

CHICKENSHED

THEATRE CHANGING LIVES

Chickenshed Statement of Intent on issues of
Sexual Harassment

Section 1 – Introduction

Chickenshed is committed to a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment and the behaviour that can potentially lead to harassment. This zero tolerance approach applies equally to any examples and incidents of sexual harassment behaviour for all gender/gender neutral/equality group situations as defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and also the government Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) report recommendations and revisions.

Chickenshed proactively supports the "remember it can happen here" approach which has been advised by Ofsted and the Office for Students - which dictates that education organisations should proactively assume that sexual harassment may be prevalent amongst individuals for whom they take responsibility for - rather than assume that their organisations are safe and sexual harassment in some way "cannot" occur or be occurring or is "highly unlikely" to occur or be occurring. This approach promotes the necessary proactive vigilance that is needed to anticipate and negate obvious, less obvious and also hidden, latent harassment behaviour together with the conditions and attitudes which may lead it.

Chickenshed is working with the Office for Students terms and definitions from their expectations in relation to harassment including sexual harassment and those definitions and explanations are outlined below.

2. Staffing Resources

2.1 Chickenshed believes that sexual harassment both thrives and also goes under the radar in situations where staff support and oversight is diluted due to it being underresourced. Chickenshed is committed to maintaining staff support resources for students to 1 to 5/6 beneficiaries to ensure that, in a relatively small venue there are always staff and Mentors close to hear, understand and anticipate concerns whilst monitoring and affecting the early potential stages of pre - sexual harassment behaviour preferably before it becomes an issue.

2.2 Chickenshed will ensure there is structured awareness amongst staff and students of the potential of less seen/hidden coercive relationship behaviour which may lead to sexual harassment or may already satisfy the conditions of sexual harassment. Safeguarding and mentoring/support resources will be targeted at these situations to ensure individuals are supported.

2.3 Chickenshed will ensure there is a named member(s) of the Support/Mentor team who reports to the wider Delegated Safeguarding Team regarding the welfare of students in relation to potential or actual sexual harassment issues.

2.4 Chickenshed will maintain a wide Delegated Safeguarding Team of 6 working across its beneficiary operations to generate and sustain awareness of sexual harassment issues and potential issues. This allows a ratio of one Safeguarding team Officer to 25 - 30 students or approximately one per cohort. This ratio will be monitored and added to when needed.

2.5 Chickenshed will maintain and extend, wherever needed, counselling resources to respond to the potential sexual harassment impact of external student home community situations and relationships. Extra counselling support systems will be provided as required.

Section 3 Awareness and Training

3.1 Chickenshed will maintain and extend, wherever needed, the positive levels of Safeguarding awareness and training activity to reflect the growing impact of sexual harassment issues with Safeguarding an agenda item for Management, Education and Support Management and also whole staff meetings.

3.2 Chickenshed will provide, wherever possible, opportunities for students to reflect on

issues of sexual harassment and related bullying, manipulation and coercive behaviour issues in curriculum creative material exploration with a parallel understanding that this can be an important vehicle for understanding, empathy and support in inclusive environments and indeed all environments. Issues of gender and LGBTQ rights and identity will be explored in impactful settings with curriculum links serving to reinforce the fact that these are not issues separate to the main educational experience but central to an understanding of inclusion and inclusive working.

3.3 Chickenshed will ensure that potential issues of sexual harassment, bullying, coercive relationship control and their impact can apply to situations across the gender, heterosexual and LGBTQ spectrum. Chickenshed is always actively seeking representation from all these groups across its beneficiary spectrum to develop its inclusivity response and provision. Therefore it is vital that awareness of sexual harassment issues and harassment issues in general recognise these aspects of lived experience.

3.3 In terms of training and awareness Chickenshed recognises that for some individuals amongst beneficiary groups past education and social experiences may have been more limited or restricted with their own exposure to routine social communication situations being potentially also limited and restricted. This can occasionally lead to a mismatch between communication/relationship expectation and appropriate behaviour when in wider, inclusive settings. Chickenshed's wide mentor/ safeguarding team provision will work hard to ensure sensitive and measured awareness for all young people of the sexual harassment "it could happen here" approach is also balanced with an awareness of appropriate communication behaviour and appropriate boundaries.

Section 4 - Acting on Sexual Harassment Issues and Reporting

4.1 - Chickenshed will use its commitment to extend safeguarding and mentoring/inclusive support resources to make communication and reporting re sexual harassment concerns as accessible and sensitive as possible. Individuals need to feel reassured to communicate with staff members they themselves feel comfortable to discuss issues with. They also need to feel comfortable in the event of feeling the need for others to communicate on their behalf if they are unsure of the best approach to suit their needs. This may be a member of staff but also may be another student.

