



Sexual Misconduct & Harassment Policy

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Glossary

Term

Definition

Abuse of power / imbalance:	Where a staff member or someone in a position of authority leverages their power over a student to influence, coerce or exploit.
Appropriate Support	The effective deployment of assistance, including but not limited to: a. support targeted at the needs of students involved in any way in an incident of harassment and/or sexual misconduct, including but not limited to during an investigatory and decision-making process; b. personal support, including in the form of counselling where appropriate; c. academic support, including in relation to decisions about attendance, continuation, suspension or cessation of study.
Balance of Probabilities	The standard of proof, i.e. on the basis of the evidence available, then it more likely than not that the alleged breach occurred.
Coercion or Force	Includes any physical or emotional harm or threat of physical or emotional harm which would reasonably place an individual in fear of immediate or future harm, with the result that the individual is compelled to engage in a sexual act.
Complicity	Includes any act by a person that knowingly assists, aid and abets, promotes, or encourages any form of misconduct including sexual misconduct and violence by another individual.
Consent	The agreement to participate in a sexual act where the individual has both the freedom and capacity to make that decision willingly. Consent cannot be assumed on the basis of a previous sexual experience or previously given consent, and consent may be withdrawn at any time. People under pressure, manipulation, coercion, intoxication, or lacking capacity may not be able to consent.
Disclosure	Means that an individual tells a member of the EDA or University community that they have experienced Sexual Misconduct (this is different from a formal complaint).
Disclosing Party	The person(s) who is disclosing an allegation of sexual misconduct to another individual.
Domestic abuse (and coercive or controlling behaviour):	An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but can also be a family member or carer. It can be mental, physical, economic or sexual in nature.
Retaliation:	Any adverse action (threat, intimidation, exclusion, disciplinary action) against someone for reporting, supporting, or participating in an investigation.
Mandatory reporter / safeguarding:	Staff (and sometimes students) who are legally or institutionally required to escalate certain disclosures, especially when under-18s are involved.

Domestic abuse and coercive or controlling behaviour	Includes incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between individuals who are, or have been, intimate partners, in a close relationship or family members. This can include, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and/or emotional abuse.
Freedom/Capacity to consent	Consent cannot be given if the individual does not have the capacity to give consent. The individual has to freely and consciously engage in a sexual act. Consent is not present when submission by an unwilling participant results from the exploitation of power, or coercion or force or lacks mental capacity to consent regardless of whether there is verbal or physical resistance. An individual is deemed to be incapacitated when asleep, unconscious, semi-conscious, or in a state of intermittent consciousness, or any other state of unawareness that a sexual act may be occurring. Incapacitation may occur on account of an impairment of or a disturbance in the functioning of, the mind or brain (whether permanent or temporary), or as the result of alcohol or substance use. Intoxication is never a defence for committing an act of sexual misconduct, or for failing to obtain consent. If there is any doubt as to the level or extent of one's own or the other individual's incapacitation, do not engage in a sexual act.
Reporting	Submitting a formal sexual misconduct complaint to the University regarding an individual's experience of sexual misconduct is an instruction for the University to take appropriate action. The complaint will allow the University to investigate the misconduct as set out in this policy and the accompanying processes.
Reporting Party	The person(s) who has made a formal complaint regarding an alleged incident of sexual misconduct.
Reporting Third Party	The person(s) who has made a formal complaint regarding an experience of sexual misconduct not relating to themselves.
Responding Party	The person(s) named in a formal complaint who is alleged to have committed an act of sexual misconduct. Revenge may constitute any words or behaviour including intimidation, threats, omissions or coercion, made in response to disclosures or reports made under this Policy. This includes the Responding Party and the Reporting Party, as well as witnesses, friends, or relatives.
Right to withdraw	Following submission of a formal complaint, the Reporting Party has the right to withdraw their complaint at any stage in the procedure. However, the University may have a duty to continue its investigation and reserves the right to re-direct the complaint into the appropriate policy, for example Safeguarding Policy or Fitness to Practice Procedure.
Sexual harassment	In the context of this Policy sexual harassment defined as behaviour which makes another person feel distressed, intimidated or offended and the behaviour is of a sexual nature.

