

Mutual Respect Policy

Addressing incidents of harassment, discrimination, bullying, sexual misconduct and victimisation.

1. Purpose of the policy	....	2
2. Statement of policy	....	2
3. Scope of the policy	....	3
4. Roles and responsibilities	....	3
5. What constitutes inappropriate behaviour	....	3
6. Code of behaviour	....	4
7. What to do when you have experienced inappropriate behaviour	....	5
8. What to do when you are the subject of concerns being raised	....	6
9. What happens if you have behaved inappropriately	....	6
10. Confidentiality	....	7
11. Victimisation	....	7
12. Malicious or vexatious complaints	....	7
13. Training and development	....	8
14. How to raise complaints not directly covered by this policy	....	8
15. Associated policies and statements	....	8

Appendix A: Code of Behaviour

1. Purpose of the policy

- 1.1 This policy replaces Homerton College's Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure, as well as the Bullying and Harassment Policy. The policy aims to prevent inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. In support of this aim, the policy:
- sets out the expected behaviour from Homerton employees and workers to ensure a common understanding of how everyone should behave towards one another
 - ensures that staff are able to disclose inappropriate behaviour if it does occur and are supported in the process of resolving it
 - promotes the early resolution of inappropriate behaviour wherever possible and appropriate, to prevent the psychological, health, and work- related problems such behaviour can cause
 - refers to what actions can be taken through the informal and formal resolution processes set out in Homerton College's Grievance Procedure if this policy's principles are not observed.
- 1.2 This policy supports Homerton College in its duty to provide a safe environment in which to work and to support a safe environment for students in which to live and study. Experiencing inappropriate behaviour often impacts an individual's physical and mental health and can also affect those who witness it.

2. Statement of policy

- 2.1 Homerton College is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inclusive community which nurtures a culture of mutual respect and courtesy. There is no place for any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or victimisation in our community and each of us is responsible for the way we interact with and treat others.
- 2.2 Bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct and victimisation are referenced collectively throughout this policy as "inappropriate behaviour" and wherever this term is used in the policy, it refers to the definitions of these behaviours in section 5 (What constitutes inappropriate behaviour?). The negative actions included in Appendix A (Code of Behaviour) also illustrate the different ways in which inappropriate behaviour may be demonstrated within our community. This Code was developed by the University of Cambridge and adopted by Homerton College.
- 2.3 Homerton College will take a zero-tolerance approach to inappropriate behaviour, whether by a Homerton employee or worker, a visitor to Homerton College, a third party such as a supplier, or a member of the public. This means that allegations of inappropriate behaviour should always be taken seriously, and action taken to stop inappropriate behaviour as quickly as possible, including the use of disciplinary processes where necessary and where such behaviour is proven.
- 2.4 Homerton staff and workers should be able to informally disclose or formally report incidents without fear of repercussion and trust the processes that are in place to address their concerns. Homerton College will not tolerate the victimisation of an individual for raising concerns in good faith or supporting someone to raise such concerns.
- 2.5 Nothing in this policy may undermine or conflict in any way with Homerton's commitment to freedom of thought and expression, as stated in the Homerton's Statement on Freedom of Speech. Maintaining a culture of mutual respect at Homerton College must not close off debate and topics that some may find disagreeable, distasteful or even offensive, and we are expected to be tolerant of the views and opinions of others in line with the principles of Homerton College's Statement on Freedom of Speech. It does mean, however, that we should treat one another courteously, professionally and with recognition of the individual behind the content when the debate and discussion of those issues are robust and challenging.

3. Scope of the policy

- 3.1 This policy applies to all Homerton employees, casual workers as well as staff employed by the University of Cambridge or other Colleges if undertaking their work or services specifically in Homerton College environment. They are expected to behave in a manner that is consistent with the Code of Behaviour set out in section 6 of this policy.
- 3.2 Academic visitors, Homerton volunteers, retired staff, suppliers and others will be expected to behave in a manner that is consistent with the Code of Behaviour set out in Appendix A to this policy.

4. Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1 All staff and workers have a responsibility to maintain a working environment where everyone is treated with mutual respect and courtesy by acting in line with Homerton College's Code of Behaviour. All staff and workers also have a responsibility for completing the relevant mandatory training courses and being informed about issues around inequality and how these issues can impact the treatment of others.
- 4.2 All managers have additional responsibilities in the application of the [Code of Behaviour](#) in their area, which include:
 - Setting a positive personal model of behaviour
 - Ensuring standards in the Code are established, communicated and understood and that regular visitors to their area have access to the Code
 - Taking appropriate action at the earliest opportunity to manage non-compliance with the Code, and to encourage a culture of early conflict resolution
 - Ensuring their staff are aware of and able to undertake the relevant mandatory training courses
 - Ensuring their staff are aware of and know how to report inappropriate behaviour through the relevant policies/procedures.
- 4.3 The HR Department is responsible for providing advice to those employees and workers alleging they have experienced inappropriate behaviour; those who are alleged to have behaved inappropriately and those supporting both informal and formal resolution processes.

5. What constitutes inappropriate behaviour?

- 5.1 Inappropriate behaviour for the purposes of this Policy means bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct and victimisation.
- 5.2 Behaviour that is perceived by one individual as inappropriate may not necessarily be perceived in the same way by another. When deciding whether behaviour is inappropriate, factors that will be taken into consideration include the impact on the individual and whether that impact or effect is reasonable in the circumstances, the specific context, the standards set out in the Code of Behaviour, and the motive or intent of the individual demonstrating the behaviour. Homerton's Statement on Freedom of Speech protects the right to express or describe views within the law that others may find offensive; this will also be taken into consideration where relevant.
- 5.3 Inappropriate behaviour may:
 - be perpetrated by an individual or a group
 - be intentional or unintentional
 - take place either on or off Homerton property, via Homerton IT systems, or online via email, the internet or social media

- range from overt and easy to recognise one-off instances, to numerous, small remarks and acts sending denigrating messages to the recipient, linked to an individual's characteristics or status (known as microaggressions).
- 5.4 Although the terms are often used interchangeably, the terms “bullying” and “harassment” describe different types of behaviour. *Bullying* is unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting to the recipient and often involves the misuse of power. Bullying can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength, status and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Examples of bullying can include:
- Spreading a false rumour about a colleague
 - Consistently giving heavier workloads to one particular individual in a team you supervise
 - Cutting off or preventing a colleague from reasonably expressing their views in a meeting
- 5.5 *Harassment* is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or reasonable effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment can be a single incident or repeated behaviour and can include imagery, graffiti, gestures, mimicry, jokes, pranks, and physical behaviour that affects the recipient. It can also include treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.
- 5.6 *Unlawful harassment* under the Equality Act 2010 may be related to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 5.7 *Unlawful harassment* under the Equality Act 2010 can also be conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is a form of sexual misconduct, an umbrella term that describes all types of unwanted and unpermitted behaviour of a sexual nature including sexual abuse. The intention of this type of harassment is to violate the recipient's dignity or create an environment that is intimidating, humiliating or offensive for the recipient. It can happen to and be demonstrated by women, men and people of any gender or sexual orientation.
- 5.8 *Discrimination* is when the recipient is treated unfairly or less favourably because of the following protected characteristic: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. This behaviour is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.9 *Victimisation* occurs when a person is subject to a detriment because they made a complaint of discrimination or provided evidence or information in connection with a complaint of discrimination or someone believes that they have done so or may do so.

6. Code of behaviour

- 6.1 In an environment that encourages and celebrates freedom of thought and expression, it is vital that our behaviour towards one another remains courteous and professional.
- 6.2 The Code of behaviour, attached as [Appendix A](#), was developed by the University of Cambridge in conjunction with the Trade Unions and representatives across The University, and sets out expectations around how we should behave and not behave towards other members of our community. Homerton College adopted this Code of Behaviour. This Code is not exhaustive but models both the positive behaviour expected of us in our interactions with one another and the negative behaviours that may lead to informal or formal action being taken.
- 6.3 The negative actions listed in the Code attached show how the inappropriate behaviours defined in section 5 may be demonstrated within our community. Understanding this can help each of us appreciate the impact of the way we behave.

6.4 Understanding the ways in which inappropriate behaviour may be demonstrated can help each of us appreciate the impact of the way we behave, and set a positive personal model of behaviour.

