

	Document Title: Harassment Policy	
	Effective Date: 14/07/2025	Document No. BC/HR/POL14
	Revision No.00	Function: Human Resources



HARASSMENT POLICY

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Summary Changes

Revision History

Date	Changes made	Revision No

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1. Policy Statement

Boitekanelo College is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that upholds the dignity, respect, and safety of all its members. The institution does not tolerate any form of harassment, whether it is based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age, nationality, ethnicity, academic status, or any other characteristic protected by law. This policy applies to all employees, students, contractors, and visitors involved in institutional activities.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- 2.1 Prevent and address all forms of harassment within the institution.
- 2.2 Provide clear definitions and examples of harassment.
- 2.3 Outline procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving complaints.
- 2.4 Ensure support and protection for affected individuals.
- 2.5 Promote a respectful, inclusive, and non-threatening institutional culture.

3. Scope of Application

This policy applies to:

- 3.1 All academic and non-academic staff (full-time and part-time).
- 3.2 All students (undergraduate, postgraduate, distance, and exchange).
- 3.3 Contractors, consultants, visitors, and volunteers.
- 3.4 All institutional settings, including classrooms, offices, residences, online platforms, fieldwork, and extracurricular activities.

4. Definition of terms

- 4.1 Harassment refers to unwelcome, offensive, or inappropriate conduct that humiliates, intimidates, excludes, or demeans an individual or group. It may be verbal, non-verbal, physical, written, or digital.

Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Insults, name-calling, inappropriate jokes, comments or derogatory jokes.
- Threatening, bullying, or stalking behaviour.

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- Display or circulation of offensive images, cartoons, or messages.
- Discriminatory remarks or actions based on race, gender, disability, or other identity traits.
- Deliberate isolation or exclusion of individuals.
- Unreasonable interference with an individual's academic or professional performance.
- Mocking behaviour based on one's accent, religion or appearance.
- Misusing power or position.
- Unwanted touching or physical proximity.

**** Note:** For all sexual harassment-related issues, refer to the Sexual Harassment Policy (Document No. BC/HR/POL15).**

5. Dress code and respectful conduct

As part of fostering professionalism and mutual respect within the institution, individuals are encouraged to dress appropriately for academic, administrative, and professional settings. However, it is imperative to underscore that a person's choice of clothing, whether perceived as conventional, expressive, cultural, or otherwise, can never be used as a justification for, or excuse of, any form of harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

NB This clause should be read in conjunction with the Institutional Dress Code Policy, which guides appropriate attire in academic and professional settings. However, adherence or non-adherence to the dress code shall never be construed as consent or a contributing factor in cases of harassment.*

6. Prohibition of relationships involving power imbalances

To safeguard against potential abuse of power, conflicts of interest, or perceptions of favouritism, romantic or sexual relationships between individuals in positions of authority (e.g., academic staff, supervisors, or managers) and their subordinates or students are strongly discouraged and are prohibited where a clear power imbalance exists.

Such relationships even when seemingly consensual can compromise objectivity, create real or perceived conflicts of interest, and may expose the subordinate party to undue pressure or

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coercion, whether intentional or not. These dynamics can also contribute to an environment conducive to sexual harassment or exploitation.

In line with this, the institution requires that any existing or developing romantic or sexual relationship between an individual and someone over whom they have academic, administrative, supervisory, or evaluative authority must be formally declared in writing to the HR office. This applies to:

- Current employees or students who are already in a relationship at the time of joining the institution or operationalization of this policy.
- Employees or students who enter a relationship while engaged with the institution.

Upon such disclosure, the institution (HR department, Every Concern Heard Out (ECHO) Committee or any appointees) will assess the situation to mitigate potential risks, which may include reassigning supervisory responsibilities or taking other necessary steps to remove the power imbalance. Failure to disclose such relationships may result in disciplinary action, particularly where the relationship leads to favouritism, harassment, or other violations of institutional policies.

7. Responsibilities of Members of the Institution

All members of the institution have a duty to:

- 7.1 Foster a respectful and harassment-free environment.
- 7.2 Refrain from engaging in any form of harassment.
- 7.3 Report harassment that they experience or witness.
- 7.4 Support victims in seeking help and redress.

Managers, supervisors, and faculty have an added responsibility to:

- 7.5 Set a positive example by modelling appropriate behaviour.
- 7.6 Address complaints promptly and with the seriousness they deserve.
- 7.7 Ensure their areas of responsibility are free from harassment.

8. Reporting Harassment

Anyone who experiences or witnesses' harassment is encouraged to report it promptly. Reports may be made to:

- 8.1 Members of the ECHO committee

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8.2 Human Resources Department (for staff-related matters).

8.3 Student Support Office (for student-related concerns).

Reports can be made orally or in writing by completing (Form BC/HR/POL14/FR01) retrievable from the HR shared folder or a hard copy which can be obtained from the HR office or submitted via email to pseah@boitekanelo.ac.bw. Anonymous complaints may be reviewed, though they may limit the extent of possible action.

9. Investigation and Resolution Process

Upon receiving a complaint:

- 9.1 The institution will launch a prompt, impartial, and confidential investigation through the ECHO committee
- 9.2 All parties will have the opportunity to present their side of the story.
- 9.3 Interim measures (e.g. separating parties, offering counselling) may be taken where necessary.
- 9.4 A determination will be made based on evidence and institutional guidelines.
- 9.5 Appropriate remedial or disciplinary action will be taken.

10. Disciplinary Measures

Depending on the severity and nature of the harassment as determined by the Members of the ECHO committee working with relevant departments (HR, Legal and or Academic Registrar), disciplinary actions may include:

- 10.1 Verbal or written warning.
- 10.2 Mandatory counselling or sensitivity training.
- 10.3 Suspension or termination of contract (staff).
- 10.4 Suspension or expulsion (students).
- 10.5 Legal referral, where applicable.

11. False or malicious accusations

Boitekanelo College takes all reports of harassment seriously and is committed to ensuring that complaints are investigated thoroughly, fairly, and confidentially. However, it is equally important to protect the integrity of the process from abuse.

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Any individual found to have **made a false**, malicious, or defamatory allegation of harassment, with the intent to mislead, defame, or cause harm, shall be subject to disciplinary action. If found guilty of such an offence, stern action will be taken, which may include, but is not limited to, suspension or termination of employment or enrollment, following institutional disciplinary procedures and relevant national labour and education laws.

The institution will ensure due process and protect all parties involved from retaliation or reputational harm arising from unverified claims.

12. Protection from Retaliation

The institution strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports harassment or participates in an investigation. Retaliatory behaviour will be treated as a serious offence, subject to disciplinary action.

13. Confidentiality

All reports and investigations will be handled with confidentiality and discretion. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in managing the case, and all parties are expected to respect the privacy of the process.

14. Awareness and Training

Boitekanelo College shall provide regular training and awareness programs to:

- 14.1 Educate staff and students about what constitutes harassment.
- 14.2 Encourage respectful conduct and mutual understanding.
- 14.3 Promote the use of this policy and available support mechanisms.

NB*Awareness shall be raised through toolbox talks (brief engagements) before the commencement of meetings.

15. Record

Form BC/HR/POL14/FR01