A factor in considering whether behaviour amounts to sexual harassment is whether the person towards whom the behaviour is directed has actively consented to it, or if they have asked the person engaging in the behaviour to stop doing it.

It may include behaviour that does not involve physical contact e.g

- i. Sexual comments or jokes.
- ii. Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.
- iii. Sending inappropriate emails or other form of electronic communication with a sexual content.
- iv. Physical behaviour (but which stops short of contact), including unwelcome sexual advances and stalking.
- v. Continued advances or invitations to social activities when the invitee has made it clear the advances or invitations are not welcome. If contact or violence is involved, the offence may become sexual assault.

Sexual Misconduct

Any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which occurred in person or by letter, telephone, text, email or any other electronic and/or social media. It includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviour:

- a. Engaging, or attempting to engage, in a sexual act with another individual without consent, including penetration of the anus, vagina or mouth with any body part or other object without consent.
- b. Any form of unwanted sexual touching in what may reasonably be perceived as a sexual manner without consent, for example, kissing, touching a person's clothes, stroking their hair, touching their body or deliberately rubbing or brushing up against them or standing too close to them.
- c. Conduct of a sexual nature which creates (or could create) an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for others including making unwanted remarks of a sexual nature (this could take place in public spaces or as part of a group).
- d. Showing body parts to another in person or electronically in a sexually inappropriate way.
- e. Recording and/or sharing private intimate materials images or recordings of another person without their consent (i.e. those made of an individual with the understanding that they would not be shared) such as videos or photographs in physical spaces – including the creation of imagery without the individuals' involved consenting at any stage of that creation (e.g. "deepfakes").
- f. Arranging or participating in events, which may reasonably be assumed to cause degradation and humiliation, for example inappropriately themed social events or initiations.
- g. Activities where consent has been given however, the level of sexual violence used exceeds the level of reasonableness of the implied consent e.g. BDSM.
- h. Sharing or creating public sexual materials (i.e. those pornographic materials that are widely available via media outlets) in physical spaces with the intention to sexually harass or incite harassment or violence.
- i. Inappropriately showing sexual organs (e.g. penis/ external genitalia) to another person, or inappropriately allowing sexual organs to be seen, in a physical space – including masturbation in a public space.

- j. Making unwanted remarks that may reasonably be perceived to be of a sexual nature, for example, making sexual remarks about a person's body, asking questions of a sexual nature, making sexual comments or innuendo or telling sexual jokes.
- k. Making unwarranted and unsolicited noises to another person such as wolf-whistling or catcalling or sex-based noises such as sexual grunting or moaning.
- l. Repeated, unwanted and unsolicited contact of a sexual nature either in person or by telephone or text message, e-mail, social media or in any online or digital space (Note: "repeated contact" in an online space constitutes repeated unsolicited contact in one digital platform or multiple unwanted contacts in numerous digital platforms).
- m) Storing or viewing inappropriate material on University IT equipment.

Vexatious Reporting Occurs when an individual shares allegations of sexual misconduct they know to lack a basis in fact. Examples include creating unwarranted or fictitious reports made under this or any other Policy, or a continuous refusal to accept any reasonable decisions arising from the application of the Procedures within this Policy.

