



# Respect and Dignity Policy (Incorporating the Harassment Policy)

Approved By:	Board of Directors/Trustees
Approval Date:	13.03.2026
Next review Date:	11.06.2027
Policy Holder:	IBTC

## 1. Introduction

The **International Bible Training College (IBTC)**<sup>1</sup> is committed to ensuring that all personnel, whether students, volunteers, visiting lecturers, residential staff or trustees/directors are treated with respect and dignity.

Definition of the three parts of the IBTC Respect and Dignity policy:

- Respect : to have due regard for the feelings, wishes, rights or traditions of others.
- Dignity: the state or quality of being worthy of honour.
- Harassment: aggressive pressure or intimidation of others.

This IBTC Respect and Dignity policy (Incorporating the Harassment policy) is grounded in the Christian ethos that all individuals have been created in the image of God and should be valued as people deserving to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of gender, age, social status and ethnic background.

IBTC is a close-knit community where staff and students are residential on the same campus site, therefore, it is especially imperative that there is a prevailing culture of mutual respect and dignity, which continues whatever changes occur to personnel that comprise the college community.

This Respect & Dignity policy incorporates IBTC's Harassment policy that has been written in conjunction with IBTC's Equal Opportunity, Safeguarding and Data Protection policies.

The IBTC has a zero-tolerance response to all forms of harassment, abuse and violence (e.g. physical, psychological or sexual, assault, domestic abuse, abusive communication, stalking, etc.)

All members of the IBTC community are encouraged to report any incidents that may occur in accordance with procedures outlined in this Respect and Dignity policy

This policy will be reviewed *biennially* by IBTC staff and the Board of directors/trustees<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- This policy is designed to provide advice and guidance to all personnel who constitute the college community of IBTC.
- Positively reinforce respectful and appropriate behaviour.
- Enable individuals to identify and understand what constitutes any form of unwanted behaviour that undermines the ethos of IBTC's values.

<sup>1</sup> In all the following text International Bible Training College (IBTC) is referred to as IBTC and. The college's trading name is IBTI.

<sup>2</sup> The Board of Directors/Trustees in all the following text referred to as Board.

- Engender a culture in which everyone feels safe from abuse or violence and feels confident to challenge and report any inappropriate behaviour.
- Support individuals to feel comfortable in being able to appropriately report any abusive behaviour and to be clear on the support they will receive.
- Support a whole college approach to effectively managing and preventing any types of violence or abuse, including an understanding of any underlying causes.

### **3. UK higher education context**

Many IBTC personnel, both staff and students, are not from the UK so it is important to present the wider UK Higher Education context of this policy.

The UK universities taskforce report *Changing the Culture* (2016) examining violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting university students, outlined every HE college's responsibilities to ensure a safe and positive experience for students.

The *Student Room*, in collaboration with *Revolt Sexual Assault* found that 62% of students and graduates had experienced sexual assault whilst at university.

The National Union of Students (2012) *That's What She Said* report highlighted the prevalence of a lad culture across HE campuses.

IBTC recognises that Christian FE & HE colleges are not immune from the prevailing influences of the surrounding culture, especially when young adults are relocated from the family home for the first time.

### **4. College responsibility**

- All staff members and volunteers are to provide a positive role model of respect and dignity through their own conduct.
- The college will provide a clear outlined means of reporting any behaviour that contravenes this policy.
- The college will offer appropriate support to anyone who is subject to behaviours and attitudes that contravene this policy.
- Should any reported behaviour be deemed as a possible criminal offence then the college would take responsibility to involve the appropriate authorities.

### **5. Individual responsibility**

- Individuals have a responsibility to abide by all IBTC policies and regulations.
- Everyone should primarily take responsibility for their own conduct.
- Challenge and report, in an appropriate manner, any behaviour and harassment that contravenes and undermines the Respect and Dignity policy.
- Signpost other members of the college community who feel they are victims of any abusive behaviour and harassment to seek relevant support.

## **6. Defining terminology regarding inappropriate behaviour & attitudes**

### **a. Harassment**

Harassment is any unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating situation for them. Harassment includes behaviour that is offensive, frightening and distressing. IBTC deplores all forms of personal harassment and seeks to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all volunteers, staff members, assessors and students.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of what may constitute harassment:

- Offensive gestures, language, gossip or jokes.
- Insulting or abusive behaviour or comments.
- Spreading malicious rumours.
- Physical contact, ranging from an invasion of personal space and/or inappropriate touching, to serious assault.
- Display of sexually suggestive, pornographic, racist or otherwise offensive pictures or other material or the transmitting of any such messages or images via electronic mail, mobile telephone or social media.
- Persistent unwanted attention.
- Humiliating or demeaning criticism.

Harassment may consist of a single incident or a pattern of behaviour.

In deciding whether any reported unwanted conduct amounts to harassment, IBTC will take into account:

- (i) the perception of the reporting individual;
- (ii) the other circumstances of the case; and
- (iii) whether it was reasonable for the conduct to have the effect identified by the reporting individual.

### **b. Bullying**

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour. It can include an abuse or misuse of power, whereby a recipient is undermined, humiliated, denigrated or injured. What is considered as bullying by one person may not be regarded as bullying to another due to differences in attitude and culture.

Some of the examples that the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services (ACAS) include as forms of bullying are:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone (particularly on the grounds of age, disability, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual orientation).
- ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail.
- exclusion or victimisation.
- unfair treatment.
- overbearing supervision or other controlling misuse of power or position.

