

Policy on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 LSE is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone in its community. This includes promoting an environment free from all forms of sexual misconduct and taking reasonable steps to prevent and eliminate such incidents in line with the School's legal anticipatory duty under the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 and obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- 1.2 Sexual misconduct can have a significant detrimental impact on the psychological wellbeing, physical health and dignity of those who experience it. It also has the potential to affect others in the wider LSE community and lead to feelings of insecurity, fear and distrust. The School acknowledges that students within the higher education sector are at an increased risk of

being subjected to sexual misconduct. In addition, the power dynamics that exist within a higher education institution can increase a person's vulnerability and a reluctance to report.

- 1.3 Definitions of sexual misconduct are set out in [Section 4](#). This includes acts of sexual harassment and sexual assault, which are unlawful. Sexual misconduct also breaches the [LSE's Ethics Code](#) which makes a commitment to Equality of Respect and Opportunity. LSE takes a zero-tolerance approach to sexual misconduct of any kind and where the School finds that an incident of sexual misconduct has occurred, this will be dealt with under LSE disciplinary procedures.
- 1.4 LSE recognises that whilst the majority of sexual misconduct victims are women, this can be experienced by anyone, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. It is also important to note that marginalised groups, and particularly those individuals who identify with more than one marginalised group are disproportionately impacted by sexual misconduct and may face additional barriers to accessing support, reporting misconduct or taking part in investigations. Incidents of sexual misconduct may also occur in a number of contexts which include incidents within intimate partner relationships, friendships and / or family. In addition, whilst issues relating to sexual misconduct may arise as a result of a power differential, it can also take place between persons at the same level or involve staff or students behaving inappropriately towards more senior members of the School.
- 1.5 LSE recognises the importance of raising awareness across our community of what sexual misconduct is, our policies and codes of conduct which prohibit it, and how to report it if it occurs.
- 1.6 LSE commits to providing support for anyone in the community affected by sexual misconduct or any form of sexual violence. This is irrespective of when an incident may have occurred (e.g., before joining LSE). Training and guidance is also in place for staff to support them in responding appropriately to any disclosures that they may receive.

2. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain the steps LSE will take to prevent sexual misconduct and ensure a safe, supportive and inclusive working and learning environment, free from any and all forms of sexual misconduct.
- Provide clear guidance as to how matters of sexual misconduct will be addressed at LSE.
- Ensure that those affected by incidents involving sexual misconduct are supported and treated with dignity and respect.
- Confirm the standards of behaviour expected from staff and students.

3. Policy Scope

- 3.1 This policy:
 - Applies to all LSE students and staff. It will also apply to any other person who is contracted to abide by this policy, such as members of Council, visiting staff, LSE alumni and other individuals authorised to be on School premises for the purposes of work or study.

- Relates to incidents of sexual misconduct, including those which occur as part of domestic abuse.
- Applies to members of the LSE community where an incident may have taken place either School premises or beyond the physical premises and / or normal business hours of the School. This includes incidents abroad, in halls of residence, at LSE events, or on social media. It may also include incidents which take place in private premises e.g., a house, bar or other external site, but involved a member(s) of the LSE community.
- Applies where a current member of the LSE community is alleged to have perpetrated an act of sexual misconduct against a third party (including, but not limited to, contractors, agency workers, visitors, job/student applicants) and where this incident has occurred on premises or in the course of work/study.

3.2 LSE recognises that there will be people within the community who may be affected by an incident(s) of sexual misconduct, abuse and / or violence, which is unrelated to LSE or took place before joining LSE. Support is available to all (see 6.14), irrespective of when and where an incident may have occurred.

3.3 Formal processes will be instigated where an incident of sexual misconduct is reported that:

- has occurred during the course of work or study and,
- where it is alleged to have been perpetrated by someone who is a current student, member of staff, alumnus or member of Council.

These formal proceedings, which include the processes of investigation, adjudication and sanction, will be carried out in accordance with one of the following procedures:

- [Disciplinary Procedure for Students](#)
- [Grievance Policy and Procedure for Professional Services Staff](#)
- [Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Professional Services Staff](#)
- [The Academic Annex \(which includes the grievance and disciplinary procedures for academic staff\)](#)
- [The ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures for hourly paid staff](#)
- [Alumni Misconduct Procedure](#)

3.4 There may be cases where an act of sexual misconduct has taken place (during the course of work or study), but where formal LSE procedures cannot be applied. For example, where the perpetrator is not an LSE member of staff and is subject to the disciplinary proceedings of their own employer. In these circumstances, the LSE will still carry out its own investigations and take appropriate action. For example, ending any future working relationship and / or, where consent is given by the Reporting Party - providing evidence to the employer to take disciplinary action (see also section 9).

3.5 LSE recognises that a number of students will be under the age of 18 when beginning a course of study at the School. The School may also recruit workers under the age of 18. Where a case of sexual misconduct involves a person under the age of 18, or a vulnerable adult, additional measures will be required in line with LSE's [Safeguarding Policy](#). This includes:

- Notifying the relevant safeguarding lead (Academic Registrar for students, Director of HR for staff) or nominated contact.
- Seeking any specific support, e.g. mental health support for the individual, as quickly

as possible.