1. Scope

1. This policy applies to:
 - All students (both under 18 BTEC learners and CertHE/degree learners).
 - All staff (teaching, administrative, support, contractors, visiting staff).
 - Any third parties (visitors, contractors, guest lecturers, placement providers) while engaged with Academy activities.
 - Incidents occurring on campus, in digital/online settings, during placements, field trips, or other Academy-connected environments or events.
2. **Note on under-18 students:** For BTEC students (under 18), Emil Dale Academy Acts as a provider of education to children and therefore follows statutory guidance under *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*, *working together to safeguard children (2023)* and The Children Act 1989. This means that any disclosure or concern involving a person under 18 will be treated as a safeguarding and child protection matter and referred to appropriate external agencies where required.
3. EDA works in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire, North Hertfordshire College and Knights Templar in respect of the delivery of the Degree, CertHE and BTEC programmes of study. As such, EDA will follow guidance and policy as advised by the partners.

2. Policy

4. Emil Dale Academy is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment, free from sexual misconduct, harassment, and abuse. Sexual misconduct, sexual violence and harassment of any kind is not permitted and everyone is expected to treat all members of the community with dignity and respect.
5. This policy aims to prevent, respond to, investigate, and remedy incidents of sexual misconduct and harassment involving students, staff, or visitors, with due regard to safeguarding for under-18 learners and higher education obligations for adult learners.
6. We promote a culture of consent, dignity, respect, transparency, support, and accountability.
7. We will not tolerate retaliation against those who report or assist in investigations.
8. The policy is guided by relevant legal and regulatory frameworks, including safeguarding of children, equality law, and higher education regulation (e.g. OfS Condition E6 on harassment & sexual misconduct).
9. At EDA, we are committed to:
 - a. Promoting a culture of respect, consent, and safety.
 - b. Taking all disclosures seriously and responding with care and fairness.
 - c. Protecting the wellbeing of anyone affected by harassment or sexual misconduct.
 - d. Ensuring staff and students know how to get help and report concerns.
 - e. Meeting our legal and safeguarding duties for both under-18 and adult students.

2.1 Background

10. In October 2016 Universities UK (UUK) published Changing the Culture¹, a report setting out the findings of a taskforce that had examined violence, harassment and hate crime against women particularly prioritising issues of sexual violence and sexual harassment in higher education.
11. The report made a set of recommendations, which recognised that a whole university approach and a clear framework of advice and guidance was necessary for the institution. In accordance with this framework, the University of Bedfordshire, and as a study centre of them, EDA, has set out its commitment to:
 - a. Create a culture free from sexual violence and sexual harassment, where the whole community behave with respect and dignity to each other, consent and understanding boundaries are the norm and individuals affected speak up and get help.
 - b. Take all reasonable steps to meet the University's statutory obligations to eliminate and prevent sexual violence and harassment, and address any inappropriate behaviours promptly to prevent issues from escalating.
 - c. Where sexual violence or harassment does occur, ensure everyone knows how to seek help and appropriate support will be provided.
 - d. Handle all allegations of sexual violence and / or harassment seriously and sensitively and investigate them promptly while protecting the individual rights of those involved, including those against whom an allegation has been made.

¹ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/archived-changing-culture>

- e. Ensure any behaviours which constitute sexual violence or harassment will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and dealt with under the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy, or Staff Disciplinary Procedure for employees.
12. Following on from the framework of the UUK report, the Office for Students (OfS) published a Statement of Expectations² in April 2021 for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students in higher education. This has now become a new condition of registration with the OfS, effective from 1st August 2025.

3. What is Sexual Misconduct and Harassment?

13. Sexual misconduct means any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes someone feel uncomfortable, frightened, humiliated, or distressed. It can happen in person or online. There are many different types of sexual violence and these can be psychological and/ or physical.
14. Examples include (but are not limited to):
 - a. Sexual assault or attempted assault.
 - b. Pressuring someone into sexual activity.
 - c. Unwanted sexual comments, jokes, or gestures.
 - d. Inappropriate touching or physical contact.
 - e. Sharing or creating sexual images without consent.
 - f. Behaviour that uses power, position, or trust to take advantage of someone.
15. Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but can also be a family member or carer.
16. Sexual harassment does not necessarily occur face to face and can be in the form of emails, visual images, social media, text messages and image-based abuse such as revenge porn and up-skirting.
16. Consent is providing express permission for something to happen or agreeing to do something with a full awareness and understanding of the facts and without coercion. Consent must always be freely given. It can be withdrawn at any time.
17. A person who is pressured, coerced, asleep, intoxicated, or under 16 cannot give consent.
18. All staff, freelancers and volunteers at Emil Dale Academy are in a position of trust under the *Sexual Offences Act 2023 (Sections 16-19)*. It is a criminal offence for an adult in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity or inappropriate relationships with anyone under 18 years old who is receiving education or training at EDA.