7. What to do when you have experienced inappropriate behaviour

7.1 Allegations should always be taken seriously, and action taken as quickly as possible to stop inappropriate behaviour. This section summarises the *informal and formal procedures* available and explains the direct support available to individuals to address inappropriate behaviour. It also explains the options to report alleged inappropriate behaviour through Homerton College's anonymous staff feedback form, available on the College website (and triaged by the Wellbeing Lead)

7.2 Both informal and formal options to resolve issues are available in Homerton College's Grievance Procedure. The grievance procedures for Fellows and College Officers are outlined in Schedules 1 and 3 to the Ordinances respectively. The principles are, however, similar to the process outlined below.

7.3 When considering which option to use, individuals are encouraged to speak in the first instance with any of the following:

- their line manager (or equivalent)
- the HR Department and/or College Wellbeing team
- a Mental Health Champion
- Individuals may also discuss the matter with a colleague in confidence when considering how to proceed.

7.4 **Informal approaches** are intended to help resolve one-off or minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour, to stop such behaviour early and to prevent it escalating. This type of collaborative approach has been found to be the most effective way of resolving conflict, tackling inappropriate behaviour and minimising any negative impact on the individuals involved. They include:

- **Direct informal resolution process:** a process where the individual experiencing the behaviour directly addresses the issue themselves. It is likely to be most effective when done in the early stages of experiencing the behaviour and in a constructive way, including specific examples of the unwanted behaviour, explaining why this made the individual feel uncomfortable or gave distress, and what the individual feels would resolve the issue.
- **An informal resolution process with support:** the individual raising the concerns may wish to try informal resolution but, understandably, feel unable or reluctant to directly approach the other party on their own. In an informal resolution process with support, the individual may ask for support to achieve an informal resolution. This approach can particularly help when addressing issues concerning a line manager or a more senior colleague. As part of this process, the supporting person can meet directly with the individual reported to have demonstrated the inappropriate behaviour to discuss what has happened and how to resolve it, or they can be part of any meeting between both parties. Where they are standing in for the individual raising the concerns, they provide regular updates on progress back to the individual.
- **Mediation and facilitated conversations:** it may be appropriate for the matter to be dealt with by way of mediation, depending on the nature of the issue. Mediation is a well-established, confidential process for resolving issues between individuals. Mediation can be used at any time as a means of informal resolution, including before or after an informal or formal process. Mediation is voluntary, confidential and either party can withdraw from the process at any time.

- 7.5 **Formal approaches** are more appropriate for serious instances or repeated patterns of inappropriate behaviour where previous informal attempts may have failed. There will be instances of inappropriate behaviour where an informal resolution process is not successful or is simply not appropriate due to the nature of the allegations. In these situations, the individual experiencing the inappropriate behaviour should raise a complaint using the formal process set out in the relevant staff grievance procedure as listed in Section 15.
- 7.6 No member of staff is expected to use the informal route before utilising the option of a formal grievance.
- 7.7 Where the member of staff wishing to raise a formal complaint is under the age of 18 or is deemed to be a vulnerable adult or adult at risk, please refer to the Safeguarding policy.
- 7.8 As well as or instead of using the informal and formal complaint processes available, staff can **report** any type of alleged bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation using Homerton College's anonymous staff feedback form, available on the website. This reporting form is simple to use, confidential and secure. Reports can be made on either an anonymous basis or with the reporting individual's identity disclosed. Reports with the identity disclosed will be triaged by the Wellbeing team and passed confidentially to HR and/or an appropriate colleague for action and resolution. Anonymous reports will be regularly reviewed and used for more general action, for example to identify and target areas needing further training, or initiating a Homerton-instigated investigation.
- 7.9 In addition to the mechanisms available as outlined above, if an individual reports the behaviour informally to a manager or colleague but does not feel able to raise a complaint, it is the responsibility of the manager or colleague approached with the disclosure to encourage the individual to reconsider this and explore what support might help reassure them.

8. What to do when you are the subject of concerns being raised?

- 8.1 It can be a disconcerting and upsetting experience for an individual to be approached and told that their behaviour could be construed as inappropriate behaviour. If this is done through an informal process, they should be prepared to listen patiently and calmly and allow the member of staff (or the person supporting them in the process) to express their concerns. If it is possible, they should also try to remedy the situation and allow a positive working relationship to be resumed. The individual should also keep a note of what was discussed and, if appropriate, agreed.
- 8.2 The individual who is the subject of the complaint should also be able to give an account of what happened as part of any informal and formal resolution processes. They can also speak with any of the following for general guidance or to discuss any specific questions about the resolution process:
- their line manager (or equivalent)
 - the HR Department and/or Wellbeing team
 - a Mental Health Champion
 - Individuals may also discuss the matter and any guidance or information received in connection with the resolution process with a colleague in confidence.

