



**VOICE STUDY
CENTRE**

Student Harassment and Bullying Policy

2024 - 2025

Table of Contents

Aim	1
Policy statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	1
Harassment and Bullying	2
Victimisation	9
Hate incidents	9
Antisemitism	10
What should you do if you experience harassment or bullying?	10
Making a complaint of harassment or bullying	11
What you should do if you experience or witness a hate incident	11
Confidentiality	11
Vexatious complaints	11
Academic freedom, freedom of expression and inclusion	12
Advice and support	12
Appendix A: International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) examples of Antisemitism	13
Policy information	15

Aim

These guidelines have been designed to offer you practical ways of dealing with harassment, bullying, hate incidents and assault. Following the guidelines may help you to stop the harassment or bullying yourself. They also explain how Voice Study Centre deals with reports of harassment, bullying, hate incidents or assault.

Policy statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Voice Study Centre recognises the value of diversity and is committed to providing equal opportunities for both students and staff. All are treated with dignity and respect on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential - we ensure equal opportunity by also taking into consideration the relevant impact and implications associated with race, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs and affiliations, or any other identity-forming characteristics. We expect all our employees, workers, contractors, students, invitees and visitors to be treated, and to treat others, with dignity and respect. We have a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment and bullying. Zero tolerance means that (i) we will take action and (ii) the action will be proportionate to the circumstances of the case.

We are committed to meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, which requires Voice Study Centre show no discrimination as required by law on account of age, disability, gender reassignment*, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Voice Study Centre will always act lawfully and this may include taking action to support people with particular protected characteristics, including disability and sex. In addition to its obligations under the Equality Act, Voice Study Centre shall adopt policies, practices, and procedures that define expected standards of behaviour and specify any additional characteristics, beyond those required by law, to which protection is provided, for example, in relation to political belief, social background and refugee status.

*Voice Study Centre's policies, practices and procedures specifically extend to all gender identities including trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people.

For the purposes of this Policy Statement the term 'trans' is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. The term 'non-binary' is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity does not sit comfortably with 'woman' or 'man'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and bullying adversely affect working, learning and social conditions for students, employees, workers, contractors, invitees, and visitors - and are unacceptable.

Definition of Harassment

This policy defines harassment as occurring when a person engages in unwanted conduct and the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or threatening environment. Harassment may involve repeated forms of unwanted and unwarranted behaviour, but a one-off incident, if sufficiently serious, can also amount to harassment.

When deciding whether any unwanted conduct amounts to harassment for the purposes of this policy, Voice Study Centre will consider the perception of the person raising the concern, the other circumstances of the matter and whether it is reasonable for the conduct to be considered to have the purpose or effect described. Harassment can be in verbal, written or physical form and can cause stress, anxiety, fear or sickness on the part of the harassed person.

Differences of attitude, background 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. However, this does not make it acceptable.

Religious or other belief does not justify harassment on any other ground including gender identity and sexual orientation. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted as an excuse for harassment.

Some general examples of harassment or behaviour that falls short of expected standards might include teasing, comments about personal characteristics or appearance, unreasonable criticism, promises of reward or threats made to secure sexual favours or negative comments about someone's age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or other characteristics to which protection is provided. Some more specific forms of harassment are detailed on the following pages.

Any act of harassment that involves the abuse of a position of authority or trust will be regarded by Voice Study Centre as very serious and could constitute gross misconduct.

Harassment related to sex

Harassment related to sex is: unwanted conduct of a sexual nature; or less favourable treatment as a result of the submission to or rejection of sexual harassment; or harassment related to sex in relation to teaching, learning, working or social situations.

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute sexual harassment:

- unnecessary and unwelcome physical contact
- sexual assault
- suggestive and unwelcome comments or gestures
- emphasising the gender of an individual or a group
- persistent unwelcome requests for social or sexual encounters and favours
- display, or electronic transmission, of pornographic, degrading or indecent images or threatening, abusive or unwanted comments of a sexual nature.
- non-consensual sharing of sexually explicit media.

These activities will be considered to be very serious if they are accompanied by one or both of the following:

- explicit or implicit promises for compliance that are a misuse of an institutional position (e.g. promises of higher assessment marks for a student or a recommendation for promotion for a member of staff)
- explicit or implicit threats of penalties for non-compliance that are a misuse of an institutional position (e.g. refusal to provide appropriate support/advice or resources)

Harassment related to sexual orientation

Harassment related to sexual orientation, actual or perceived, can be:

- harassment of someone because of their actual sexual orientation
- harassment of someone because of their perceived sexual orientation
- harassment of someone because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation of those with whom they associate.