4. Reporting Concerns/ Making a disclosure

18. Students and staff are not obliged to disclose any incident of sexual violence or harassment to EDA. However, if you or someone you know has been affected, we encourage them to act promptly and not to feel at fault for any sexual violence or sexual harassment, or that they have to wait for a situation to be repeated or exacerbated.
19. It is important that they should not feel they have to tolerate such behaviour and that they know EDA and our partners will provide support if, when and how they decide to take further action. We will listen, take your disclosure seriously, and explain your options.
20. Students can report concerns by:
 - a. Emailing siobhan@emildale.co.uk (Welfare Officer) or one of the safeguarding team
 - Victoria Hammond – DSL and Principal vicky@emildale.co.uk
 - Sarah Moore – Deputy DSL and Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager sarah@emildale.co.uk
 - Jonathan Hunt – Deputy Principal and Degree Course Leader jonathan@emildale.co.uk
 - Marina Abdeen – Head of Dance and CertHE Course Leader marina@emildale.co.uk

- Rachel Saunders – Sixth Form Course Leader rachels@emildale.co.uk
 - Melissa Joseph – Office Manager melissa@emildale.co.uk
- b. Seeking advice or discuss the matter in the first instance with a course leader, faculty or other staff member with whom they feel comfortable
 - c. For University of Bedfordshire validated courses, students can also:
 - use the online reporting form:
<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=3NszMWQ82kumanUURaGSdVIOsk2sfKxMpZssxbM-NZJUOEExHUFixTetXVIZQQ1NEOU5FTURCWTFRNC4u&route=shorturl>
 - Visit any Reception or Student Information Desk (SiD) on campus
 - Contact Student Support on 01234 793333 (Bedford), or through the Student Information Desk (SiD) on 0300 300 0042 (Luton and other sites)
 - Make a report via Support and Report – supportandreport@beds.ac.uk
 - Call Security on 0800 389 8455 (24/7 emergency number) or 4444 (internal)
21. Staff/ Freelancers/ Visitors who have been victim or witness to an incident, or have concerns regarding sexual violence or sexual harassment, can report concerns through the following channels:
- a. Contacting their Line Manager or point of contact within the business.
 - b. Seek advice or discuss the matter in the first instance with a colleague, or anyone whom they feel comfortable; this may include a trade union representative.
 - c. Make a report to the Welfare Officer by emailing welfare@emildale.co.uk or any member of the safeguarding team (see email addresses in section 16a above).

If you are in immediate danger or need urgent help, please contact emergency services on 999

22. Anyone reporting an allegation will be treated with dignity and respect and given time to disclose their circumstances at their own pace and only if they are comfortable to do so.
23. Deciding whether or not to report an incident to the police can be a difficult decision to make and an individual may need time to think about this option, especially if they are feeling distressed or in a state of shock.
24. EDA can provide advice about relevant time frame for reporting and preservation of forensic evidence to the police. Please note, EDA does not have qualified staff on site to take forensic evidence; this can only be managed by a medical professional.
25. If an individual does not want to report the incident but would like the police to be made aware that it has occurred they can report it anonymously online at <https://www.police.uk/pu/contact-the-police/report-a-crime-incident/>.
26. EDA will respect the decision of the individual and any information about the incident will not be shared beyond relevant staff without consent – unless any persons are at significant risk.