- Working co-operatively with safeguarding services for vulnerable groups and in partnership with parents / guardians where appropriate.

The School's [Safeguarding in Research and International Activities Policy](#) will also apply for staff and students working with young people and / or vulnerable adults as part of research or international activities.

3.6 Related policies include:

The LSE's [Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy](#) sets out the School's commitment to challenge and address any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying within its community or against its members. It addresses unwanted conduct or behaviour which may not be sexual in nature.

The LSE's [Policy and Procedure on Personal Relationships](#) sets out the expectations and responsibilities of staff, students and the remainder of the LSE community specifically in respect of personal relationships between staff, and between staff and students, but also in respect of any personal relationship that includes a power imbalance. The policy confirms that personal relationships between staff and students are prohibited where there is: a direct supervisory relationship in existence; direct or indirect responsibility for a student's work and / or personal welfare; other interaction with a student as part of a member of staff's role.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply.

4.1 **Sexual Misconduct*** is any unwanted or attempted unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. This includes, but is not limited to:

- sexual harassment
- sexual assault; and
- rape.

See [Appendix 1](#) for examples of sexual misconduct.

4.2 **Harassment*** LSE follows the meaning given to harassment in:

- [Section 26 of the Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Section 1 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#)

We have summarised Section 26 of the Equality Act 2010 as follows:

'harassment, including sexual harassment, includes unwanted behaviour or conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment because of, or connected to, one or more of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.'

* Definitions taken from the Office for Students 2024.

The unwanted behaviour, which can be verbal, non-verbal or physical, does not have to be intended for, or directed at, a particular person— it can be something that they witness or overhear.

We have summarised Section 1 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 as follows:

‘a course of conduct conducted on at least two occasions that harasses one other person, or a course of conduct that harasses two or more persons at least once each. References to harassing a person include alarming the person or causing the person distress.’

Sexual harassment does not need to be sexually motivated, only sexual in nature and can be experienced by someone of the same or different sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Sexual harassment also occurs if an individual, or third party, treats a person less favourably because that person has rejected or submitted to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. The third party may not be the person who engaged in the unwanted conduct.

- 4.3 **Intimate personal relationship*** means a relationship that involves one or more of the following elements:
 - physical intimacy including isolated or repeated sexual activity; or
 - romantic or emotional intimacy.
- 4.4 **Abuse of power*** means a situation where a relevant staff member (someone who has direct academic responsibilities, or other direct professional responsibilities, in relation to that student) exploits a position of power in relation to a student so as to apply pressure in a way which:
 - may result in the student doing something, or refraining from doing something, that they may not have otherwise done; and
 - that action or inaction could reasonably result in something that falls within the scope of an intimate personal relationship.
- 4.5 **Domestic Abuse** involves abusive behaviour from one individual to another where they are personally connected. That personal connection can include, but is not limited to, people who are (or have been) in an intimate personal relationship, or who are related to each other. Behaviour is abusive if it consists of physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour. Domestic abuse also includes economic abuse and psychological, emotional, or other abuse.
- 4.6 **Victimisation** means treating an individual unfavourably (subjecting them to a detriment) because they have carried out a protected act. A protected act can be:
 - Making a claim or complaint under the Equality Act (for example, for discrimination or harassment)/Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.
 - Helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information.
 - Alleging that someone has breached the Equality Act.
 - Doing anything else which may relate to the Equality Act.

Victimisation also means subjecting an individual to a detriment because it is believed that they have done, or are going to do, a protected act. It also includes giving evidence to support

an individual complaining about a protected act; the individual does not actually need to have done the protected act.

4.7 **Consent** is when a person provides explicit permission and agreement for something to happen. Consent must be given without coercion, pressure or force. In order to give consent, the person must have both the freedom to consent and the capacity to consent. E.g., if someone is intoxicated, unconscious or otherwise incapable, they do not have the capacity to provide consent. Consent can be withdrawn at any time. This may be before or during a sexual act, regardless of whether consent had been given previously.

LSE does not consider that consent can be freely given where a power imbalance exists which means that one person has influence over another, e.g. a student and academic member of staff who has supervisory or other responsibility for that student.

4.8 **LSE community** includes all salaried and non-salaried members of staff, including visiting staff, students, alumni, members of Council and other individuals authorised to be on School premises for the purposes of work or study.

4.9 **Safe Contacts** are members of LSE staff, some of whom have received enhanced training on sexual violence and harassment from an external specialist support agency and can provide a primary point of contact, information and support for individuals disclosing sexual misconduct.

4.10 **A Disclosure** is when an individual chooses to speak with someone about their experiences. [This is different from making a report.](#)

4.11 **A Report** refers to a written complaint being lodged with the School which can lead to an investigation into the reported incident(s). Reports are usually made via [Report + Support](#).

