



“Enabling Students to Accomplish their Academic Goal”

Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy

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1. Introduction

Bellmont College is committed to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive and supportive learning and working environment in which students, staff, visitors and partners are protected from harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, bullying, abuse, exploitation and inappropriate conduct. The College recognises that dignity, safety and trust are essential to student wellbeing, academic engagement, continuation of study and a high-quality student experience.

Bellmont College currently works with Liverpool Hope University and is seeking Office for Students approval for its own funding arrangements. Under the current partnership, some academic oversight, quality assurance, student support, complaint and conduct processes may involve Liverpool Hope University, depending on the programme and the applicable partnership responsibilities. Belmont College also recognises that future regulatory or funding developments may result in changes to the College's arrangements, while continuing to protect student interests, continuity of study, fair treatment and access to support.

This policy brings together Belmont College's approach to preventing and responding to harassment and sexual misconduct. It is read alongside (*HSP1 Belmont College Safeguarding and PREVENT Policy*), (*SWP2 Belmont College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy*), (*CAP3 Belmont College Complaint and Appeal Policy and Procedure*), (*SWP4 Belmont College Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy*), (*HRP3 Belmont College Staff Grievance and Disciplinary Policy*) and (*QGP1 Belmont College Quality Assurance Handbook*).

The policy is intended to be practical, accessible and student-centred. It explains expected standards of behaviour, reporting routes, support arrangements, confidentiality principles, investigation expectations, governance oversight and the way Belmont College monitors effectiveness through its committees and quality assurance arrangements.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out how Belmont College prevents, identifies, responds to and monitors harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students, staff or the wider College community. It provides a clear institutional framework so that concerns are taken seriously, handled sensitively and addressed through fair, proportionate and evidence-informed processes.

The policy supports Belmont College in maintaining safe learning environments, protecting students from harm, ensuring fair access to reporting and support, promoting respectful behaviour, preserving confidentiality where possible, and ensuring that serious concerns are escalated appropriately. It also supports staff by explaining professional boundaries, referral expectations, information-sharing responsibilities and the governance routes through which concerns are reviewed.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all students, applicants, staff, Directors, contractors, consultants, visiting lecturers, agency workers, volunteers, visitors, placement providers, partners and third parties acting for or on behalf of Belmont College. It applies to conduct that occurs on College premises, online, through College systems, during teaching and learning, during student support activity, at events,

during meetings, on placements, through social media or digital communication, or away from College premises where there is a sufficient connection with College activity, student safety, staff responsibilities or the learning environment.

The policy covers concerns between students, between staff, between staff and students, between students and third parties, and between staff and third parties where the matter affects Belmont College activity or responsibilities. It also applies to current partnership provision involving Liverpool Hope University where Belmont College provides local teaching, support, operational handling, signposting or partnership liaison.

Where a concern falls within another procedure, Belmont College identifies the most appropriate route and explains this clearly. A concern may be considered under more than one route where necessary, for example where a disclosure involves safeguarding risk, student complaint issues, staff conduct, wellbeing support, academic disruption, criminal allegations or partnership responsibilities.

4. Regulatory and Legal Framework

This section consolidates the main legal, regulatory and sector requirements relevant to this policy.

Requirement	Relevance to this Policy
Higher Education and Research Act 2017	Provides the statutory framework for the Office for Students and supports effective governance, accountability and protection of student interests.
Office for Students Conditions B2 and B3	Connect harassment and sexual misconduct response to effective student support, student engagement, continuation, completion and progression.
Office for Students Conditions C1, C2, C3 and C5	Require clear and accurate information, fair complaint routes, student protection arrangements and fair treatment of students.
Office for Students Conditions E1 and E2	Require effective public interest governance, management, accountability, risk oversight and compliance monitoring.
Office for Students Condition E6: Harassment and Sexual Misconduct	Requires clear information, reporting routes, support, training, fair investigation and decision-making, and restrictions on confidentiality provisions that prevent reporting.
Competition and Markets Authority expectations for higher education providers	Require clear, accurate, timely and accessible information, fair terms, fair processes and accessible routes for complaints and redress.
UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024	Supports safe and inclusive learning environments, student partnership, effective support, fair processes, partnership oversight and continuous enhancement.