5. What Happens After a Report

27. When you report a concern, a trained member of staff (from the Safeguarding or Welfare team) will:
 - a. Listen without judgment and provide emotional support.
 - b. Explain your options (informal support, formal investigation, or external reporting).
 - c. Carry out a risk assessment and take steps to protect your safety.
 - d. Arrange support such as counselling, timetable changes, or no-contact arrangements if needed.

- e. If the student involved is a University student, EDA would also refer to the SASH (Sexual Assault & Sexual Harassment) team at the university for advice and support if required, and follow their protocols.
- 28. If the report involves a student under 18, EDA has a legal duty to follow safeguarding procedures, which may include sharing information with local safeguarding partners or the police.

6. Escalating a reported incident

- 29. If a student decides to make a formal report or complaint of harassment or sexual misconduct against another member of the EDA community, they can follow the Student Complaints and Student Code of Conduct policy (degree/ CertHE) or the Sixth Form Student Complaints procedure.
- 30. A staff member or freelancer or contractor can escalate any concerns regarding harassment and sexual misconduct against another member of the EDA community to the designated safeguarding lead or a member of the safeguarding team (see email addresses in section 16a).
- 31. All reports will be taken seriously and will be investigated in accordance with the guidance in the relevant policy, with due consideration to all parties. The reporting party will be kept informed by a member of the safeguarding team.
- 32. If the individual decides to pursue a police complaint and a police investigation is commenced, EDA will consider whether an internal investigation is required or, if already underway, whether the internal investigation should be paused whilst the police investigation is undertaken.
- 33. EDA will seek consultation with their relevant partners if necessary to support any investigations, reporting or support required.
- 34. For BTEC and sixth form students, formal reports will follow the *Sixth Form Student Complaints and Conduct Procedure* rather than the university-linked process. These procedures reflect safeguarding requirements for under-18 learners.
- 35. Adjustments may be required during this time period to protect EDA and the individual(s) involved. Examples may include:
 - a. For students, this may involve separating students involved in the learning environment etc and/or temporary removal of a student from campus, or a recommendation of interruption of studies.
 - b. For staff members, this could include temporary redeployment, amending work duties and/or relocation to a different work location and suspension from work.
- 36. Full consideration will be given to the facts and circumstances of each particular case when considering how and when investigations should be undertaken, any necessary adjustments and any disciplinary or other sanctions.

7. Confidentiality

- 37. We treat all disclosures sensitively and confidentially. Information will only be shared with people who need to know in order to provide support or fulfil our safeguarding or legal responsibilities.
- 38. If a disclosure is made, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if it is determined that an immediate danger is presented or under 18 safeguarding protocols need to be followed.
- 39. However, if a student does report sexual misconduct or harassment, EDA will ensure that only relevant parties need to know and the student will be informed as such.

40. For under-18 students, confidentiality cannot be maintained if staff believe the student or another child is at risk of significant harm. In these cases, the DSL must make a safeguarding referral in accordance with statutory obligations (Mandatory reporter).

8. Support and Wellbeing

41. Support is available to anyone affected by sexual misconduct or harassment. This may include:
- a. Welfare support at Emil Dale Academy and counselling at the University or through local companies.
 - b. Academic or pastoral adjustments to support wellbeing.
 - c. External specialist services, such as local sexual assault referral centres or Rape Crisis services.

