HUGHES HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

# Harassment and Sexual Misconduct between Students Policy and Procedures

## Table of Contents


1. Policy Purpose ..... 2
2. Scope ..... 2
3. Definitions ..... 3
4. Responsibilities ..... 3
5. Policy Statement ..... 4
6. Review ..... 8
7. Associated Documents ..... 8
8. Appendices ..... 9
9. Implementation / Communication / Training ..... 11


## Executive Summary:


This policy outlines the measures Hughes Hall takes to prevent and respond to harassment and sexual misconduct between students in the College. It emphasises a student-led approach that prioritises fairness, dignity, and appropriate support throughout the reporting process. Proceedings follow one of three pathways; informal, formal and disciplinary. Information on additional resources and support (both within and external to the College) are signposted throughout the policy document.


| | |
|---|---|
| Policy owner: Senior Tutor | Version number: 3.0 |
| Effective date: 17/12/25 | Date of review: 12/28 |
| Approving body: Council | Location: website |

## 1. Policy Purpose

1.1 Hughes Hall will not tolerate any form of harassment or sexual misconduct. This policy outlines the core prevention and response measures the college takes to minimise occurrence and maximise appropriate response. In instances of alleged harassment or sexual misconduct between students, this policy supports the College to take effective preventative measures, treat all reports seriously, respond to them as effectively as possible (including with impartial external investigation), and support those involved both at the time and afterwards.

## 2. Scope

2.1 This policy and set of procedures applies where a student at Hughes Hall wishes to complain that the behaviour of another student at Hughes Hall constitutes Harassment and/or Sexual Misconduct.

2.2 A complaint under this procedure may be brought by or against two or more students at Hughes Hall where the complaint is about harassment or sexual misconduct arising from the same event(s). In such cases references in this procedure to the 'Reporting student' or the 'Respondent' shall be construed as appropriate as referring to more than one person.

2.3 A complainant may choose whether to raise a complaint under this procedure or under the equivalent University procedure, if applicable. They may not, however, have a complaint active under both procedures at the same time or with one harassment procedure and one grievance procedure. Similarly, if police investigation of any aspect of the complaint begins, it is the standard expectation that formal University and college procedures be suspended until the investigation is complete. Additionally, it is the expectation of the Colleges and the University that the University procedure will normally be used where:

a. the complaint relates to conduct occurring in the context of University societies or sports clubs.
b. the complaint is brought against Students at more than two Colleges.
c. the reporting student believes the harassment to be unresolvable by informal means and to require a formal, impartial investigation via the University's specialist investigators.
d. there is a clear element of sexual harassment or misconduct.

The University's Office for Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA) will be able to answer any specific questions and will endeavour to ensure that students understand the University procedure at each stage. OSCCA can be contacted at OSCCA@admin.cam.ac.uk. Students who choose to report via an external procedure of any kind can still expect support from the college as per their needs.

2.4 A complaint of harassment or sexual misconduct may be brought under this procedure whether or not it has been reported to the police. The college will support the complainant in reaching a decision on whether to make a complaint to the police but will not exert pressure either to report or not report in this way. In exceptional circumstances where there is a clear threat to the life of the reporting student, respondent or another party, the college may need to report to the police without the complainant's consent.

2.5 A complaint of harassment or sexual misconduct may not be brought under this procedure if it has already been investigated under the university procedure.