4.12 **An Anonymous Report** is a report that has been made by someone whose identity is not known or is not shared when dealing with a sexual misconduct case.

4.13 **The Reporting Party** is the person who has made a disclosure or submitted a report about an incident of sexual misconduct. The Reporting Party can be someone who does this on someone's behalf or as a witness.

4.14 **The Reported Party** is the person against whom the alleged act(s) of sexual misconduct have been made.

4.15 **The Harassment Management Group** assesses the risks arising from a disclosure or report of alleged student-related misconduct (including alumni) and identifies what precautionary measures, if any, may be suitable in instances involving a risk or threat of serious harm to the Reporting Party, another member of the LSE community or serious disruption to the Reporting Party, the LSE community or School activities.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 All members of the LSE community are expected to contribute to a safe and inclusive environment by:

- Understanding what constitutes sexual misconduct (and attending training sessions where relevant).
- Moderating their own behaviour and conduct, ensuring that they are sensitive to the needs of others and treating all individuals with dignity and respect.
- Upholding the commitments of this policy and the position that sexual misconduct is unacceptable.

5.2 LSE is responsible for:

- Taking reasonable steps to prevent and eliminate sexual misconduct.
- Taking early and appropriate action when it is aware that sexual misconduct has, or may have, taken place.
- Ensuring this policy is followed and that effective and objective investigations are carried out in a timely manner, with those affected being treated with dignity and respect.
- Ensuring that throughout any investigatory/complaints procedure, the reporting party is entitled to be supported by a member of staff who has received enhanced training in responding to sexual misconduct.
- Providing appropriate support and care to all parties involved in cases of sexual misconduct, recognising that differing levels and / or types of support may be required by the individuals involved.
- Raising awareness and providing training, including any refresher training, to help members of the School community identify and handle cases of sexual misconduct.
- Ensuring effective monitoring of sexual misconduct within the LSE community, through regular reviews of numbers and outcomes of reported incidents and investigations. This will be overseen by LSE's Inclusion Management Board, chaired by the President and Vice Chancellor.

5.3 Staff and students who are in a position of power or authority over others – e.g., line managers, senior staff, academic staff, student leaders – should be especially mindful of the power dynamics that will exist in relation to others. It should not be assumed that someone will feel empowered to speak up where they are subject to unwanted behaviour or conduct. For example, someone may not feel empowered to speak up if a more senior person instigates unwanted close personal contact (e.g., hugs) or extends unwanted invitations for informal or social interactions. Staff who have interactions with students and / or hold a position of power or authority are expected to always conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner and should act in accordance with the [LSE Policy and Procedure on Personal Relationships](#). Where the School finds that an [abuse of power](#) has occurred, this will be dealt with under LSE disciplinary procedures. Managers and supervisors should also model appropriate conduct and behaviour to reinforce appropriate standards to staff. They should also ensure that any instances of unacceptable behaviour amongst team members is addressed appropriately and in accordance with this policy.

6. Policy Principles

- 6.1 Everyone has a right to feel safe and supported at work. Sexual misconduct is unacceptable, and all staff and students have a responsibility to ensure that they treat others with dignity and respect. Examples of sexual misconduct are provided in Appendix 1. Where an allegation of sexual misconduct is upheld, this will normally result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or expulsion, in accordance with the relevant procedure.
- 6.2 LSE will take steps to prevent and eliminate sexual misconduct within the LSE community as set out in Appendix 4 – Preventing sexual misconduct.
- 6.3 All disclosures and reports of sexual misconduct must be treated seriously and without judgement of the Reporting Party. Students and staff are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct and can do so using the School's online reporting tool Report + Support (<https://reportandsupport.lse.ac.uk>). Witnesses to an incident of sexual misconduct can also make a report. The LSE website includes guidance for making a report, available support and also options for making a disclosure in person. (<https://info.lse.ac.uk/report-it>).
- 6.4 In all cases, those making a named report will be contacted directly to discuss their report, have their options outlined and clarify next steps:
 - For reports made by staff, contact will be from an HR Partner.
 - For reports made by students, alumni or others, contact will be from the Deputy Head of Student Services (Advice and Policy), the Head of Student Advice and Engagement Management, or their nominee.
 - Where reports are made by students about a member of staff, these may be passed to an HR Partner.Both the Reporting Party and the Reported Party will be provided with a named contact who will keep them regularly updated at agreed intervals.
- 6.4 LSE recognises the difficulty and sensitivity in making reports and allows individuals to report anonymously. Further information regarding anonymous reports is outlined in section 7.
- 6.5 LSE will ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff on how to respond to disclosures relating to sexual misconduct. Additional training will also be provided for those who have been identified as key contacts in the management of advice and disclosures- e.g. safe contacts, designated staff within student services, HR Partners. Specialist trauma-informed training will also be provided for investigators
- 6.6 The Reporting Party will have a range of options in terms of how they proceed with their disclosure, which includes a formal process (see Appendix 2) and also options for an informal route (see Appendix 3). Where guidance is needed, options can be discussed with the allocated contact for the Reporting Party, who would normally be a member of the student services team (for students) or an HR Partner (for staff). At any time, the Reporting Party can choose to make a report to the police.