9. Safeguarding and Under-18 Students

42. For BTEC students (under 18), any allegation or disclosure of sexual misconduct will be treated as a safeguarding matter. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)/ Principal will ensure appropriate referrals are made to children's social care or the police where required.
43. Where an allegation involves one student under 18 against another (child-on-child abuse), the College will follow statutory safeguarding procedures and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* guidance on 'child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment'. Each case will be assessed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to determine whether it should be referred to Children's Social Care, the police, or managed internally under the Sixth Form Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy.
44. Where a student under 18 makes a disclosure, the DSL will determine whether and when parents or carers should be informed, balancing the student's wishes with the duty to safeguard. Parental consent is not required for referrals to statutory agencies where there is risk of harm.
45. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) holds overall responsibility for ensuring that all staff and students understand safeguarding procedures relating to sexual misconduct, including mandatory reporting, record-keeping, and referrals for under-18s. All staff who interact with the BTEC students, including freelancers, are required to complete safeguarding and child protection training at least annually.
46. Concerns involving staff or volunteers will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

10. Education and Prevention

47. Emil Dale Academy is committed to preventing sexual misconduct through education and awareness.
48. All students and staff receive training or information about consent, respect, and professional boundaries, and this is included in student and staff handbooks.
49. The College provides annual training and workshops for all students on topics including consent, respectful relationships, online safety, and reporting routes.
50. Staff are also trained in recognising signs of grooming or sexual exploitation, in line with local safeguarding partnership guidance.

11. Monitoring and Review

51. This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective, compliant, and in line with best practice. Feedback from students and staff is welcome and helps us improve how we prevent and respond to misconduct.
52. This policy should be read in conjunction with:
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Sixth Form Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy
 - Online Safety Policy
 - Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy

12. Contacts and Further Information

53. If you need advice, support, or wish to make a report, please contact:
- a. Email: welfare@emildale.co.uk
 - b. Speak to your Course Leader
 - c. Speak to a member of the safeguarding team (see section 16a for email addresses)
 - d. For University of Bedfordshire students:
<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=3NszMWQ82kumanUURaGSdVIOsk2sfKxMpZssxbM-NZJUOExHUFixTEtXVIZQQ1NEOU5FTURCWTFRNC4u&route=shorturl>

Appendix A – Support services

<u>Service</u>	<u>How they can support</u>	<u>Contact details</u>
Local services		
Sexual Assault Referral Centre Herts	Free, confidential healthcare and compassionate support, in Hertfordshire, to people of all ages, who have experienced sexual assault, including rape.	Telephone: 0330 223 0099 Website: https://hertssarc.org/
Herts Sunflower	Service supporting people who have been abused or people who know someone who has been abused.	Telephone: 08 088 088 088 Website: www.hertssunflower.org/herts-sunflower.aspx
Men's Advice Line	A confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic violence and abuse, which offers practical advice, information and emotional support. Tel: 0808 801 0327 27	Telephone: 0808 8010327 Monday–Friday 10am-5pm Website including webchat support: https://mensadvice.org.uk/contact-us/
National Services		
24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line	Support service for anyone aged 16+ in England and Wales who has been affected by any form of sexual violence at any point in their life.	Telephone: 0808 500 2222 Website: https://247sexualabusesupport.org.uk/
24 Hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline for Women	The Freephone, 24-hour helpline to know your rights and options, learn how to support someone you care about, how to access emergency refuge accommodation.	Telephone: 0808 200 0247 Website: https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/
The Survivors Trust	With 120 member organisations based in the UK & Ireland which provide specialist support for women, men and children who have survived rape, sexual violence or childhood sexual abuse.	Telephone: 0808 801 0819 Website: www.thesurvivorstrust.org
University of Bedfordshire Services		
Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)	The Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) offers medical, practical and emotional support to anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted or abused. For Luton and Bedford the local SARC is the Emerald Centre in Ampthill	Find services near you: Find a rape and sexual assault referral centre - NHS Emerald Centre Telephone: 01234 897052 (9am to 5pm) 0330 2230099 (out of hours) Website: www.emeraldcentre.org/
Victim Support Bedfordshire	Victim Support provides emotional and practical help to people who have been affected by any crime, including sexual violence and domestic abuse.	Telephone: 0808 168 9111 (Supportline) 01234 763785 (Bedfordshire) Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Luton All Women's Centre	Centre for women and girls in Bedfordshire, offering advice, information, practical and holistic support.	Telephone: 01582 416783 Website: www.lutonallwomenscentre.org.uk/
Women's Aid	Provide support, information, guidance and safe accommodation for women and children who have suffered from or are exposed to all forms of abuse and violence.	Women's Aid Luton Telephone: 01582 391856 Website: https://womensaidinluton.org/ Find local support near you: Women's Aid Directory - Women's Aid
Ebonista Project	Provide emotional support, safety advice and planning, national refuge searches, signposting and support with referrals such as housing, benefit advice, counselling and legal representation.	Telephone: 07306 088816 (helpline 10 am to 6 pm) Website: https://theebonistaproject.org.uk/ Email: support@theebonistaproject.org.uk