Requirement	Relevance to this Policy
Equality Act 2010	Prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and underpins reasonable adjustments and accessibility.
UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018	Require lawful, fair, secure and proportionate processing of complaint, safeguarding, health, equality and conduct records.
Protection from Harassment Act 1997	Recognises that serious or repeated harassment may also raise civil or criminal issues requiring protective action or external referral.
Sexual Offences Act 2003	Provides the criminal law context for sexual assault and other sexual offences where police or specialist external support may be relevant.
Human Rights Act 1998 and freedom of speech duties where applicable	Require decisions to be proportionate and rights-aware while making clear that unlawful harassment and sexual misconduct are not protected conduct.
Care Act 2014, Children Acts 1989 and 2004, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Modern Slavery Act 2015	Inform safeguarding responses where concerns involve adults at risk, under-18s, exploitation, abuse, coercion or vulnerability.
Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974	Supports safe premises, safe activities and proportionate action where harassment or misconduct creates safety risks.
Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and Prevent duty guidance	Relevant where harassment, hate incidents, radicalisation, extremism or online harm overlap with safeguarding and Prevent responsibilities.
Office of the Independent Adjudicator Good Practice Framework	Informs accessible, timely, fair, evidence-based and well-recorded complaint and appeal handling.
Liverpool Hope University partnership requirements	Apply where LHU policies, procedures, support routes, student conduct arrangements or academic responsibilities are relevant to partnership students.

5. Definitions and Core Principles

Term	Meaning in this Policy
Harassment	Unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Term	Meaning in this Policy
	It may relate to a protected characteristic or may otherwise cause alarm, distress or harm.
Sexual harassment	Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
Sexual misconduct	Unwanted or attempted unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, coercive or manipulative sexual behaviour, image-based abuse, stalking, intrusive sexual comments, unwanted touching, sexual exploitation and abuse of power.
Disclosure	Information shared by a student, staff member or other person about harassment, sexual misconduct, harm, risk or wellbeing concerns. A disclosure does not automatically require the person to make a formal complaint.
Report	A request for Belmont College to record, assess or take action in response to a concern. A report may lead to support, safeguarding action, informal resolution, formal investigation, referral to Liverpool Hope University or external referral.
Reporting party	The person who raises a concern or is directly affected by alleged harassment or sexual misconduct.
Responding party	The person whose behaviour is the subject of a concern, allegation or investigation.
Victimisation	Subjecting a person to disadvantage because they raised a concern in good faith, supported another person, provided evidence or participated in a procedure.
Consent	Agreement given freely and with capacity. Consent cannot be assumed from silence, previous contact, intoxication, pressure, fear or a power imbalance.
Interim measure	A temporary and proportionate action intended to protect safety, wellbeing, confidentiality or the integrity of an investigation while a concern is considered.

Bellmont College's core principles are safety, dignity, fairness, accessibility, confidentiality, non-retaliation, proportionality, evidence-informed decision-making, respect for individual rights and continuous improvement. The College listens to concerns without judgement, does not require students or staff to label their experience before seeking support, and does not penalise anyone for raising a genuine concern or supporting another person in good faith.

6. Prevention, Culture and Standards of Behaviour

Bellmont College does not tolerate harassment, sexual misconduct, bullying, discrimination, hate incidents, intimidation, victimisation, abuse, exploitation or the misuse of power. This applies in person, online, through email or messages, in class, during meetings, at events, on placements, through social media connected with College activity and in any setting where behaviour affects the learning, working or support environment.