9. What happens if you have behaved inappropriately

- 9.1 While this policy emphasises the value of an early, informal resolution process, there will be situations that can only be resolved through a formal grievance. Where a formal grievance is brought and upheld against an individual and the nature of the inappropriate behaviour

warrants it, a separate procedure under the relevant disciplinary policy will be undertaken by Homerton College. This may result in a formal warning being issued to the person demonstrating the inappropriate behaviour or, in the case of serious or sustained conduct, the termination of employment. Training or other interventions may also be recommended.

- 9.2 The disciplinary procedures for Fellows and College Officers are outlined in Schedules 1 and 3 to the Ordinances respectively.
- 9.3 Additionally, where Homerton College has become aware of concerns or complaints of inappropriate behaviour, which may not have been formally reported but give rise to sufficient cause for concern, Homerton College may choose to conduct an investigation to understand the behaviours in more detail and identify and target appropriate support and interventions. If the findings indicate, this may lead to a disciplinary process under the relevant procedure.

10. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is critical when dealing with allegations of inappropriate behaviour. Details of the complaint (including the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused) must only be disclosed on a 'need-to-know' basis. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under the relevant disciplinary procedure. Information about a complaint by or about an individual may be placed on their personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and any notes or other documents compiled during the process. Notes and records will be treated as confidential and be kept no longer than necessary in accordance with the data protection principles in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

11. Victimisation

Homerton College will not tolerate any form of victimisation against an individual who has raised or supported an informal complaint, co-operated in a formal investigation, challenged inappropriate behaviour, or in each case is believed to have or is believed to be likely to take such steps. If a formal complaint of victimisation is made about a member of staff's behaviour it will be fully investigated and dealt with in accordance with the relevant disciplinary procedures.

12. Malicious or vexatious complaints

A malicious complaint is one that is made with the intention to intimidate, to lower the reputation of, or otherwise injure or harm a colleague or manager, through knowingly providing false or misleading information or withholding information about an incident or issue.

A vexatious complaint is either one that is made with the sole or main intention to harass, annoy or subdue somebody, or one that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, burdensome or unwarranted.

If it is found that an individual has made a complaint that is malicious or vexatious, Homerton College may instigate a disciplinary process against them. Disciplinary action will not be taken, however, where a grievance is mistaken or otherwise ill-founded but not otherwise malicious or vexatious.

13. Training and development

Homerton College provide a wide range of training and development opportunities for all employees. There are also mandatory courses that need to be undertaken by all staff when they join Homerton College and on a periodic basis afterwards. These include but are not limited to:

- Equality and Diversity Essentials (to build awareness of employment legislation in this area and set the context for expected behaviour)
- Understanding Implicit / Unconscious Bias (to build awareness of our implicit biases and understand the impact these may have on our behaviour and everyday interactions)
- Bullying and Harassment.

14. How to raise complaints not directly covered by this policy

14.1 Homerton employees or workers who have a complaint against a student should contact the Senior Tutor in the first instance, who will liaise with the [Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals \(OSCCA\)](#) to agree an appropriate course of action.

14.2 Homerton employees or workers who have a complaint against an individual in another College or University of Cambridge Department should raise their complaint directly with the relevant College or University Department in the first instance through the head of department (if known) or HR Manager/team.

14.3 Homerton employees or workers who have a complaint against any other third party (such as contractor) or a member of the public should speak with their line manager in the first instance. In order to address the complaint, it may be necessary to notify third parties and use their local complaints procedure.

14.4 In circumstances where a student has concerns about the behaviour of a Homerton employee or worker, these should be raised through the appropriate Student Policy or Procedure as outlined on the website, including the Dignity at Work and Study Policy, or the Sexual Harassment and Assault Guidelines. Students can also raise complaints using the anonymous Student Feedback Form, or the Safeguarding policy as appropriate.

14.5 All other individuals who are not Homerton employees or workers who have a complaint against a Homerton employee or worker will be advised to raise the complaint in writing with the relevant Head of Department (if known) or the Bursar in the first instance.