6.7 Where an individual chooses to pursue formal action, the School will ensure that a formal investigation is conducted in accordance with the relevant staff or student procedure. The Investigator will be trained and independent, with no previous involvement in the case. The Investigator will be responsible for gathering relevant information and providing a report of their findings. Where the matter proceeds to a formal disciplinary hearing, the Investigator's report will be submitted to the relevant decision maker and / or panel who will decide upon the outcome of the case. Investigations will normally proceed to conclusion, even if the Reporting Party or the Reported Party leave the institution. (also see Appendix 2).

6.8 Internal investigations and procedural outcomes will be judged on the balance of probabilities, as opposed to the criminal standard of 'beyond a reasonable doubt'. Any judgements reached as part of an investigation do not constitute a legal ruling on whether or not criminal activity has taken place.

6.9 Duplicate investigations under different procedures will be avoided. Wherever possible, a single investigation will take place. Where the matter progresses from one formal process to another (e.g. staff grievance case to a staff disciplinary case), the evidence collected from the original investigation will normally be used in the procedure which follows.

6.10 The Reporting Party will have the right to decide how they wish to proceed following the disclosure of an incident. However, the School may decide to take action if there is a reasonable belief that the individual or others within the wider LSE community may be at risk of harm. In all cases, this action will be proportionate to the nature of the disclosure and will follow discussion with the Reporting Party. In this case, the decision and reasons for it will be provided. The School will ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent further incidents or victimisation of the Reporting Party. Appropriate support will also be discussed and put in place.

6.11 Following disclosure to a member of staff, should the Reporting Party decide not to take the matter forward, a report should be made on Report and Support, subject to the individual's consent. This is so that there is a central record of disclosures made, to support monitoring and prevention work.

6.12 Following a report of sexual misconduct, the School will assess any risks and consider whether measures should be taken to mitigate any risks to the Reporting and Reported Parties as well as the wider LSE community whilst the investigation / process is ongoing. Interventions will normally involve changes to the working or learning arrangements of the individuals concerned and / or the provision of additional support. (See also section 2, Appendix 2: Management of formal procedures relating to sexual misconduct.) Any action will be managed in accordance with the formal procedure that is being followed.

6.13 The School will communicate the outcome of the formal process to the Reporting Party. In doing this, the School will consider the level of detail that is appropriate in the circumstances of each case and any data-sharing risks in line with data protection legislation.

6.14 The School recognises that an incident of sexual misconduct can significantly impact a person's physical and mental health. LSE will provide support to the Reporting Party which will include access to the School's Independent Sexual Violence Support Service. This service

will be available to any member of the LSE community who has been impacted by sexual violence at any point in their lives.

- 6.15 LSE will offer support to both the Reporting Party and the Reported Party when allegations of sexual misconduct arise. LSE will also provide support to any member of its community who has been affected by an incident(s) of sexual misconduct. This is regardless of when and where an incident may have occurred, and whether or not they were indirectly involved in the incident (e.g. as a witness or as the recipient of a disclosure). Support available for members of the LSE community includes counselling, mental health and wellbeing support. Detailed and up to date information on available support will be maintained [online](#) for both staff and students.
- 6.16 Individual arrangements for support may also be agreed where a staff or student may be at risk of harm from someone outside of the LSE community. For example, in cases of domestic abuse, stalking, sexual assault or threats from someone outside of the School. Support could include authorised absence from the School- e.g., to meet with external support agencies or attend court hearings; flexible working arrangements; or assistance from security staff whilst on campus (e.g. to put safety plans in place when there is a threat, or perceived threat, to an individual's safety).
- 6.17 No member of the LSE community should face victimisation or any form of retaliation for making a report or disclosure or providing evidence as part of an investigation. Any such retaliatory action will be in breach in this policy. Reports of victimisation due to having raised or, supported (i.e., as a witness) a complaint of sexual misconduct will be taken seriously, and LSE disciplinary procedures will apply as appropriate. Reports regarding victimisation can also be made via Report + Support.
- 6.18 Details of any incidents involving allegations of sexual misconduct will be treated confidentially. An appropriate level of detail will only be shared with key staff who have been assigned a role in dealing with the issues raised. The School will always abide by its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.
- 6.19 LSE does not use Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) in place of the investigation or adjudication process of sexual misconduct cases, or to prevent individuals from speaking out about such incidents. LSE is committed to understanding and addressing complaints of sexual misconduct that are made in order to eliminate such incidents.
- 6.20 This policy operates in accordance with the School's Code of Practice on Free Speech. There may be occasions where content of a sexual nature, which may be potentially offensive, is included in course materials (including, but not limited to, books, videos, sound recordings, and pictures). It is unlikely that, where it is used in accordance with the law and within the scope of the curriculum, statements and views expressed by a person as part of teaching, research or discussions in connection with the content of a higher education course – will amount to sexual misconduct.
- 6.21 This policy will operate in accordance with current relevant UK legislation. This includes the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, under which LSE will ensure, as far as is reasonably

practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees and also the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, under which LSE will take reasonable steps to prevent the sexual harassment of its workers.