All members of the College community are expected to behave with dignity, courtesy and respect. Academic debate, disagreement and freedom of expression are protected where they are lawful and respectful, but those protections do not excuse harassment, sexual misconduct, threats, intimidation, victimisation or abuse. Bellmont College promotes a culture in which students and staff can raise concerns early and can access support without fear of disadvantage.

Student expectations, staff conduct, inclusion and respectful behaviour are communicated through induction, College handbooks, staff guidance and student-facing procedures, including (*QGP3 Bellmont College Student Handbook*), (*HRP2 Bellmont College Employee Handbook*), (*SWP2 Bellmont College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy*) and (*HSP1 Bellmont College Safeguarding and PREVENT Policy*).

7. Reporting and Disclosure Routes

Bellmont College encourages students, staff and visitors to report harassment or sexual misconduct as early as they feel able to do so. A person may seek support, make a disclosure or submit a formal report. They do not need to decide at the outset whether they want a formal investigation, and staff receiving a disclosure explain available routes in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental way.

Concerns may be raised through Student Support, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or nominated safeguarding contact, a tutor, Programme Coordinator, Head of Academic Programmes, Head of Quality & Operations, line manager, Human Resources, or another trusted member of staff. Where the concern is urgent or there is immediate danger, emergency services are contacted first.

A concern may be handled through safeguarding, complaint, staff grievance, staff disciplinary, wellbeing, student protection or partnership routes depending on the circumstances. Relevant routes include (*HSP1 Bellmont College Safeguarding and PREVENT Policy*), (*CAP3 Bellmont College Complaint and Appeal Policy and Procedure*), (*HRP3 Bellmont College Staff Grievance and Disciplinary Policy*), (*SWP4 Bellmont College Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy*) and (*CAP1 Bellmont College Student Protection Plan and Policy*).

For students studying under Liverpool Hope University collaborative arrangements, Bellmont College signposts students to relevant Liverpool Hope University reporting, support, conduct or complaint routes where those routes apply. Bellmont College also cooperates with Liverpool Hope University where partnership responsibilities require shared action, referral or case coordination.

8. Immediate Safety, Support and Interim Measures

Where there is immediate danger, serious risk of harm or a medical emergency, Bellmont College staff contact emergency services first and notify the Designated

Safeguarding Lead or a senior manager as soon as it is safe to do so. Immediate safety takes priority over procedural formality.

Students and staff who disclose harassment or sexual misconduct are offered clear information about support options. Support may include wellbeing guidance, safeguarding response, academic support, reasonable adjustments, timetable or contact arrangements, signposting to specialist external services, help preserving evidence, and information about reporting to the police or external agencies where appropriate.

Interim measures are considered on a case-by-case basis and are not a disciplinary finding. They may include adjustments to teaching or support arrangements, restrictions on contact, alternative communication routes, temporary changes to access arrangements, additional check-ins, wellbeing support, or escalation through safeguarding and health and safety routes. Relevant support is coordinated with (*SWP4 Belmont College Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy*), (*SWP1 Belmont College Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy*), (*HSP2 Belmont College Health and Safety Policy*) and (*HSP1 Belmont College Safeguarding and PREVENT Policy*).

9. Case Handling, Investigation and Decision-Making

Bellmont College handles reports sensitively, fairly and proportionately. The first step is triage: the College considers immediate safety, support needs, safeguarding risk, whether the matter may be criminal, whether Liverpool Hope University or another external body has responsibility, which procedure is most appropriate, and whether interim measures are needed.

Where a formal investigation is required, the College appoints an appropriate person who is impartial and suitably trained for the matter being considered. Both the reporting party and responding party are treated with dignity and fairness. They are given clear information about the process, expected timescales, the nature of the concern, opportunities to provide relevant evidence, support arrangements and outcome communication. Decisions are based on relevant evidence and are recorded with reasons.