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to sexual orientation:

- making suggestive or unwelcome comments or gestures emphasising the actual or perceived sexual orientation of an individual or group
- engaging in homophobic or biphobic behaviour
- using homophobic or biphobic language or displaying homophobic or biphobic materials
- making homophobic or biphobic insults or threats
- engaging in banter or making jokes which are degrading to a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation
- outing an individual as lesbian, gay or bisexual without their permission
- ignoring or excluding an individual from activities because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual
- spreading rumours or gossip about an individual's actual or perceived sexual orientation
- asking an individual intrusive questions about their private life
- making assumptions and judgements about someone based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation
- verbally or physically abusing or intimidating someone because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation

Harassment related to gender reassignment

Voice Study Centre policies, practices, and procedures cover all gender identities including trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people.

A person has the characteristic of gender reassignment if that person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing the physiological or other attributes of sex. Individuals do not have to be under medical supervision to be protected by the law.

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to gender reassignment:

- refusing to address a trans person by their preferred name and correct gender pronoun
- repeated and deliberate mis-gendering of a trans person or people
- denying a trans person or people access to the appropriate single sex facilities such as toilets or changing rooms
- engaging in banter or making transphobic comments, taunts or jokes
- outing an individual as trans without their permission or spreading rumours or gossip about their gender identity, expression and/or history
- ignoring or excluding an individual from activities because they are trans
- asking a trans person intrusive questions about their private life
- making assumptions and judgements about someone based on their gender identity, expression and/or history
- verbally or physically abusing or intimidating someone because they are trans

Harassment related to race

Harassment related to race includes harassment related to colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to race:

- derogatory name-calling
- insults, threats and racist jokes
- ridicule of an individual for racial or ethnic difference
- racist graffiti, images or insignia.

- microaggressions including asking persistent questions such as where a person is really from
- making persistent comments about appearance, command of language or stereotypical assumptions based on race
- not using the individual's name or adopting a nickname.

Harassment related to religion or belief

Harassment related to religion or belief of an individual or a group can be because of:

- their religion
- that they have no religion
- that they have changed or renounce their religion
- their religious or philosophical belief
- their lack of any such belief

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to religion or belief:

- teasing or mocking someone for holding a particular religion or belief
- persistently asking an individual intrusive questions about how they choose to observe their religion or belief
- ostracising someone because of their religion or belief
- failing to respect the religion or belief of another (i.e. by persistently offering inappropriate food and drink)
- persistent criticism of employee for not wearing appropriate uniform or dress

Harassment related to disability

A person has a disability for the purposes of this policy if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Some people also meet the definition of disability without having to show that they have an impairment that has or is likely to have a substantial, adverse long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes people who have cancer, HIV infection, multiple sclerosis and people who are certified as blind, partially sighted, severely sight impaired or sight impaired by a consultant ophthalmologist.

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to disability:

- direct verbal abuse or comments that make a disabled person feel uncomfortable, intimidated or degraded
- comments which fail to acknowledge the employee disability
- physical abuse
- jokes or banter relating the disabled person
- mimicking or teasing a person about their disability
- deliberately altering physical space or removing equipment required by the disabled person

Harassment related to age

The following are some examples of activities that might constitute harassment related to age:

- direct verbal abuse or comments about age that make a person feel uncomfortable, intimidated or degraded
- unjustified exclusion of a person because of their age
- ageist jokes
- using inappropriate language, related to age, to describe someone (e.g. 'over the hill', 'wet behind the ears')

Bullying

Voice Study Centre defines bullying as follows:

“Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power, through means that may reasonably be considered to have the effect of undermining, humiliating, denigrating or injuring the recipient or recipients (emotionally or physically).”

Examples of behaviours that may constitute bullying include:

- making someone feel frightened, less respected, made fun of or upset
- spreading a false rumour about someone
- putting someone down in meetings
- not allowing someone to go on training courses, but allowing everyone else to

- giving someone a heavier workload than everyone else
- excluding someone from team/group social events
- persistently ignoring or 'talking down' an individual
- criticising an individual in an inappropriate manner or belittling them about their work, personality or appearance
- pressurising an individual into behaviour or actions against their wishes

Harassment or bullying via social media or other electronic means

Harassment or bullying through social networking sites and messaging apps such as Facebook or Twitter or through other electronic means such as text message or email is not acceptable. The following are some examples of what might constitute this form of harassment or bullying:

- Pages that identify and shame individuals
- Images altered to degrade individuals
- Photos or videos of physical bullying posted to shame the victim
- Sharing personal information to blackmail or harass people and
- Repeatedly targeting other people with unwanted friend requests or messages
- Non-consensual sharing of sexually explicit photographs

Victimisation

Voice Study Centre seeks to protect any member of the Voice Study Centre community from victimisation. Voice Study Centre will regard as victimisation any instance where a person is subjected to detrimental treatment because that person, in good faith, made an allegation of harassment, or:

- indicated an intention to make such an allegation, or
- assisted or supported another person in bringing forward such an allegation, or
- participated in an investigation of a complaint, or
- participated in any disciplinary hearing arising from an investigation, or
- Is suspected of having done so.