Appendix B – Guidance for Staff responding to a report

This guidance is intended to support EDA staff in responding to a report of sexual assault, sexual harassment or domestic abuse from a student, on or off campus.

The emphasis is on student choice and consent. However, if a student is under the age of 18 there is also a legal responsibility on staff to report this formally. You must speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Principal) or a member of the Safeguarding Team who will manage this reporting. You will not be required to report this to their parent or guardian – this will be managed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Do not promise confidentiality in the event that others may need to be involved.

Only in cases where there is a perceived risk to the student or other members of the EDA community should action be taken without the consent of the student.

This step-by-step guide is designed to ensure consistent practice amongst staff responding to students and also to ensure they feel supported and confident in dealing with any disclosure:

1. Assess Risk: Is the student or others still at risk from an alleged assailant?

- If a student presents in distress disclosing a very recent incident of sexual assault, it is important to assess if the alleged perpetrator is still in the vicinity and an immediate risk to the student or others, or if the student has injuries which require immediate medical attention. If so, call police/ ambulance on 999 and notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Principal). You do not need the student's consent in these circumstances.

2. Create a safe environment

- If the situation is not an emergency, invite the student for an appointment with the Welfare Officer or a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- If you are alone with a student who is feeling vulnerable or distressed, you should inform a colleague.
- If the student is accompanied, check this person's presence is welcomed and if not, tactfully explain that it may be best that they leave to allow the student some privacy.
- If the student is not accompanied, check if they would like anyone to be contacted (i.e. a friend).

3. Allow the student time to talk, making a brief record of their account

- Focus on what is being said and try not to lead the conversation with questions or make assumptions about what the student wants or feels. It may not be easy for them to talk about what has happened so give them time.
- They do not have to provide details if they do not want to.
- Use the checklist to make a note of the student's name; the alleged perpetrator's name (if known); the time, date and location of the incident(s); the support that has been offered; and any agreed actions. Keep it minimal, brief and factual.
- Bear in mind the information you collect at this stage may be requested by the police as evidence.

4. Advise the student about the preservation of forensic evidence

- Forensic evidence may be collected up to 7 days after the incident so it is important to make the student aware that if they want to report the incident now or at a later date, they should not wash any part of the

body (including hair); brush their teeth; smoke; eat or drink; change or wash clothes; tidy up or remove any items the assailant may have touched.

- Advise the student to preserve any other possible, physical evidence such as text messages, phone call log or voice mails, photos or emails.
- If the student thinks they have been drugged they should provide a urine sample as soon as possible, which can be collected at a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) or by the police.

5. Ask the student what they want to do next in respect of reporting to police or seeking further help

- The student will need to consider whether they want to report the incident to the police, either immediately or possibly in the future. It must be their decision and this should be respected. If they wish to report the incident, advise the student how they can contact the police.
- Advise the student to consider seeking medical help if they may be injured, at risk of pregnancy or at risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI). This should be addressed sensitively. You may suggest attending A+E or the walk-in centre.