The College recognises that a person may not wish to make a formal complaint immediately after a disclosure. Belmont College still considers support, safeguarding action and risk management. Where there is a serious risk to the reporting party, other students, staff or the wider community, the College may need to take proportionate protective action even if the individual does not want a formal investigation.

Bellmont College does not use confidentiality provisions, settlement terms or non-disclosure arrangements to prevent a person from reporting harassment or sexual misconduct to the police, a regulator, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, Liverpool Hope University where relevant, a legal adviser, a healthcare professional, a safeguarding body or another appropriate support route.

Where the matter is raised as a complaint, the College applies the principles of accessibility, transparency, timely handling and fair review under (*CAP3 Belmont College Complaint and Appeal Policy and Procedure*). Where staff conduct is involved, the College applies (*HRP3 Belmont College Staff Grievance and Disciplinary Policy*). Where a concern raises wider institutional risk or public interest

issues, (*QGP7 Belmont College Whistleblowing and Public Concern Policy*) may also be relevant.

10. Staff-Student Relationships and Professional Boundaries

Bellmont College expects all staff to maintain professional boundaries with students and to avoid behaviour that creates or appears to create a conflict of interest, abuse of power, favouritism, pressure, exploitation or risk to student wellbeing. Staff do not use their position to pursue sexual, romantic or otherwise inappropriate personal relationships with students over whom they have teaching, support, assessment, supervisory, disciplinary, admissions or other professional responsibility.

Any existing, previous or developing personal relationship that may create a conflict of interest, safeguarding concern or perceived imbalance of power is declared promptly so that Belmont College can make appropriate arrangements. Such arrangements may include changing teaching, support, assessment, supervision, marking, decision-making or communication responsibilities.

Professional boundary concerns may be considered through safeguarding, staff conduct, conflict of interest or student protection routes, including (*HRP2 Belmont College Employee Handbook*), (*QGP6 Belmont College Conflict of Interest Policy*), (*HRP3 Belmont College Staff Grievance and Disciplinary Policy*) and (*HSP1 Belmont College Safeguarding and PREVENT Policy*).

11. Confidentiality, Information Sharing and Record Keeping

Bellmont College treats information about harassment and sexual misconduct confidentially and shares it only with those who need to know in order to provide support, manage risk, investigate fairly, meet legal obligations, protect safety or fulfil partnership responsibilities. Staff do not promise absolute confidentiality where there is a risk of harm to the individual or others, where safeguarding action is required, or where disclosure is required by law or regulation.

Information is recorded factually, securely and without unnecessary detail. Records include what was disclosed or observed, dates, times, people involved, immediate action taken, support offered, decisions made, reasons for decisions and any referrals or escalation. Informal private records outside approved systems are not appropriate.

Records are managed in accordance with (*BCP5 Belmont College General Data Protection & Regulation (GDPR) Policy*), (*QGP5 Belmont College Information Governance, Public Information and Transparency Policy*) and (*QGP10 Belmont College Retention Record Schedule*). Committee reports normally use anonymised or aggregated information unless identifiable information is necessary for safeguarding, risk, governance, legal or partnership reasons.

12. Training, Awareness and Communication

Bellmont College provides proportionate staff training and guidance so that staff understand respectful behaviour, professional boundaries, how to receive a disclosure, how to report concerns, how to protect confidentiality, how to avoid victimisation, how to preserve evidence and how to signpost students to support. Staff involved in safeguarding, complaints, investigations, student support, HR, teaching, admissions or committee reporting receive training appropriate to their role.

Students receive clear information about standards of behaviour, support, reporting routes, complaints, safeguarding and student voice through induction, handbooks, student communication, tutorials, student support activity and committee engagement. Student Representatives help raise thematic issues and signpost peers to appropriate support, but they are not expected to investigate or provide specialist safeguarding or wellbeing support.

Training and communication are supported by (*HRP1 Belmont College Staff Development Plan*), (*QGP3 Belmont College Student Handbook*), (*QGP4 Belmont College Student Representative Handbook*), (*SWP2 Belmont College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy*) and (*HSP1 Belmont College Safeguarding and PREVENT Policy*).