Victimisation carried out by an employee or agent of Voice Study Centre may also amount to a breach of the Equality Act 2010.

Hate incidents

Voice Study Centre investigates any incident which is perceived by the victim, or any other person (e.g. a witness), to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's:

- disability or perceived disability;
- race or perceived race;
- religion or perceived religion;
- sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation;
- transgender identity or perceived transgender identity.

Where, following investigation and consideration of the evidence, an incident is found to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, Voice Study Centre will consider this to be a Hate Incident and treat this as an aggravating factor in considering any appropriate action to take. Hate Incidents may also be crimes and consideration should be given to reporting such matters to the police.

The incident can take many forms, and be perpetrated by either an individual or group, including:

- physical attacks, such as physical assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, neighbour disputes and arson

- threat of attack, including offensive letters, abusive or obscene telephone calls and other intimidating behaviour
- verbal abuse or insults, abusive gestures
- other abuse, such as offensive leaflets and posters, unfounded and malicious complaints and bullying.

Antisemitism

Voice Study Centre has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of Antisemitism: Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. The IHRA provides eleven examples of antisemitism (as set out in Appendix A to this document).

What should you do if you experience harassment or bullying?

If you feel that you are being subjected to harassment or bullying in any form by a student, a member of staff or a visitor, do not feel that it is your fault or that you have to tolerate it. Voice Study Centre's primary concern is that the harassment stops and that there is support and assistance available when needed.

If possible, you should make it clear to the person causing offence that their behaviour is unacceptable to you. You can speak to them directly but you may find it easier to do this by letter or email (you should keep a copy). This may in some instances be sufficient to stop the behaviour.

You can also ask someone else to speak to them on your behalf. This could be your tutor, or it could be the Head of Student Support, who will take appropriate action to seek to stop any bullying or harassment.

It is important to make a note or keep a diary of the details of any relevant incidents which distress you – particularly if you feel unable to speak to the person concerned or if, having spoken to them, the behaviour persists. If the harassment has caused you to change the pattern of your work or social life or if it has had any effect on your health, you should include this information as well.

You do not have to experience harassment or bullying yourself to report it. If you observe someone else being harassed or bullied you are strongly encouraged to report it.

Making a complaint of harassment or bullying

If you are a student and you want to make a complaint of harassment or bullying by someone working for Voice Study Centre, you should use the complaints procedure outlined in the VSC Student Complaint Policy. If you would like to make a complaint about another student, use the procedure in the Student Code of Conduct policy.

What you should do if you experience or witness a hate incident

If you are a student and you want to make a complaint of harassment or bullying by someone working for Voice Study Centre, you should use the complaints procedure outlined in the VSC Student Complaint Policy. If you would like to make a complaint about another student, use the procedure in the Student Code of Conduct policy.

You are encouraged to report an incident to Voice Study Centre in the first instance, but if you do report an incident directly to the police, please ensure you also report the incident to Voice Study Centre by contacting one of the services mentioned above.

The Head of Student Support will also be able to give information about the personal and academic support that is available within Voice Study Centre.

Confidentiality

Voice Study Centre has an obligation to protect both you and other members of the community and for this reason the appropriate information will only be disclosed to relevant parties and all investigations will remain confidential.

Vexatious complaints

Complaints of harassment and bullying are treated seriously by Voice Study Centre. It should therefore be noted that anyone making mischievous or malicious complaints will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

Academic freedom, freedom of expression and inclusion

We are an organisation that values academic freedom, freedom of expression and inclusion. Academic Freedom is an essential part of academic life and flourishes where there is tolerance of, and respect for, a wide range of views and beliefs. In addition, everyone has the right to freedom of expression within the law. Our commitment to inclusion demands that we exercise our freedoms responsibly, respectfully and with due regard to the values we share as a community. This means that neither academic freedom nor freedom of expression can be used as an excuse for subjecting an individual or group to bullying or harassment or for committing a hate incident or crime.

Advice and support

In the first instance, students can raise concerns with our Head Of Student Support (tracy@voicestudycentre.com) who will be able to advise on the support services available.

Alternatively, students can make contact confidentially, by emailing Student Confidential (student-confidential@voicestudycentre.com)

The direct phone line for Voice Study Centre is +441206 298172 available during UK office hours.

Appendix A: International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) examples of Antisemitism

As set out at <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other

democratic nation.

- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Policy information

Title: Student Harassment and bullying

Policy Classification: Guidelines

Security Classification: Open

Nominated Contact: Director of Operations

Publication Date: 30 October 2023

Minimum Review Frequency: Annually

Policy Review Expiry Date: 30 October 2024