It should be noted that members of the LSE community are also personally liable for their actions, which, in some instances, could lead to criminal or civil action in court under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Equality Act 2010, Sexual Offences Act 2003, or other relevant legislation, such as the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

- 6.22 The LSE Students' Union may use their own separate procedures to investigate and take appropriate action to resolve the same allegation of sexual misconduct. In cases involving staff and student incidents, HR will keep the LSE Students' Union informed of relevant action where appropriate.
- 6.23 No time limits are applied to complaints of sexual misconduct. Where historical allegations are brought by a member of the LSE community, including alumni, these will be taken seriously, regardless of when the reported incident occurred. LSE is committed to investigating historical complaints by making reasonable attempts to obtain relevant information to determine the appropriate response.

7. Anonymous Reports

- 7.1 All anonymous reports will be reviewed and a judgement made as to any appropriate actions or interventions that should be taken. This might include general precautions - for example, putting additional safety measures in place on campus or in a hall of residence, or individual actions where the Reported Party has been named. However, it would not normally be possible to instigate a formal investigation against a Reported Party based on an anonymous report. Records will be kept of any decisions and the reasons for these. Where these reports are in relation to students only, the reviews will be managed by Student Services. Where reports involve members of staff, these reviews will be managed by HR. Where reports have been made anonymously, it will not be possible to provide feedback on the progress of the complaint or the outcome.
- 7.2 Where an anonymous report relates to an ongoing investigation, the report will normally be passed to the investigator of that case. Investigators will need to carefully consider how anonymous reports can, or should, be used. This includes whether the report may warrant the pursuit of any further lines of enquiry. It will not normally be possible for the Investigator to use evidence from anonymous sources which cannot be presented to the Reported Party for a response.

8. Environmental Investigations

- 8.1 Where there are multiple disclosures regarding concerns of sexual misconduct, LSE may decide to instigate an environmental investigation. This is action that may be appropriate in the absence of any formal reports of sexual misconduct, but where there is reasonable indication that a wider cultural issue exists. An environmental investigation may be focused on a specific area of the School - the outcome of which may lead to interventions to prevent

the reoccurrence of such behaviour and / or the provision of support within that area, or in the School more broadly.

9. Dealing with sexual misconduct perpetrated by a third party

- 9.1 LSE will take reasonable and appropriate action where a member of the School community has been subjected to, or witnessed, sexual misconduct by a third party during the course of their work or study. Third parties include visitors, contractors and members of the public.
- 9.2 Appropriate internal and external contacts will be involved, depending on the nature of the case. This can include, but is not limited to, contact with third party employers and the police. Depending on the circumstances, appropriate action could include:
 - Providing evidence to the third-party employer to take disciplinary action - where consent is given by the Reporting Party
 - Liaising with third-party organisations for them to take reasonable steps to prevent the reoccurrence of such incidents e.g. by requiring new rules and / or safeguards in relation to future contact or business with LSE.
 - Banning somebody from School premises.
 - Reviewing any contractual relationship with the Reported Party's employer.
- 9.3 Support will be available to any member of the School community who has been affected by sexual misconduct by an external party (see section 6.15).

Appendix 1- Examples of Sexual Misconduct (This list is not exhaustive)

1) Sexual harassment - examples include:

- Unwelcome bodily contact or invasions of personal space - including touches, kisses and hugs
- Sexual jokes, comments, and innuendo
- Displaying, sending, or sharing of sexually-based images
- Sharing sexual images of another person without their consent
- Inappropriate comments about a person's looks or appearance
- Spreading sexual rumours about a person
- Staring, leering or suggestive looks
- Sexually-based insults or name-calling
- Intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life
- A person discussing and / or imposing details of their own sex life
- Threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour
- Demands or propositions for sexual favours

2) Sexual assault (acts of physical, psychological and emotional violation in the form of a sexual act, inflicted on someone without their consent. It can involve forcing or manipulating someone to witness or participate in any sexual acts).

3) Rape (including 'stealthing' - when someone removes a condom during sex without the other person's consent or lies about having put one on in the first place.

Other examples of sexual misconduct could include:

- Voyeurism – Observing and / or recording another person carrying out a private act or installing / operating equipment which allows the observation of another person carrying out a private act.
- Indecent exposure – this involves someone intentionally exposing their genitals to another person.
- Up-skirting- taking a photo underneath someone's skirt or dress without their consent.
- Downblousing - taking a photograph or image down somebody's shirt, blouse or top without their consent.
- Cyberflashing - this typically involves sending an unsolicited sexual or nude image to victims via social media or dating apps, but can also take place through data-sharing services with strangers such as Bluetooth and Airdrop.
- Image-based Abuse or on-consensual Intimate Image Distribution - the distribution of a private sexual image of someone without their consent and with the intention of causing them distress. This includes images that have been falsely generated without consent.
- Stalking – this may be understood as a pattern of fixated, obsessive, unwanted and / or repeated behaviour which is intrusive. Examples of this include following a person and repeated unwanted contact.
- Cyberstalking – This involves a pattern of unwanted behaviour that can take place on the internet and via other technologies. This can include the use of social networking sites, email, chat rooms and other forums facilitated by technology, for a range of purposes, including damaging the reputation of the victim, sending multiple unwanted communications or locating personal information.