13. Liverpool Hope University Partnership Arrangements and Future Regulatory Development

Bellmont College currently works with Liverpool Hope University for relevant higher education provision. Where a student is registered under Liverpool Hope University arrangements, Belmont College signposts the student to the appropriate Liverpool Hope University policy, support or reporting route where University procedures apply. Belmont College also provides local support, records relevant local action and escalates partnership matters through appropriate College and University contacts.

Relevant Liverpool Hope University documents and routes may include (*Liverpool Hope University Policy and Process for Handling Sexual Misconduct*), (*Liverpool Hope University Student and Apprentice Complaints Policy and Procedure*), (*Liverpool Hope University Student Guide to Regulations and Policies*), (*Liverpool Hope University Safeguarding Policy and Prevent information*) and (*Liverpool Hope University Student Support and Well-being information*).

Future regulatory or funding developments may result in changes to Belmont College’s procedures, responsibilities, reporting routes or governance arrangements. Belmont College manages any such change transparently and proportionately, ensuring that students continue to receive clear information, fair access to support, continuity of study, appropriate protection and accessible routes for raising concerns.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Board of Directors	Holds ultimate governance oversight for this policy, including student protection, safeguarding, harassment and sexual misconduct risks, regulatory compliance and assurance that Belmont College maintains safe and respectful learning and working environments.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Holds executive accountability for implementing Board-approved strategy and ensuring that arrangements for harassment and sexual misconduct are implemented, resourced, monitored and escalated appropriately.
Head of Quality & Operations	Owns this policy, leads the quality assurance framework, coordinates policy monitoring and review, and reports

Role	Responsibilities
	relevant assurance through Senior Management Committee, Quality Committee and Academic Committee routes.
Head of Academic Programmes	Provides academic leadership where harassment or sexual misconduct affects learning, teaching, assessment, academic support, student engagement, continuation or academic standards.
Head of Professional Services	Oversees professional services across the student lifecycle, including admissions, registry, student support and outcomes monitoring, and ensures support provision and operational responses are effective.
Head of IT & Human Resources	Supports staff conduct, fair employment processes, staff development and secure digital systems that enable confidential reporting, record keeping, data management and regulatory reporting.
Programme Coordinator	Coordinates programme-level action, academic support and escalation where concerns affect teaching, learning, assessment, student engagement or the learning environment.
Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding contacts	Assess and escalate safeguarding, PREVENT, immediate safety, abuse, exploitation, harassment and sexual misconduct concerns through the appropriate internal and external routes.
Student Support and Wellbeing Team	Provides initial support, wellbeing guidance, signposting, referral coordination and reasonable adjustment liaison for students affected by harassment or sexual misconduct.
Human Resources and line managers	Apply staff conduct, grievance, disciplinary and professional boundary processes where concerns involve staff or workers acting for Belmont College.
All staff	Maintain respectful professional boundaries, respond to disclosures sensitively, protect confidentiality within the limits of this policy, record concerns appropriately and refer matters through the correct route.
Student Representatives	Support student voice, raise thematic concerns through the Student Staff Committee and signpost peers to appropriate support without investigating cases or providing specialist advice.
Students	Behave respectfully, engage with support and reporting processes where they choose to do so, and raise concerns about harassment, sexual misconduct, victimisation or unsafe behaviour.

Role	Responsibilities
Liverpool Hope University partnership contacts	Work with Belmont College where Liverpool Hope University procedures, student support routes, conduct processes, academic regulations or partnership responsibilities apply.

15. Governance and Committee Oversight

Bellmont College implements, monitors and reviews this policy through its existing governance and quality assurance arrangements. Committees receive proportionate information so that they can test whether procedures are effective in practice, identify themes, track actions and escalate risk without unnecessary disclosure of personal information.