6. Options for reporting the incident

a) Student wishes to disclose the incident to the police

- The student should make the initial call to the police. If they feel unable, they may ask for your help to do so but make sure you have their permission and they are present when you do.
- You can call 101 to make the report to the police and if they are coming onto campus, notify reception so they can be directed appropriately on arrival.
- The police will take a statement from the victim (either on site or at the police station). If they are attending the police station or SARC they may want to take a friend for support.

b) Student does not wish to contact the police at this point but would like to preserve forensic evidence so that they can retain this option for the future

- The student should visit the nearest SARC. For EDA, this is <https://hertssarc.org/>
- The SARC can provide advice and can carry out a forensic medical and store the samples without involving the police. They can also provide further emotional and practical support, including referral to an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA).
- Students can also contact Victim Support (www.victimsupport.org.uk) for advice and support.

c) Student is adamant that they do not wish to report the incident to the police at any time

- Advise the student about the support available through the Welfare Officer or Safeguarding Team, or if they need mitigating circumstances for assessment.
- If the alleged perpetrator is another student, ask the student if they wish to make a complaint about the incident. If they do, explain that they need to follow the complaints policy or procedure (as appropriate for their year group) so that an internal investigation can be carried out, as appropriate.
- Explain that if they have disclosed the name of another student as the alleged perpetrator, EDA has a duty of care to other students and will need to assess the risk to determine any action to be taken – even if they do not want to report to the police or make a formal complaint.

7. Check whether alternative accommodation is required

- Check whether the student feels they need to find alternative accommodation, either because of concerns about safety or to alleviate shock or trauma. You may need them to speak to a friend that they feel safe with or contact someone close to them who can support their accommodation choices.

8. Historical Incidents of Sexual Assault/ Abuse

- There is no time limit for investigating and prosecuting incidents of sexual violence.
- If a student discloses details of an assault which happened more than 7 days previous – or even years before – they can still be referred to an ISVA for advice. They may also wish to report the incident to police.

9. Third Party reports of Sexual Assault

- If a student does not want to contact the police, but wants them to be aware of the sexual assault, they can ask for help to report it anonymously.
- This can be reported through the Third Party Reporting Centre <https://www.report-it.org.uk/home> or Crimestoppers <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>

10. Recording the incident internally

- In order that EDA can monitor the nature and extent of student reports of sexual assaults and sexual harassment, all incidents are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Principal) and recorded by the Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager, even where the student does not wish to notify police or make an official complaint to the University.
- The student should be made aware that no further action will be taken unless they wish and only very limited anonymised details will be recorded and held securely.
- Case handlers will be offered appropriate support and a de-brief after a disclosure. This support will be arranged through the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Principal) and recorded by the Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager.

Appendix C - Reporting Checklist

Checklist	Information
Student name and student number (if known)	
Assess the risk – is there any immediate risk to the student or others? If there is no immediate risk, carry on with the process.	
Is there is a safe confidential space to meet the student?	
If no immediate danger, explain about confidentiality. Ensure student is aware that if they disclose the name of another student or staff as alleged perpetrator, EDA has a duty of care and may consider an internal investigation under the code of conduct – even if they do not wish to report the incident police or make a complaint	
Would the student like a friend with them?	
Reporting the incident internally: • When and where did the incident take place? • Take a contact number and email • Does the student know the name of the perpetrator? Is this is another student?	
Does the student need medical help?	
Have you advised about preservation of forensic evidence?	
Have you advised about the local SARC? 0330 223 0099	
Does the student want to report incident to the police? If so, do they need any help?	
Do they have a crime ref. no? Please note here.	
Does the student need alternative accommodation?	

Have you discussed the support available at EDA and locally?	
Any Additional information (please provide brief notes of the information provided)	

Name of person taking the report	
Signature	
Date & Time	

Document History

Version Number	Date of Issue	Review Date	Author	Changes Made/ detail
01	15.10.25	September 2026	Sarah Moore	First draft
02	29.10.25	September 2026	Sarah Moore	Added further clarification on terms within the glossary Added Mens Advice Line