- Grooming – when a person builds a relationship with a child, young person or vulnerable adult so they can abuse them and manipulate them into doing things of a sexual nature.
- Complicity - knowingly helping, promoting, or encouraging any form of sexual misconduct by another individual.
- A contravention of the [LSE Policy and Procedure on Personal Relationships](#) resulting in abusive behaviour between those who are, or have been, intimate partners.

Appendix 2 – Management of formal procedures relating to sexual misconduct

1. Procedure application

- 1.1 Formal procedures in relation to sexual misconduct cases will normally be instigated where:
 - the Reporting Party has reported an incident of sexual misconduct and wishes to proceed with a formal process.
 - an informal approach to resolving a case (see appendix 3) has not been successful and the Reporting Party wishes to proceed in this way.
 - the School considers that it is appropriate to address a reported incident of sexual misconduct using a formal procedure due to the severity of the allegation.
- 1.2 Formal proceedings will normally be carried out in line with one of the following procedures:
 - [Grievance Policy and Procedure for Professional Services Staff](#) (for PS employee-led complaints)
 - [Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Professional Services Staff](#) (for investigation and sanctioning of PS staff)
 - [The Academic Annex](#) (which includes grievance and disciplinary procedures for academic staff).
 - [Disciplinary Procedure for Students](#) (for investigation and sanctioning of students)
 - [Alumni Misconduct Procedure](#) (for investigation and sanctioning of alumni).
 - [The ACAS Code of Practice](#) on disciplinary and grievance procedures for hourly paid staff

Where a complaint is between two different groups of the community, (e.g., involving both a staff member and a student) the procedure applicable to the Reported Party will normally apply. In particular, staff procedures will be followed to investigate a report made by a student against a member of staff. Where a grievance is raised by a member of staff, the relevant grievance procedure will be followed to determine the facts of the case and appropriate resolution.

2. Interventions

- 2.1 Following a report of sexual misconduct, the School will assess any risks and consider whether measures should be taken to mitigate any risks to the Reporting and Reported Parties as well as the wider LSE community whilst the investigation / process is ongoing. Interventions will normally involve changes to the working or learning arrangements of the individuals concerned and / or the provision of additional support. Interventions will be managed in accordance with the relevant procedure that is being followed.
- 2.2 A Harassment Management Group meeting can be triggered where a concern is raised about high-risk misconduct cases. The Group will undertake a risk assessment to consider what reasonable and proportionate precautionary measures may need to be put in place to mitigate any ongoing risks to students, including recommendations of precautionary measures to HR in cases where students have made allegations against a member of staff. The Group will ensure that the parties involved are signposted to relevant support.
- 2.3 Where the report of sexual misconduct solely involves members of staff, the risk and any interventions will normally be assessed and arranged by the Human Resources Division.

2.4 In considering what action should be taken the School will consider:

- The needs of the relevant parties.
- The risks and / or safety of the relevant parties and others in the LSE community.
- The potential impact of any action on the investigation process.

2.5 Actions may vary depending on the nature of the case, but can include:

- Taking measures to reduce or remove contact between the two parties.
- Suspension, or partial suspension, in line with the relevant disciplinary procedure.
- Introducing new reporting arrangements for either party (e.g. changing line manager or PhD supervisor).

2.6 Any intervention that is put in place will be reasonable and proportionate and will constitute a neutral act. It should not be understood as an indication of guilt or that any judgement has been made regarding the outcome of the investigation. Any interventions will be regularly reviewed. Given the potential impact on the mental health and wellbeing of both parties, they will be offered appropriate support and kept regularly informed whilst the case is ongoing.

When interventions cease

2.7 Both the Reporting Party and the Reported Party must be informed when any interventions will cease and the reason why. This should be communicated to both parties without delay.

2.8 Steps should be taken by all parties involved to ensure that the return to normal working / learning arrangements is handled carefully. There should be awareness of the sensitivities involved and codes of conduct established and agreed.

3. Formal Investigations

3.1 Investigations will be conducted in accordance with the relevant staff or student procedure (as detailed in 1.2 above). The Investigator will be responsible for gathering relevant information and providing a report of their findings. Where the matter proceeds to a formal disciplinary hearing, the Investigator's report will be submitted to the relevant decision maker and / or panel who will decide upon the outcome of the case.

3.2 Duplicate investigations under different procedures will be avoided. Wherever possible, a single investigation will take place. Where the matter progresses from one formal process to another (e.g. staff grievance case to a staff disciplinary case), the evidence collected from the original investigation will normally be used in the procedure which follows.