## 3. Definitions

| | |
|---|---|
| Harassment | Behaviour that causes an individual alarm or distress, violates their dignity and may create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It may take place in-person or remotely and have verbal, psychological, physical, sexual, discriminatory or coercive elements. For it to be covered by the procedures in this document the harassment must have been alleged to have occurred between Hughes Hall students. Instances of fully or partially external alleged harassment are dealt with separately under University procedures and/or via the police (but, where Hughes students are involved, they will still be supported in a manner consistent with the principles of the policy elements of this document). Harassment is not permitted under the college's Rules of Behaviour (available here). |
| Sexual Misconduct | Sexual misconduct is unacceptable behaviour of a sexual nature that causes or has the potential to cause a person or group to feel distressed, coerced, discriminated against or humiliated. It may involve harassment, but not always. To be covered by the procedure element of this document it must occur between Hughes Hall students. Sexual misconduct is not permitted under the college's Rules of Behaviour (available here). |
| Reporting student | The student who raises an allegation of harassment or sexual misconduct. |
| Respondent | A student who is alleged to have undertaken harassment and/or sexual misconduct towards one or more other students. |
| Senior Tutor | This definition is taken to include the college's appointed Senior Tutor or their designated deputy (the Deputy Senior Tutors, The Head of Student Wellbeing and Welfare or the Head of Education Services, as most appropriate to the case) and in the case of situations falling under the disciplinary procedure, the Deans of Discipline. |
| Welfare Team | The Senior Tutor, Deputy Senior Tutor (Teaching and Outreach), Head of Student Wellbeing and Welfare, Head of Education Services and the College Health Practitioner. |
| Tutor | An appointed Tutor from the college. A list of tutors is available here. |
| Harassment Support Tutor | A specialist tutor who has attended training from the Harassment and Violence Support Service and has agreed to be a contact point for cases where harassment is alleged. Two are appointed each year and current appointees are detailed here. |

## 4. Responsibilities

4.1 This policy's overall implementation is led by the Senior Tutor, with the Head of Student Welfare and Wellbeing reporting to them on its delivery. College Council are responsible for reviewing the policy regularly and approving any amendments, with the Student Welfare, Accommodation and Finance Committee providing additional expert input where needed.

4.2 Hughes Hall will take all reasonable measures to prevent harassment and sexual

misconduct within its physical premises, any online media it has responsibility for and within the broader culture and conduct of its members. This includes student training (compliant with Office for Students' guidelines) and staff training, alongside publicising the college Rules of Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

4.3 The college will at all times endeavour to create a culture in which harassment and sexual misconduct are not tolerated and all members are aware of their responsibilities to uphold the dignity and respect of both other members and wider society.

4.4 Routes to support for any instances of harassment or sexual misconduct that do occur will be in place and regularly reviewed and suitably trained champions will be made clear each year from the Senior Membership. The Hughes welfare and tutor team will also regularly undertake training in supporting disclosures.

4.5 Line managers have the responsibility to set and steer culture within the teams they lead. They should ensure all staff are aware of this policy, trained where appropriate to handle student disclosures and feel confident in their ability to report unacceptable behaviour within the student community.

## 4. Policy Statement

### 5.1 General Principles

5.1.1 The College will act reasonably in implementing this procedure, having regard to the individual circumstances of the case. Every effort will be made to ensure that all parties are treated with fairness and dignity. The college will endeavour to apply the principles of best practice outlined by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, which say that the process should be:

- Accessible and clear
- Fair, independent and confidential
- Inclusive
- Flexible, proportionate and timely
- Of genuine improvement to the student experience.

5.1.2 Any timings or time limits set out in this procedure may be varied by the Senior Tutor (or their deputies) or the Deans of Discipline for good reason, after consultation with the Reporting student and the Respondent as appropriate.

5.1.3 Any written decision issued in accordance with any element of this procedure shall also include the reasons for that decision.

5.1.4 The Senior Tutor may suspend the consideration of a complaint at any stage of this procedure and/or refer the matter for consideration under another more relevant procedure, after consultation with the Reporting student and the Respondent as appropriate.

5.1.5 If the Senior Tutor considers that precautionary action is necessary to protect any person or to enable a full and proper investigation of the complaint to be carried out, they may refer the matter to The President for them to enact appropriate, proportionate precautionary measures as laid out in the college's Disciplinary Policy, available here.

5.1.6 A Reporting student may withdraw their report at any time during the College procedure, by notifying the Senior Tutor in writing. Where a student withdraws their report no further action will be taken under this procedure, but the Senior Tutor may refer the matter for consideration under another University procedure. They will also retain a log in line with the college's data use policies.

5.1.8 Information relevant to any claim of harassment or sexual misconduct will be gathered and stored according to the college's data protection statement (available here). It will not be shared with parties beyond the college welfare team or Deans' office without explicit consent, unless a clear and significant current risk is identified.

5.1.9 Students retain the right to source their own legal advice on an incident at any time and this may be most useful in a case involving a complex police investigation. However, the steps detailed in these procedures do not require them, referring to the existing powers that college and university have to support, investigate and take reasonable steps.