15. Associated policies and statements

Links to other related Homerton policies and procedures can be found below:

- [Homerton's Statement on Freedom of Speech.](#)
- Grievance and Disciplinary policies
- All Fellows and College Officers, and Academic Staff should refer to Schedules 1 and 3 to the [Ordinances](#)
- [Personal Relationships between Staff and Students Policy](#)
- Whistleblowing Policy

- Students Policies and procedures: Dignity at Work and Study Policy, or the Sexual Harassment and Assault Guidelines.
- Safeguarding Policy

Policy change history		
Date	Summary of Changes	Date of next review
June 2023	New policy to replace Dignity at Work, and Bullying and Harassment policies in line with the University of Cambridge's Dignity at Work Policy (2023 edition) and Code of Behaviour.	June 2024

This policy is not contractual and may be amended from time to time, as necessary, in light of any changes in legislation or operational requirements.



CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

In an environment that encourages and celebrates freedom of thought and expression, it is vital that our behaviour towards one another remains courteous and professional.

The Code of behaviour was developed by the University of Cambridge in conjunction with the Trade Unions and representatives across The University, and sets out expectations around how we should behave and not behave towards other members of our community. Homerton College adopted this Code of Behaviour. This Code is not exhaustive but models both the positive behaviour expected of us in our interactions with one another and the negative behaviours that may lead to informal or formal action being taken.

The negative actions listed in the Code below show how the inappropriate behaviours defined in section 5 of the Mutual Respect Policy may be demonstrated within our community. Understanding this can help each of us appreciate the impact of the way we behave.

Understanding the ways in which inappropriate behaviour may be demonstrated can help each of us appreciate the impact of the way we behave, and set a positive personal model of behaviour.

We are each individually responsible for our own actions and for recognising the impact of our behaviour on others. This Code is not exhaustive but models both the positive behaviour expected of us in our interactions with one another and the behaviours we should avoid.

We should always strive to:

- Foster a trusting environment which enables honest and supportive working and studying conditions
- Recognise that our actions can impact others and show courtesy and consideration in our interactions with others, even if we disagree with their views
- Discuss views that others may find disagreeable or distasteful, in a constructive and lawful way, in line with [Homerton's Statement on Freedom of Speech](#)
- Treat each other fairly and without bias
- Recognise and acknowledge the contribution of others to our work
- Honour the need for confidentiality when the nature of our work requires it
- Maintain [appropriate and professional relationships](#) with all members of Homerton College
- Promote a culture where colleagues can speak out about inappropriate behaviour
- Support our colleagues experiencing inappropriate behaviour by intervening, speaking out and helping where we feel able.

In order to maintain a community of mutual respect, courtesy, trust and inclusion, we should strive never to bully, harass, discriminate, victimise or behave in a way that can be construed as sexual misconduct, by **avoiding such behaviour as:**

- Talking down to, belittling, gratuitously interrupting or preventing others from speaking
- Directing inappropriate language, such as swearing, towards others or making

- degrading comments about individuals or groups of individuals
- Making inappropriate derogatory remarks about a colleague's performance in public, whether directly (such as in a meeting) or indirectly (for example, by needlessly copying people into an email)
 - Humiliating others by shouting at them, either publicly or privately
 - Maliciously ignoring individuals or groups of individuals, or inhibiting the ability of others to perform their roles by withholding information or excluding them from necessary meetings and discussion
 - Imposing overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision or management
 - Undermining the reputation of another through malicious rumours or false allegations
 - Making racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, or ageist jokes, remarks or microaggressions, which may demean or discriminate independently of our intentions
 - Mocking, mimicking or belittling a colleague, student or visitor because we perceive them as different to us, or using this difference as a reason to treat them unfairly
 - Behaving in a controlling or coercive way, such as pressurising others to subscribe to a particular political or religious belief
 - Circulating or displaying any type of communication on any form of media that could reasonably be perceived as offensive, intimidating or degrading, including pornographic material, unless relevant for the direct purpose of academic debate or teaching or otherwise protected by Homerton College Statement on Freedom of Speech
 - Making unwelcome and unpermitted sexual advances, suggestive behaviour or touching someone against their will, even if we perceive it as harmless
 - Retaliating to allegations of inappropriate behaviour, including threatening those who have made the allegations, providing unfair or misleading references, or blocking access to career development opportunities.