



Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy for Students

Group responsible	Executive Team
Individuals responsible	Director of Finance & Administration, Chaplain
Date Last Approved	June 2025
To be reviewed	Annually
Date of next review	June 2026

Purpose

1. The London School of Theology (LST) is committed to fostering a learning environment that is free from harassment and sexual misconduct. This commitment is rooted in our confessional foundations as an evangelical Christian learning community, as enshrined most particularly in our Doctrinal Basis and Community Code. Harassment and Sexual Misconduct are inimical both to our Christian values and to our obligations as a Higher Education Institution aligned with statutory requirements and best practice within the HE sector. They contravene the fundamental Christian principles of love for neighbour and responsibility towards the other. This policy sets out the expectations for student behaviour, procedures for reporting incidents, and the support mechanisms available. It complies with the Office for Students' ongoing condition of registration **E6**, which mandates providers to take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students.

Scope

2. This policy applies to all students enrolled at LST, across all modes and levels of study. It applies to behaviour that occurs:

- 2.1 On LST premises;
- 2.2 During LST-related activities (including placements, field trips, and social events);
- 2.3 Online or via digital communications;
- 2.4 Off-campus where there is a connection to LST membership.
- 2.5 At the REMA Counselling Centre(s)

Definitions

3.1 Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic or other personal attribute that has the purpose or effect of violating a student's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

3.2 Sexual Harassment

Any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which includes but is not limited to:

- Sexual harassment (e.g., unwanted sexual comments or jokes);
- Sexual assault including touching, pinching, pushing or grabbing
- Sharing private sexual images or videos without consent;

- Sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive
- Stalking or persistent, unwanted sexual attention;
- Initiation rituals that involve sexual acts or coercion.
- It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to conduct of a sexual nature, or that is related to sex, in the past.

3.3 Consent: A freely given, informed, and specific agreement to engage in a particular sexual activity. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

3.4 Freedom to consent: a person is free to make a choice if nothing negative would happen to them if they said no.

3.5 Capacity to consent: Capacity is about whether someone is physically and/or mentally able to make a choice and to understand the consequences of that choice.

3.6 Abuse of power: An abuse of power is where someone uses their position of power or authority in an abusive and unacceptable manner. Abuse of power can take various forms and may include, but is not limited to manipulation, coercion, bullying and harassment. Abuse of power may also occur in the context of a close personal or intimate relationship.

3.7 Victimisation: Victimisation (defined in Section 27 of the Equality Act 2010) takes place where one person treats another less favourably because he or she has asserted their legal rights in line with the Act or helped someone else to do so. An example might be where a student alleges that they have encountered racism from a member of staff / fellow student, and as a result they are ignored by other staff members / students.

Statement of Commitment

4. LST will:

- 4.1 Maintain clear behavioural expectations for students (and staff) regarding harassment and sexual misconduct;
- 4.2 Provide accessible reporting channels;
- 4.3 Ensure fair, transparent, and timely investigative processes;
- 4.4 Offer appropriate support to all parties involved;
- 4.5 Provide prevention-focused education and training;
- 4.6 Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its policies and practices.

Reporting and Disclosure

5. Students who are being sexually harassed by a fellow student (or anyone else associated with LST whether a member of staff, volunteer, trustee or visitor) may:

- 5.1 Consider whether they are able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. They may be unaware of the effects of their actions on you. Explain clearly that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- 5.2 If this is too difficult, you should speak to a member of the LST pastoral team, who can provide confidential advice and help in resolving the issue informally. If you feel unable to speak to a pastoral team member, you could speak to your tutor, or to the DFA or ASDAS.

If you are not sure whether an incident or series of incidents amounts to Sexual Harassment you can speak to a member of the pastoral team for advice.

If informal steps are not appropriate or have been unsuccessful, you can raise a formal complaint:

- 5.3 The complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant policy. You will be able to explain the behaviour and its effect on you and express your wishes about what consequences would be appropriate. You will be kept informed at every stage of the process.

How to Report

6. Students may report incidents of harassment or sexual misconduct through:

- 6.1 The dedicated online reporting tool www.lst.ac.uk/support ;
- 6.2 Confidential support services (e.g., Pastoral Services);
- 6.3 A trusted faculty or staff member or academic tutor.

Reports may be anonymous, although this may limit LST's ability to respond formally.

If you witness Sexual Harassment or victimisation

7. Witnesses are encouraged to take appropriate steps. These may include:

- 7.1 Intervening to stop Sexual Harassment
- 7.2 Supporting the victim to report, or reporting on their behalf
- 7.3 Co-operating in any investigation into the incident(s).

All witnesses may also seek support from the pastoral team and will be protected from victimisation.

Timeframes

8. There is no formal time limit for reporting, though students are encouraged to come forward as soon as possible. Timely reporting supports more effective response and evidence collection.

Institutional Response

9. Upon receiving a report:

- 9.1 A trained staff member will conduct an initial risk assessment to ensure the student's safety and wellbeing are being addressed;
- 9.2 The student will be informed of their options, including formal investigation, informal resolution, and external reporting (e.g., police);
- 9.3 Protective measures may be implemented (e.g., no-contact orders, adjustments to learning environments);
- 9.4 A formal investigation may be launched, led by a trained and impartial investigator;
- 9.5 Outcomes will be communicated clearly and sensitively to all parties.

Sanctions following substantiated misconduct may include disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Support for Students

10. Support is available to all parties involved and may include:

- 10.1 Access to pastoral support and trained counsellors;
- 10.2 Academic support or adjustments;
- 10.3 Referral to external services such as Rape Crisis or Victim Support;

10.4 Emergency financial support where appropriate.

Students will be signposted to relevant internal and external services regardless of whether they pursue a formal complaint.

Training and Prevention

11. LST will provide:

11.1 Mandatory induction training on harassment and sexual misconduct;

11.2 Ongoing awareness campaigns throughout the academic year;

11.3 Training for all staff involved in student support, investigations, and decision-making.

Data Collection and Monitoring

12. We will collect anonymised data on reports and outcomes to:

12.1 Monitor trends;

12.2 Assess the effectiveness of policies;

12.3 Report to the Office for Students as required;

12.4 Inform continuous improvement.

Confidentiality and Fairness

13. All reports will be handled with strict confidentiality, in accordance with data protection law. Procedures will ensure impartiality, procedural fairness, and support for the wellbeing of all involved.

Reporting Outcomes

14.1 When a complaint is upheld, we will advise the complainant of the action that has been taken to address the complaint and any measures put in place to prevent a similar event in the future.

14.2 Information about a complaint by or concerning a student may be placed on their student file along with a record of the outcome. If the complaint concerns a staff member, the information will be retained on their HR file.

Review and Oversight

15. This policy will be reviewed annually, with oversight from the Pastoral Care Committee. Student representatives will be engaged in the review process.

Related Policies and Procedures

15.1 Student Code of Conduct

15.2 Student Disciplinary Procedures

15.3 Student Non-Academic Complaints Policy

15.4 Bullying Policy (Students) LST

15.5 LST Safeguarding Policy

15.6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

15.7 Fitness to Study Policy

For further support or to report an incident, visit the dedicated student support area on the LST website: www.lst.ac.uk/support

16. Helplines

The 24-hour freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge, on 0808 2000 247

The Rape Crisis national freephone helpline on 0808 802 9999 (12 - 2.30pm and 7 - 9.30pm every day of the year).

Are you in immediate danger? If you are in immediate danger or seriously injured, you can call 999 or 101 to connect directly with the police.