**5.2 Reporting, Supporting and Guidance**

5.2.1 Students who believe they have been harassed or been the subject of sexual misconduct are advised to seek support from the College and/or from the University. If a sexual assault has occurred they should consider reporting to the regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), noting that some evidence can be time-sensitive. If they believe a crime has been committed they should additionally consider reporting to the police via dialling 101. Students are welcome to contact the University's Harassment and Violence Support Service, whether they have reported the matter or not. At Hughes Hall, students can speak to their own Tutor, a Harassment Support Tutor, the Senior Tutor, the College Health Practitioner or the MCR Welfare Officer. Students may also seek independent general support and information from the Student Union's Student Advice Service (SAS).

5.2.2 The University has a helpful single point of information regarding rape and sexual assault. We strongly advise any affected student to consult it.

5.2.3 If you feel that you have been affected by any form of harassment or sexual misconduct by another student, or have witnessed this, you are encouraged to report it. Matters will be kept confidential to those involved, and only divulged to others on a need-to-know basis, where there is a significant risk of serious harm to others. Hughes Hall will not oblige or coerce a student into disclosing to or engaging with any particular service. They will not break confidentiality and will be led by the student's preferences for specific action (or inaction). The only exception will be if there is an acute and likely threat to the student's further safety or that of another, in which law enforcement may need to be informed of essential details to ensure one or more parties' physical security.

5.2.4 The college has three types of response to reports of Harassment or Sexual Misconduct: Informal Procedure, Formal Procedure (externally led) and Disciplinary Procedure. These are detailed in sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 of this document, respectively. Note that whilst the Informal Procedure is generally intended to be used at an early stage and for cases of lower impact (as defined by those impacted), the Formal and Disciplinary Procedure do not necessarily constitute increasing levels of severity and referral into any of them is based primarily on student choice (alongside evidence of rule-breaking in the case of Disciplinary investigation) and can happen at any time without undertaking the others.

### 5.3 Informal Resolution Procedure

5.3.1 Hughes Hall advocates for dialogue, shared understanding and restorative justice wherever possible and encourages the consideration of relevant discussions to informally resolve a situation. However, these will never be used to dismiss or downplay what a student has experienced or in lieu of more formal options (including police reporting) where the student clearly wishes for this to occur.

5.3.2 Students are encouraged to consider engaging with their College Tutor and/or one of the college's dedicated Harassment Tutors before speaking directly with one another where there is an allegation of harassment. Tutors can assist with planning what to say and what to do if the discussion is challenging. They can also accompany students in the discussion itself and provide follow-up support and signposting.

5.3.3 Where informal discussion between students (and potentially tutors) does not fully resolve a case of alleged harassment or misconduct, a number of options are available, usually to be determined via a discussion with the Senior Tutor or an appointed deputy (referred to from here as the facilitator). Students should write to the Senior Tutor inbox senior.tutor@hughes.cam.ac.uk. The email should contain:

1. an objective statement of the alleged behaviour only (avoiding subjective opinion).
2. an outline of the key impacts it has had.
3. a brief rationale of why tutor-facilitated dialogue is not sufficient to address it.
4. an indication of any preferences the student has for steps to resolve it.
5. details of any professionals the student gives consent for communication with about this incident, for example their student union advice worker.

The email should not contain:

1. Information that may be retraumatising or trigger any clinical symptoms the student has (for example a graphic account of an incident).
2. Evidence: the facilitator will be clear about what they need to see at a later stage.

5.3.4 The facilitator will write to the reporting student within a week to offer a meeting with them. Reporting students are free to bring a professional supporter to this meeting such as their college tutor or a member of the student union advice service and should notify the facilitator if they wish to do so. They may also request any reasonable adjustments they need in order to attend the discussion comfortably.

5.3.5 The facilitator will also write to the respondent student(s) and offer a meeting with them. Respondent students have the same right to be accompanied and request reasonable adjustments as reporting students.

5.3.6 After meeting with the involved parties and reviewing any relevant evidence, the facilitator will take up to two weeks to review the information provided and propose one or more of the following resolutions:

a. that mediation be undertaken. Mediators can be appropriate trained University staff members or independent professional mediators. They are impartial, with no vested interest in the outcome. They manage the whole process, creating a safe and supportive environment so that both students can talk honestly and openly. They do not impose an agreement but work to help students reach a mutually acceptable one. The University mediation service can provide professional, accredited support with this process.

b. that a conduct agreement (with specifics appropriate to the scenario in question) be drafted and implemented for the respondent student.
c. That the respondent student attend a behavioural awareness course.
d. If a rule of behaviour has been breached, that the mechanisms outlined in the Disciplinary Policy are activated as per section 5.5 of this document.