Committee / route	Oversight role
Board of Directors	Receives assurance on serious risk, student protection, safeguarding, harassment and sexual misconduct, regulatory compliance, policy approval and institutional performance.
Audit & Risk Committee	Reviews risk, internal control, compliance and assurance matters where harassment, sexual misconduct, safeguarding or student protection risks require escalation.
Academic Committee	Acts as the academic authority and receives assurance on academic quality, standards, student support, assessment, student outcomes and academic risks linked to this policy.
Senior Management Committee	Coordinates operational implementation, resourcing, urgent risk response, case escalation, partnership coordination and management reporting.
Quality Committee	Monitors policy implementation themes, complaints and appeals, student experience, equality matters, support effectiveness, enhancement actions and annual review.
Learning and Teaching Committee	Reviews learning, teaching, inclusive practice, academic support, assessment arrangements and learning resources where harassment or sexual misconduct affects academic engagement.
Recruitment, Admissions and Registry Committee	Oversees applicant information, induction signposting, student records, reporting routes and registry processes connected to student safety and support.
Student Staff Committee	Provides a student voice route for cultural themes, support experiences, communication issues and enhancement suggestions.
Liverpool Hope University partnership routes	Where Liverpool Hope University procedures apply, Belmont College coordinates relevant matters through

Committee / route	Oversight role
	the Operational Group, Academic Oversight Group and Strategic Oversight Group as appropriate.

16. Monitoring, Review, Audit and Evidence

Bellmont College monitors this policy through case records, committee minutes, student feedback, staff training records, risk review, partnership liaison and annual policy review. Monitoring focuses on whether students and staff know how to raise concerns, whether support is timely, whether processes are fair and whether actions are completed.

Area monitored	Reviewed by	How it supports assurance
Reports, disclosures and case handling	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head of Quality & Operations, Senior Management Committee.	Shows that concerns are recorded, assessed, supported, escalated and closed with reasons.
Student voice and learning environment	Student Staff Committee, Quality Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee.	Shows that students can raise concerns about culture, support, communication and learning environment.
Complaints, appeals and redress	Quality Committee, Senior Management Committee and Board of Directors.	Shows that formal concerns are handled fairly and that themes inform improvement.
Safeguarding and wellbeing support	Safeguarding route, Student Support and Senior Management Committee.	Shows that harassment and sexual misconduct are treated as potential safety and wellbeing matters.
Training and awareness	Senior Management Committee, Learning and Teaching Committee and Quality Committee.	Shows that staff and students receive information needed to prevent and report concerns.
Risk, governance and policy review	Senior Management Committee and Board of Directors.	Shows that risks are escalated, monitored and reviewed through governance.
Partnership coordination	Head of Quality & Operations, Quality Committee and Senior Management Committee.	Shows that responsibilities are coordinated where LHU procedures or support routes apply.

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier where legislation, regulatory expectations, Liverpool Hope University partnership arrangements, College funding arrangements, serious incidents, student feedback, complaint themes or institutional risks indicate that review is needed. Review outcomes are reported through the appropriate committee route and approved through the College’s governance process.

17. Conclusion

Bellmont College is committed to maintaining a safe, inclusive and respectful academic community in which harassment and sexual misconduct are not tolerated. The College’s approach is based on prevention, clear reporting routes, accessible support, fair and sensitive case handling, professional boundaries, lawful information sharing and effective governance oversight.

Through its committees, student voice mechanisms, safeguarding arrangements, staff development, quality assurance processes and partnership liaison, Belmont College keeps this policy under active review and uses evidence to strengthen practice. The College remains committed to protecting student interests and ensuring that future regulatory, funding or partnership developments are managed responsibly, transparently and with students’ safety, dignity and continuation of study at the centre of decision-making.

Bellmont College Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy					
Version	Date	Author(s)	Amendments	Approved by	Next review
1	March 2026	Head of Quality and Operations	New Document	Board of Directors	March 2027