

Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

This document is the '**single comprehensive source of information**' required by the Office for Students (OfS registration condition E6).

This document summarises the college's policies and procedures on student harassment and sexual misconduct, including intimate personal relationships between staff members and students.

What is harassment and sexual misconduct?

Harassment and sexual misconduct are defined in the College's [Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) as follows:

"Harassment" is unwanted behaviour or conduct that causes someone to feel intimidated, offended, degraded, or humiliated. It is often related to a protected characteristic, such as race, gender, religion, or disability, and is defined under the Equality Act 2010. This includes harassment by association or perception, and harassment may happen in person or online.

"Sexual Misconduct" is a broad term that refers to any unwanted and potentially unlawful conduct of a sexual nature. It encompasses a range of behaviours, from sexual harassment to serious criminal offences such as sexual assault and rape. Many forms of sexual misconduct are defined in law and may lead to disciplinary or legal consequences. For clarity, sexual misconduct includes (but is not limited to):

- Sexual harassment as defined by Section 26(2) Equality Act 2010.
- Sexual assault as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- Rape, as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- Unwanted physical sexual advances, as outlined in the Equality and Human Rights Commission: Sexual Harassment and the Law (2017).
- Intimidation, coercion, or the offer of rewards or benefits in exchange for sexual favours, as described in the Equality and Human Rights Commission: Sexual Harassment and the Law (2017).
- Sharing explicit or intimate sexual images or videos without consent, as defined by the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015.
- Upskirting, as defined by the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, which involves taking photos or videos under someone's clothing without their permission, with the intention of obtaining sexual gratification, or causing humiliation, distress, or alarm.

Read the full policy [here](#).

Reporting harassment and sexual misconduct

The College encourages students to report any concerns or incidents promptly and have put in place several ways to make this process as accessible, supportive, and confidential as possible. The Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy sets out all the options which students have access to disclose concerns or raise allegations. We encourage students to consider using the **Reporting tool** in the first instance so that they can access necessary support. You can submit an anonymous report but this may limit our ability to respond or investigate fully. If you are unsure, you can seek support directly from the Wellbeing and Safeguarding team (wellbeing@plumpton.ac.uk).

Support for those affected

You can choose to disclose an incident anonymously or you can request to speak to a member of the Wellbeing and Safeguarding team. If you choose to speak to a team member, this will allow us to talk through the available support to you, confidentially. Our team are trained Mental Health First Aiders.

There is also a range of support available internally and externally to the College for those who have experience harassment and sexual misconduct. Support options are outlined in the Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and include:

- **In person** support by visiting the Wellbeing offices on campus (main building),
- Seek support **via email** studentwellbeing@plumpton.ac.uk
- **WhatsApp** messaging support (Tel 07387411834)
- Contact the **24hr support helpline** provided by Health Assured
- Survivors Network <https://survivorsnetwork.org.uk/>
- The Saturn Centre <https://saturncentre.org/contact-us/> , *home address location dependent.*

Students facing allegations: As indicated in the Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy, any student facing an allegation will be provided with support from the Wellbeing team. Support is also available as indicated above.

What happens when a report is made

When a report or disclosure is made, how we deal with it is outlined in the Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy that specifies:

- The student **Complaints Policy** will be applied to investigate allegations of harassment and sexual misconduct against students.
- The **Staff Disciplinary Policy** will be used to investigate allegations of harassment and sexual misconduct made by students against staff.

These policies are available on the College website, on the internal Student Hub and available in print upon request.

How we handle reports

Plumpton College is committed to fostering a culture that ensures all students are treated with dignity and respect, and where bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct are never tolerated. Our Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy encourages transparency and openness. We handle all reports with sensitivity, discretion, and respect for privacy.

The College will take all reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of individuals. However, in some cases (for example, to protect a vulnerable or at-risk individual), the College may be required to break confidentiality and share information internally or with external agencies as appropriate.

Further details about confidentiality and information sharing are provided in the [Policy](#).

Informing individuals

In line with the Student Disciplinary Policy and data protection laws, the College will, where appropriate, inform the student who raised a concern about harassment or sexual misconduct of the outcome of any investigation. This includes any action taken (or not taken) and any changes to the outcome. In some cases, only limited information can be shared due to confidentiality or legal constraints.

Where a student makes an allegation of harassment or sexual misconduct against a staff member, the case will be considered under the Staff Disciplinary Policy. A protocol is in place between Wellbeing & Safeguarding and Human Resources (HR) to ensure effective coordination. This includes:

- Ensuring Wellbeing & Safeguarding receives sufficient information to provide the student with appropriate progress updates and manage expectations;
- Sharing relevant outcome information with Wellbeing & Safeguarding, so the student can be informed, in line with data protection law.

The level of information provided to the student will be consistent with what would be shared with a staff member raising a concern under the relevant HR procedure.

Training for students

We're committed to ensuring that students understand what harassment and sexual misconduct are, how to report concerns, the support available to them, what consent means, and how to intervene safely and effectively.

As part of ongoing personal development resources, all students will have access to complete an online course on Healthy Sex and Relationships, developed by experts at our collaborative partner, the University of Greenwich. This course covers key topics including sexual consent, rape culture, and how to be an active bystander against sexual violence and harassment. After completing the course, students should feel more confident about taking a stand against sexual harassment and supporting others, and also understanding what does and does not count as consent.

In addition, at induction students will receive information and guidance on harassment and sexual misconduct and how to disclose incidents. We will also be promoting through themed campaigns awareness and interventions to help further inform students about sexual consent.

Training for staff

To ensure a consistent and informed approach to preventing and responding to harassment and sexual misconduct, all staff receive regular and mandatory training. This includes

- Induction training for all new staff
- Annual refresher training to keep staff up to date with best practice, legal duties and College policies
- Specialist training for staff in supportive roles.

Staff are trained to understand what harassment, sexual misconduct and discrimination are and the impact of it, how to respond effectively and sensitively; how to escalate concerns and how to promote respectful, inclusive culture.

All staff training is tracked by HR and content is regularly reviewed.

Taking steps to protect students

We are committed to creating a safe, respectful environment for everyone. Bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct have no place here — and we take clear, firm steps to prevent them and respond when things go wrong. These include:

- Consulting with students on changes to harassment and sexual misconduct policies, with student representatives involved at committees that approve these policies.
- Analysing and reporting data from our reporting channels. Annual reports on complaints and disclosures are reviewed at senior leadership level.
- Raise awareness and educate by continually developing training resources and upskilling both staff and students.
- Creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment where students and staff are expected to treat each other with respect.

Personal relationships between staff and students

Intimate personal relationships between staff and students are strictly prohibited due to the inherent power imbalance and safeguarding risks they create. The Employee Code of Conduct Policy bans such relationships, regardless of the student's age or whether the relationship is consensual. Preexisting relationships prior to the policy's implementation (1 August 2025) must be formally declared to the Human Resources (HR) department so any conflicts of interest can be managed.

Non-disclosure agreements

Since September 2024 the Office for Students has prohibited higher education providers from using non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in relation to student allegations of harassment and sexual misconduct. In response, the College will not use NDAs in relation to complaints of sexual harassment, misconduct or other forms of harassment and bullying. This has been stipulated in the Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy.

If you need support, please get in touch –

- wellbeing@plumpton.ac.uk
- safeguarding@plumpton.ac.uk
- WhatsApp: +447387411834