Cook and PC Gaynor Martin. Students can speak to the Police Liaison Officers without their query becoming an official complaint to the Police. They can also speak to the Police Liaison Officers anonymously (for example, over the phone without giving their name) if they wish. PC Lee Cook can be contacted on 07947 722924 or [L.cook2@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:L.cook2@brighton.ac.uk) and PC Gaynor Martin can be contacted on 07921 459005 or [G.Martin2@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:G.Martin2@brighton.ac.uk)

Further information about support available at the university can be found in [Section 1.2](#)

### **Local and national support**

The following local and national agencies may also be able to provide information and support to students who are experiencing bullying, harassment or victimisation:

**Brighton and Hove Independent Mediation Service (BHIMS)** offers a comprehensive range of services aimed at resolving many different conflicts and disputes, including conflicts between neighbours and residents. [www.bhims.org.uk/](http://www.bhims.org.uk/)

**Mediation East Sussex** provides a confidential service to residents in East Sussex (including Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne, and Hastings and Rother), using mediation as a way of resolving disputes. [www.mediationeastsussex.co.uk/](http://www.mediationeastsussex.co.uk/)

**Safe in the City, Brighton and Hove Safety Community Partnership** can support residents in dealing with crime and community safety issues. They have dedicated staff working in the areas of racist and religiously motivated incidents and crimes, LGBT hate crime, disability hate crime, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour. [www.safeinthecity.info/](http://www.safeinthecity.info/)

**East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership** provides help and advice about anti-social behaviour hate incidents, and other crimes such as sexual violence and cyber-crime. [www.safeineastsussex.org.uk/help-and-advice.html](http://www.safeineastsussex.org.uk/help-and-advice.html)

**Bullying UK** is a national organisation that provides information and guidance for individuals experiencing bullying and harassment, including students in higher education. [www.bullying.co.uk/general-advice/bullying-at-university/](http://www.bullying.co.uk/general-advice/bullying-at-university/)

**Bullying Online** is a national organisation that provides information and guidance for individuals experiencing bullying and harassment in the workplace. [bullyonline.org/index.php](http://bullyonline.org/index.php)

**Digizen** website provides information for educators, parents, carers, and young people on issues such as cyber-bullying. <http://www.digizen.org/>

**True Vision** is a national organisation that provides information about hate crime or incidents and how to report it. [www.report-it.org.uk/home](http://www.report-it.org.uk/home)

**The Portal** provides a single point of contact for victims/survivors of domestic or sexual abuse and violence, helping them to find the right help, advice and support in Brighton and Hove and East Sussex. [theportal.org.uk/](http://theportal.org.uk/)

**Rape Crisis England and Wales** is a national charity and umbrella body for network of independent member Rape Crisis organisations. They also have a national **Rape Crisis Helpline** which can be contacted on 0808 802 9999 between 12 noon – 2.30pm and between 7 – 9.30pm any day of the year. [rapecrisis.org.uk/index.php](http://rapecrisis.org.uk/index.php)

**The Revenge Porn Helpline** is a dedicated service supporting adults in the UK who have had intimate photos or videos of them distributed either off or online without their consent. [revengepornhelpline.org.uk/](http://revengepornhelpline.org.uk/)

**The Samaritans** is a national organisation that provides emotional support for people who are struggling to cope, including those who have had thoughts of suicide. They have a 24 hour free and confidential helpline: 116123. [www.samaritans.org/](http://www.samaritans.org/)

## **Appendix - Types of Bullying and Harassment**

### **Bullying and Harassment related to Age**

This is unwanted behaviour based on known or presumed age (excluding under-18s). Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation;
- making assumptions about an individual's ability or competence because of their age;
- inappropriate reference to age;
- refusal to carry out instructions because of a manager's or lecturer's age;
- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of an individual(s) from social events or meetings because of their age.

Harassment on the grounds of age also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of the age of the people they associate with.