### **c. Victimisation**

This can include treating someone differently because they are regarded as different and not fitting in. Individuals are intentionally excluded and deliberately isolated socially.

Individuals who are already vulnerable can be further victimised and taken advantage of.

### **d. Hate crime**

“Any hate incident, which constitutes a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate.”

### **e. Sexual abuse/misconduct**

Sexual misconduct is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which occurred in person or by correspondence, telephone, text, email, or other electronic and/or social media and may include:

- engaging or attempting to engage in a sexual act without consent.
- threatening or abusive behaviour of a sexual nature.
- sexually touching another person without their consent.
- inappropriately showing sexual organs to another person.
- recording and/or sharing intimate images of another person without their consent.
- repeatedly following a person without good reason.
- inappropriate comments, innuendo and humour.

## **7. College grievance reporting procedures**

IBTC is an environment where there are individuals from many different ethnic and cultural contexts. IBTC is committed to creating a campus based on values of tolerance, understanding and awareness. It is hoped that the positive culture set on the IBTC campus through this Respect and Dignity policy will result in minimum use of the grievance procedures. However, the following procedures are in place to deal with any grievances arising from a breach of this policy.

The college requires that all those seeking to initiate any grievance process should follow, whenever possible and appropriate, the three-stage procedure indicated below:

- **Stage One – informal resolution**

IBTC recognises that personal, unfair treatment can take many forms and the individuals involved may not always realise that their behaviour and actions give reason for legitimate complaints. IBTC therefore encourages the complainant to give, where possible the person/s allegedly involved in the grievance, the benefit of the doubt and an opportunity to resolve any minor infringements through a private and informal dialogue.

Third parties should only be involved who can provide relevant material eyewitness testimony regarding incidents that may be a breach of this policy, if the complaint is serious and taken beyond the informal phase.

If the complainant and the other party do not reach a satisfactory resolution through the informal phase, then the complainant may progress the appeal to stage two within 5 days.

However, if the infringement is serious and/or frequent then the matter should be reported as a formal grievance and taken to stage two of the procedure.

- **Stage Two – formal complaint to relevant staff member**

If the situation has not been resolved at stage one or the grievance is more serious and/or sensitive, the college gives the right to the complainant to take the matter to stage two. If any student within the IBTC community wants to raise a concern that another person is behaving in a way that is in breach of the Dignity and Respect policy they should clearly and discretely report the matter to the Student welfare department, so that the matter can be investigated and appropriately responded to. If a staff member is concerned about any breach of the dignity and respect policy, they should clearly and discretely report the matter to the HR officer or the college Principal, so that the matter can be investigated and appropriately responded to. The person managing the complaint at stage two should retain all copies of any correspondence and retain any notes or reports in a confidential file that is subject to the Data Protection policy. IBTC will ensure that all aspects of the appeals process will be dealt with and will be kept strictly confidential. Written records of grievances and their outcomes will be filed in a separate file and stored in the college safe for a period of two years.

Formal complaints of any breach of the Respect and Dignity policy should include:

- The name of the perpetrator
- The nature of the alleged behaviour
- The dates and context of the alleged incident or incidents
- The names of any witnesses
- Any conversation or action already taken in response to the alleged incident

The designated college staff member, who receives the formal complaint will ensure that a full investigation will be done by listening separately to the complainant and to the other party. Any probable witnesses will also be consulted before a proposed resolution is outlined for the affected parties to accept. A resolution should be reached within **20 working days** of the complaint reaching stage two. The result of the complaint will be communicated to both parties in writing.

If either party is not satisfied with the result of the grievance process, they may proceed to the next stage.

- **Stage Three – formal complaint to the Board**

Any very serious breach of the Respect and Dignity policy will be reported to the college board of directors/trustees for them to further investigate and determine an outcome.

If the initial complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of both parties at stage two the matter must be brought, in writing, to the attention of the Board, within **five working days** of completion of stage two.

On receipt of a formal complaint the Board will take action to separate, if necessary, the complainant from the alleged person(s) deemed to be guilty of any serious

irregularity to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place and until the matter has been resolved.

The Board will thoroughly investigate the complaint and request the notes taken by the designated member of staff who dealt with the complaint at stage two. They will be expected to declare any conflict of interest and also to act with confidentiality and impartiality. If the investigation concludes that the allegation is well founded, the guilty party will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action and the previous decisions reversed or adjusted as necessary.

The decision of the Board will be final and will be communicated to both parties in writing. **This will usually be within 20 days from receipt of the stage three appeal.** If any person brings a complaint of harassment, they will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, **if the investigation concludes that the complaint is untrue and has been brought with malicious intent then their studies or voluntary work will be terminated.**

If the issue involves a potential breach of IBTC's Safeguarding policy then the reporting procedure should follow the guidance provided by that policy.

All written notes taken regarding any complaint will be subject to the Data Protection policy.

#### **8. Location of the policy**

The college will ensure that the policy is available to all students and staff and will also be on the IBTC website: [www.ibti.org.uk](http://www.ibti.org.uk)

#### **9. Mechanisms for feedback**

Constructive comment for the continued improvement of this policy is welcomed and should be forwarded to the IBTC's Data Protection Officer at [policies.data@ibti.org.uk](mailto:policies.data@ibti.org.uk).