Respondent students will be made aware that a formal investigation has not taken place and that as such any steps they are requested to undertake as a result of the facilitator's recommendations are not mandatory. However, it will be made clear that formal reporting options remain open to the reporting student at any time and that they retain their right to request a formal investigation if a satisfactory informal resolution is not reached for them.

5.3.7 The reporting students should confirm to the facilitator whether they find the proposed resolution satisfactory or whether they wish to take additional steps. If the reporting student wishes to raise a concern about the College's management of the informal procedure, this should be raised using the student grievance policy.

**5.4 Formal Investigation and Resolution Procedure**

5.4.1 Where students wish to request a formal investigation, they are able to do so via the University's procedure, with details available on the Student and Staff Behaviour webpages. This is designed to be impartial and specialist, with an appropriately trained investigator from the University's Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA) attached to conduct it.

5.4.2 College will continue to offer support via the tutorial and welfare teams to any students engaged in an investigation, including respondents. Where appropriate, this may include steps like accompanying to interviews (with the student's consent).

5.4.3 While an investigation is ongoing under the University's procedure, the College reserves the right to take such action as it deems necessary to restrict the rights of any student involved in relation to facilities, services or grounds of the College, in accordance with the precautionary measures as set out in the College's Disciplinary Procedure.

5.4.4 Following the outcome of the University's procedure, the College shall rely on the investigation and findings made by the University. The College will not re-investigate a matter following the conclusion of the University's procedure. However, the College will need to determine whether further College-specific action is appropriate in the circumstances, and this may require further information being sought. The College reserves the right to take action in accordance with its applicable processes based on the investigation and findings of the University's Procedure where it deems it necessary, taking into account all of the circumstances.

5.4.5 If the student feels that the outcome of the University's procedure is not representative and they wish to appeal, College will continue to offer support, primarily via the assigned college tutor, during this process. Students are advised to log any appeal with OSCCA quickly, as these can have a time limit.

**5.5 College Disciplinary Procedures**

5.5.1 College retains the right to conduct its own investigations where there is evidence that a rule of behaviour has been breached. Such investigations would be led by one of the Deans of Discipline and proceed in accordance with the Discipline Policy. If an OSCCA process has already been activated for any such case it is the usual expectation that it would conclude first.

### 5.6 Police involvement

5.6.1. Students will be supported in coming to an informed decision as to whether they wish to report the incident to the police. Neither the College nor the University will require this step to be taken as a precondition of informal or formal investigation.

5.6.2. If a student decides not to take this step, this will not form the basis of any adverse inferences against them.

5.6.3. Where concerns arise that there may be a significant or ongoing risk to any member of College or the wider University community, the Senior Tutor may take an executive decision to report the matter to the police. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the reporting student will be informed before this step is taken.

5.6.4. Following an investigation by the police the College will:

5.6.4.1 Not presume that the fact that criminal proceedings were commenced but discontinued amounts to proof the alleged breach of the rules of behaviour did not occur.

5.6.4.2 Consider that an acquittal following evaluation at the criminal standard of proof ('beyond reasonable doubt') is a conclusive finding that a breach of the College's rules of behaviour did not occur only of the specific complaint of which the student was acquitted. It will not prevent the College later resuming an investigation into other alleged breaches concerning the same parties on a different occasion or a different breach occurring at on the same occasion but of a different nature which was not pursued by the police.

5.6.4.3 Consider that any conviction resulting in a relevant prison sentence, fine, court-ordered community sanction or caution amounts to conclusive evidence that the responding student did breach the Rules. In such an event the College may take appropriate measures for the purpose of protecting the interests of the College and its members.

## 6. Review

6.1. This document is subject to a three-year review cycle, with additional amendments to be reviewed by Council as required in response to legislative or policy changes.