### **Bullying and Harassment related to Disability**

This is unwanted behaviour based on known or presumed disability, impairment or additional need. Under the Equality Act 2010, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment (such as a mental health issue or learning difficulty) that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on an individual's ability to do normal daily activities. Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation; inappropriate reference to disability;
- asking inappropriate intimate questions about an individual's impairment;
- assuming that a physical or mental disability means that the individual is inferior;
- assuming that a mental disability means that the individual lacks intelligence;
- speaking to colleagues or peers rather than the person with the disability;
- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of disabled people from social events or meetings.

Harassment on the grounds of disability also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of their association with a disabled person.

### **Bullying and Harassment related to Gender Identity/Re-assignment**

This is unwanted behaviour directed at anyone who is known or assumed to be undergoing or to have undergone gender reassignment. 'Gender reassignment' is considered a social process and not a medical process and therefore includes people who have chosen to permanently live in their preferred gender role but have not had or do not intend to have any medical gender reassignment treatments.

Bullying and harassment on the grounds of gender identity/re-assignment may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation;
- breaching the confidentiality of someone who is intending to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment (this may also be a criminal offence);
- refusing to treat a person as of their new gender when they transition;
- failing to address a person by their preferred name and correct gender pronouns;
- inappropriate exclusion of a trans person from toilet or changing facilities for their preferred gender;
- intrusive questioning;
- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of trans people from social events or meetings.

Harassment on the grounds of gender identity/reassignment also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of their association with someone who is intending to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment.

### **Bullying and Harassment related to Race**

This is unwanted behaviour based on race, ethnic or national origin, nationality (including citizenship), caste or skin colour. Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation;
- displaying racially offensive material including graffiti;
- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of an individual(s) from social events or meetings because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin.

Harassment on the grounds of race also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of the race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin of the people they associate with.

### **Bullying and Harassment related to Religion or Belief**

This is unwanted behaviour based on religious beliefs or practices, including non-belief (such as atheism or agnosticism) and non-religious beliefs (such as Humanism and Pacifism). Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation;
- mocking or deriding people's religious or non-religious beliefs or lack of belief;
- ridiculing people for wearing items for religious reasons;
- denigrating cultural customs;
- dismissive treatment of requests for holidays for religious or cultural festivals.

Harassment on the grounds of religion or belief also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of the religion or beliefs of the people they associate with.

### **Bullying and Harassment related to Sex/Gender**

This is unwanted behaviour based on known or presumed sex/gender. Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation; making assumptions about an individual's ability or competence because of their sex/gender;
- inappropriate reference to an individual's sex/gender;
- refusal to carry out instructions because of a manager's or lecturer's sex/gender;
- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of an individual(s) from social events or meetings because of their sex/gender;
- harassing or bullying a woman because she is pregnant (for example, a woman's manager not letting her attend antenatal appointments)

Harassment on the grounds of sex/gender also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of the sex/gender of the people they associate with.

### **Sexual Bullying and Harassment**

This is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. It includes attention that denigrates or ridicules or is intimidating. This may be physical, ranging from unwanted touching, groping or the invasion of personal space to sexual assault, rape or indecent exposure. Sexual harassment can be verbal and may include:

- unwanted personal comments or sexual slurs;
- belittling, suggestive, lewd or abusive remarks;
- explicit 'jokes' or innuendo;
- compromising invitations, including demands for sexual favours.

Examples of non-verbal sexual harassment include:

- suggestive looks, leering and explicit gestures;
- sending sexually explicit emails or the display of pornographic material on university equipment or premises. (Further information can be found in the university's [IT Regulations](#)).

Whilst sexual harassment of women by men is more common, it is important to remember that sexual harassment can occur of men by women, and also between members of the same sex.

### **Bullying and Harassment related to Sexual Orientation**

This is unwanted behaviour based on known or presumed sexual orientation whether gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual. Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation; actual or threatened unwanted disclosure of an individual's sexual orientation;
- intrusive questioning about an individual's personal or sex life;

- inappropriate references to a person's sexual orientation;
- excluding a same sex partner from social events when opposite sex partners are included;
- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of an individual(s) from social events or meetings because of their sexual orientation.

Harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of the sexual orientation of the people they associate with.