3.3 The Investigator will be trained and independent, with no previous involvement in the case. External investigators may also be used in cases of sexual misconduct; this will be determined based on several factors including the seriousness of the allegation, the specialist skills required, the time factor required and / or the availability of an appropriate internal investigator.

3.4 Investigators will be responsible for ensuring that:

- a meeting is held with the Reporting Party so that there is a shared understanding of the concerns and / or incidents that are being investigated.
- the Reported Party is aware of the concerns and / or incidents that are being investigated and has the opportunity to provide a response.
- the terms of reference and lines of enquiry for the investigation have been drafted, recorded and shared with the relevant parties.
- the investigation is carried out in accordance with the relevant procedure (seeking guidance from the School's Legal team or HR Partner as appropriate)
- both parties are updated regularly (at the agreed intervals) on the progress of the investigation.
- evidence is gathered from relevant witnesses.
- evidence or reports that have been provided anonymously are considered in terms of whether they can, and should, be used as set out in section 7 of the policy.

3.5 Investigations will normally proceed to conclusion, even if the Reporting Party or the Reported Party leave the institution. In this event, the investigation report will be submitted and reviewed by the appropriate party, in line with the relevant procedure being followed. In cases where complaints are upheld, whilst it may not be possible to refer the matter to a disciplinary panel, outcomes will be recorded and may be used in references. This may also be taken into account in the event that the former student or member of staff applies to return to LSE. Where possible, such outcomes will be communicated to the individuals involved.

3.6 The School will communicate the outcome of the formal process to the Reporting Party in line with the relevant procedure being followed. In doing this, the School will consider the level of detail that is appropriate in the circumstances of each case and any data-sharing risks in line with data protection legislation. Both the Reporting Party and the Reported Party will be informed of any interventions within the working or learning environment that have been taken / put in place. (See also section 2) The School will also indicate its expectation regarding any future interaction between the Reporting Party and the Reported Party, even where no future interaction is anticipated within the LSE environment.

4. Witnesses of Sexual Misconduct

4.1 Individuals who have witnessed an incident may also be asked (by the Reporting Party, the Reported Party or the person investigating the case) to support a formal process. In this situation, they may be asked to:

- Submit a report detailing the incident that was witnessed. Where possible, this statement should include a description of what occurred, the names of any other witnesses, notes of anything that was said and the relevant date and time of the incident.
- Provide evidence at a hearing as part of a formal procedure.

4.2 Where witnesses are approached and / or agree to participate provide evidence in a formal procedure, they will be invited to meet with an appropriate staff member – either a member of Student Services, the Legal Team (for students), or an HR Partner (for staff), so that the process and available support can be outlined to them in advance. They will also have a named person who they can contact with any queries. This may be the same staff member they were invited to meet with at the start of the process.

- 4.3 The confidentiality of witnesses will be protected; their details will not be shared with anybody outside of the formal process. Witnesses are also expected to maintain confidentiality.
- 4.4 Witnesses will be updated on the overall outcome where appropriate. The information shared will be proportionate to their involvement in the case and in line with the School's confidentiality obligations.

5. Criminal Proceedings

- 5.1 Where a complaint is being investigated as a criminal act, LSE will normally defer its own internal investigations pending the conclusion of the criminal case. In these circumstances, the School would still consider and assess the need for precautionary measures. This will be done in order to manage risk and safeguard the community, whilst taking care to avoid compromising any criminal investigation.

Appendix 3 – Informal routes to resolution when dealing with cases of sexual misconduct

- 1.1 Due to the serious nature of sexual misconduct, these cases will normally be dealt with formally. However, the School recognises that in some cases, the Reporting Party may wish to use alternative methods. In these circumstances, providing that the School does not judge that formal action is required to protect members of the LSE community, an informal approach may be used where the Reporting Party requests to do so. Prior to making a decision, the Reporting Party is encouraged to seek support and guidance from the Deputy Head of Student Services (Advice and Support) or an HR Partner, as appropriate.
- 1.2 The aim of using an informal route is to stop the unwanted behaviour and prevent any reoccurrence without the use of formal proceedings. Attempts at informal resolution should be dealt with promptly and where an informal approach has been unsuccessful, if unwanted behaviour continues, or the Reporting Party wishes to do so, they will be able to submit a formal complaint in accordance with the relevant procedure.
- 1.3 Where an informal approach to resolution is discussed and / or attempted, notes should be made by all parties to summarise the discussions that have taken place, and a confidential record of the outcome kept securely. (i.e. in an access restricted / password protected file).

Informal Approaches

- 2.1 **Direct individual approach.** If an individual feels safe enough to do so, they may decide to address their complaint with the Reported Party directly. In these circumstances, the Reporting Party describes the unwanted behaviour and asks that the other party stop. Where an individual is approached in this manner, they should deal with the matter professionally and seek support themselves if required.