## 7. Associated Documents

7.1. The following documents work in conjunction with this policy:

- Condition E6 of the Office for Students

- The College Student Disciplinary Policy

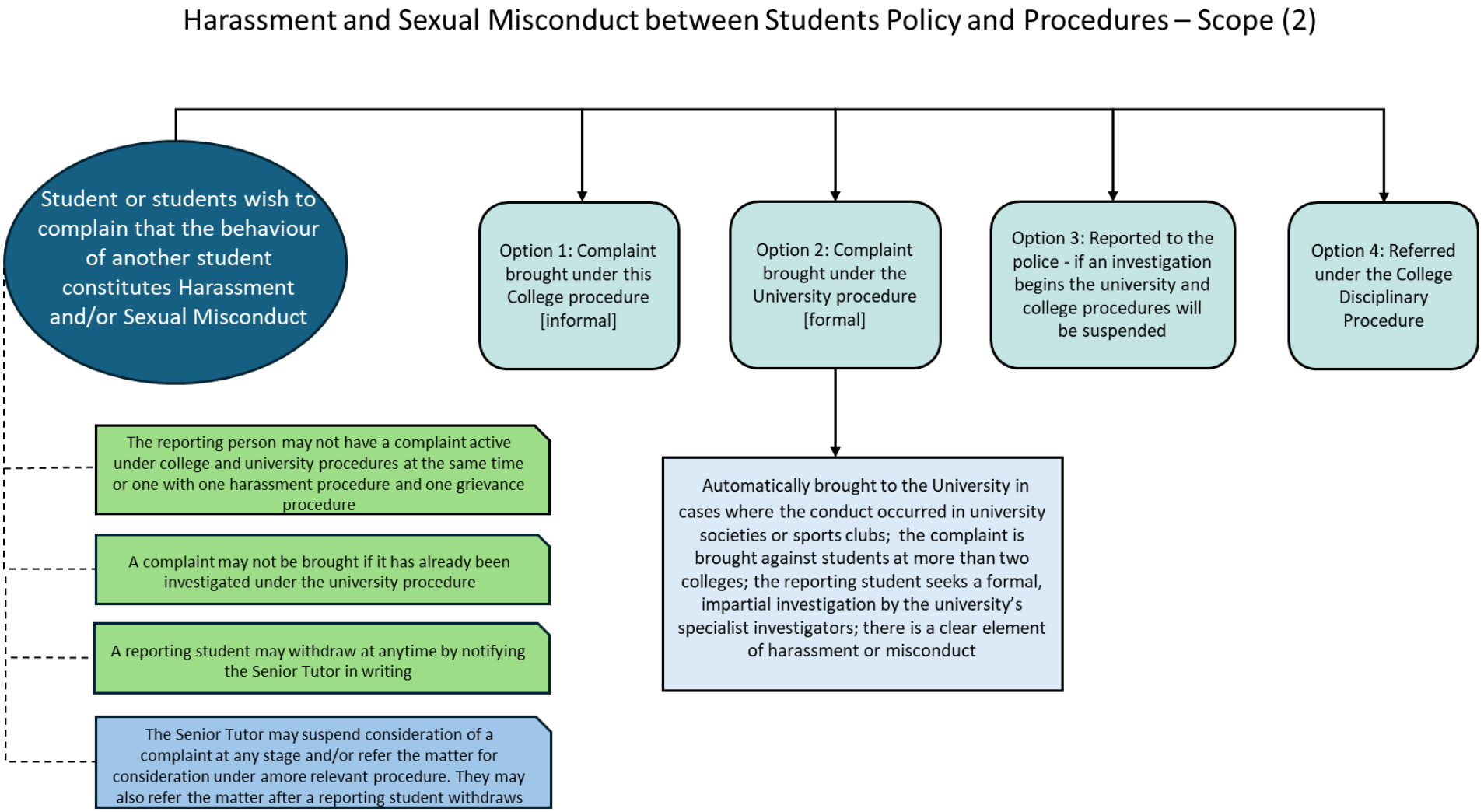
- The College Student Grievance Policy

- The University Student Disciplinary Framework

- The College Student Data Use Policy

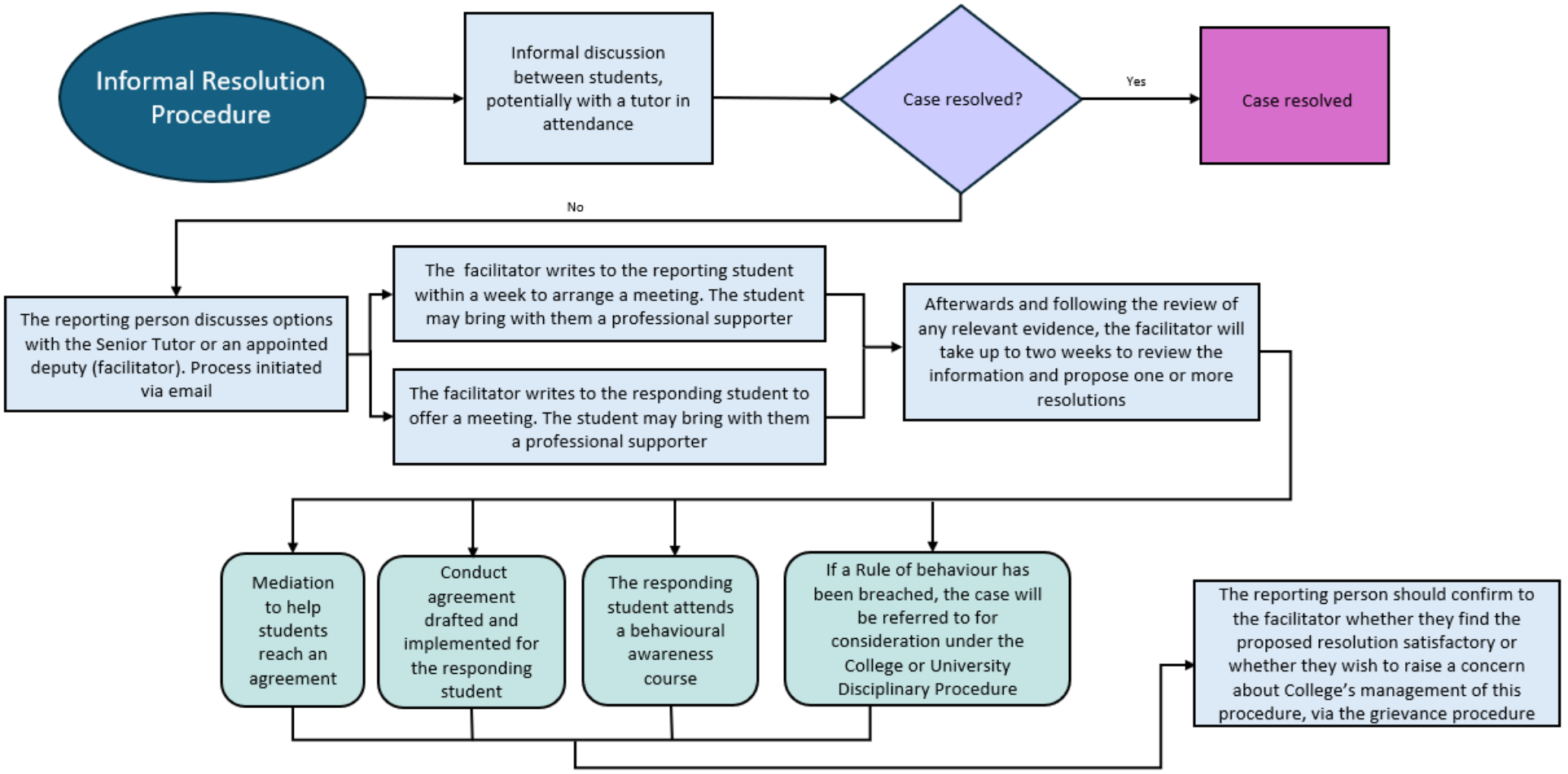
## 8. Appendices

Appendix A



Appendix B

# Response to Report of Harassment or Sexual Misconduct – Type 1 (5.3)



## 9. Implementation / Communication / Training

9.1 All college staff in significant student support roles will attend dedicated online and in-person university training for managing disclosures, as laid out in the University's Single Point of Information. Compliance with this will be actively monitored by line managers (or the Senior Tutor and Head of Student Wellbeing and Welfare, in the case of non-staff such as tutors).

9.2 The policy will be public via the college website and relevant teams supporting students (tutors and porters) will be informed directly.