Should such an approach not result in a successful outcome, the Reporting Party may consider next steps, which includes making a disclosure or reporting the incident.

- 2.2 **Informal approach with support.** An individual may decide to enlist the help of a third party in seeking to resolve the matter informally. This would usually be someone in a position of responsibility.

Students can seek initial support from the Deputy Head of Student Services (Advice and Support), their academic mentor or Head of Department. Staff can approach their line (or other) manager, an HR Partner, or their trade union representative.

The person who has received the disclosure may, with the agreement of the Reporting Party, help facilitate a meeting with an appropriate manager and the Reported Party (which can include the Reporting Party, if they wish) to discuss the complaint with a view to seeking a resolution.

For staff cases, it may also be possible to arrange a meeting between the parties and an external facilitator, in an attempt to reach a resolution. An external facilitator can be arranged by contacting the relevant HR Partner.

2.3 **Training.** Training may be offered to Reported Parties or to specific groups / areas within the School. Training can be used to raise awareness of any relevant issues surrounding sexual misconduct and expectations of behaviour within the LSE community. This may be appropriate where a reporting party does not wish to pursue a formal investigation, or a report has been made anonymously. This approach will not imply any guilt on the part of the Reported Party / Parties and will be taken as a supportive measure.

Appendix 4 - Preventing Sexual Misconduct

LSE will take the following steps to prevent and eliminate sexual misconduct within the LSE community.

1. Training and Awareness

All staff and students are expected to undertake training in relation to the prevention of sexual misconduct. This will be designed to raise awareness of, and recognise, sexual misconduct as well as to provide guidance on how to report incidents. Information will also be provided on the potential action that the School may take in dealing with cases of sexual misconduct or victimisation.

2. Accessible reporting

LSE will maintain accessible methods for reporting incidents of sexual misconduct, which will also allow for anonymous reporting. As well as maintaining online guidance, the School will also provide regular communication to students and staff so that they know who they can contact and how to report concerns. The School will use the data collected from these reports to analyse trends.

3. Risk assessments

LSE will carry out risk assessments in order to identify any further steps which could be taken to prevent incidents of sexual misconduct and will take appropriate action as a result of these assessments. These risk assessments will consider factors which may place individuals at greater risk of being subjected to sexual misconduct. For example, where individuals:

- may be working alone
- are attending overnight trips
- are attending public or other events where alcohol is present, or
- power imbalances

Risk assessments will also be carried out specifically for activities in relation to the safeguarding of vulnerable groups – i.e., children and vulnerable adults. These risk assessments will be carried out in accordance with the School's [Safeguarding Policy](#) and / or the [Safeguarding in Research and International Activities Policy](#), as appropriate.

4. Maintaining policy and procedure

LSE policies, procedures and guidance related to preventing and dealing with cases of sexual misconduct will be periodically reviewed. Reviews will consider where improvements should be made to further reduce or remove the risk of sexual misconduct occurring. Reviews will also consider if there are any other relevant policies, e.g. student or staff disciplinary procedures, that may need changing. Any change to policy and / or procedure will be in line with established protocols for wider consultation.

5. Engagement

LSE will engage with students, staff, EDI, the LSE Students' Union, Trade Union representatives, Security, Safe Contacts and other relevant groups to ensure that we are working together to keep our environment safe. This includes a commitment to maintaining open communication, considering all feedback, and addressing any concerns raised.

6. Utilising insights and data

Relevant data will be collected and reviewed to monitor the number of sexual misconduct cases reported and our effectiveness in managing them. This data will include statistics, summaries of anonymised reports and disclosures (where available) and School action. It will also include feedback from audits, relevant stakeholders, student and staff surveys, and exit interviews.

LSE will use the analysis and insights gained from our data and case management system to understand the type, location and context of incidents. We will use this information to target interventions, for example in particular locations on our campus, halls of residence or nighttime economy venues. We will liaise with the LSESU and our local community partners to support prevention activities and we will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our interventions.

Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
1 year	30 July 2026	November 2025

Version history

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
1	July 2025	JNICC (Agreed as an interim policy*)	This policy replaces LSE's Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy.

*This policy has been agreed and implemented as an interim policy and further review will be carried out during 2025/2026. This policy is fully operational and applicable to all those defined within its scope (which includes all LSE staff and students), until replaced with an updated version.

Links

Reference	Link
Report + Support	https://reportandsupport.lse.ac.uk/
Disciplinary Procedure for Students	https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/Services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/disProStu.pdf
Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Professional Services Staff	https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/disPolProSerSta.pdf
Grievance Policy and Procedure for Professional Services Staff	https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/Services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/griPolProAcaSupSta.pdf
The Academic Annex	https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/acaAnn.pdf
Alumni Misconduct Procedure	https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/aluMisConPro.pdf
Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy	https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/Services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/harPol.pdf
Policy and Procedure on Personal Relationships	https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/perRelPolAndPro.pdf
LSE Ethics Code	https://info.lse.ac.uk/Staff/Divisions/Secretarys-Division/Ethics/Ethics-Code

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