Student Policy on Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct

Introduction

Chickenshed does not tolerate any form of harassment or victimisation or sexual misconduct and expects all members of the Chickenshed community, its staff, students, volunteers, visitors and contractors to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration.

Chickenshed has always been committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality of opportunity, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all members of the Chickenshed community are respected. Chickenshed actively promotes this ethos of inclusive zero tolerance of harassment in a number of ways including before, during and after a project start or a year start through Induction with this ethos also being reinforced for any extra engagement or enhancement activity. Whilst a student can expect to be challenged by staff, by each other, and by the concepts and materials that form the teaching within Chickenshed, this will be undertaken in a “safe” and respectful environment with harassment due to equality group status or opinion needing direct intervention.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- a) Promote a positive open environment in which people are treated fairly and inclusively with respect;
- b) Make it clear that harassment is unacceptable and that all members of Chickenshed have a role to play in creating an environment free from harassment – and creating awareness of how to understand and challenge harassment when it arises.
- c) Provide a framework of support for students who feel they have been subject to harassment.
- d) Inform students where to report and/or make a complaint – when they or others feel they have been subject of harassing behaviour, including sexual harassment.

Definitions

A person subjects another to **harassment** where they engage in unwanted and unwarranted conduct which has the purpose or effect of:

- violating another person's dignity, or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for another person

The victim does not need to have explicitly stated that the behaviour was unwanted but behaviour can be seen or recognised by others including students, staff and family/carers.

Bullying is a form of harassment and which can be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Chickenshed staff and students need to be aware that bullying in all its forms can also occur as a result of sexual harassment and as a result of an action by a victim to counter sexual harassment. However bullying can also occur as a prelude to sexual harassment to intimidate or attempt to normalize inappropriate behaviour.

Victimisation is when one individual treats another badly or subjects him/her to an intimidating form of treatment because of a complaint about sexual harassment discrimination, harassment or bullying. It can also occur when an individual has or have participated in an investigation, or because they have helped someone who has been a victim of discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Chickenshed regards all forms of **Bullying** or **Victimisation** as misconduct needing to be highlighted and prevented. Chickenshed recognises that sexual harassment and exploration of this form of harassment needs to be treated with extra sensitivity and awareness due to attempts being often made by perpetrators to "normalize" the behaviour or see it as something which can be "tolerated" as part of routine communication – with differing attitudes and levels of awareness.

Behaviours

Harassment including sexual harassment may involve repeated forms of unwanted and unwarranted behaviour, but a one-off incident can also amount to harassment.

Every member of staff and every student should ensure that they understand harassment and have an awareness and the potential that harassment can occur. The perception of the complainant and the extent, to which that perception needs to be treated as reasonable and needing action.

Being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or otherwise intoxicated is not an excuse for harassment including sexual harassment in all its forms

Sexual Harassment and general harassment can take a variety of forms:

- Through individual behaviour
 - face to face, either verbally or physically
 - through other forms of communication, including but not limited to, written communications and communications via any form of electronic media or mobile communications device:
 - directly to the person concerned, or to a third party
- Through a prevailing study environment which creates a culture which tolerates harassment or bullying, for example the telling of homophobic sexist, misogynist or racist jokes.

Examples of behaviour which may amount to sexual harassment and general awareness harassment under this Policy include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Offensive gestures, language, gossip or jokes.
- Insulting or abusive behaviour or comments.
- Physical contact, ranging from an invasion of personal space and/or inappropriate touching, to serious assault.
- Display of sexually aggressive, pornographic, racist or otherwise offensive pictures or other material, or the transmitting of any such messages or images via electronic mail.
- Intentional isolation or exclusion.
- Humiliating or demeaning behaviour and/or persistent negative criticism

Stalking is also a form of sexual harassment and harassment in general and may be characterised by any of the following repeated and unwanted behaviours:

- Following a person;
- Contacting, or attempting to contact, a person by any means;
- Publishing any statement or other material –
 - Relating or purporting to relate to a person, or
 - Purporting to originate from a person;
- Monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication;
- Interfering with any property in the possession of a person;
- Watching or spying on a person including through the use of CCTV or electronic surveillance.

Sexual misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- Attempting to engage, or engaging in, sexual intercourse or other sexual act without consent
- Sharing the private sexual material of another person without consent
- Kissing without consent
- Touching inappropriately through clothes without consent
- Inappropriately showing sexual organs to another person directly or indirectly (e.g. through digital means)
- Making unwanted remarks of a sexual nature
- Taking uninvited photographs of another student, including up skirting.

Application of the Policy

Chickenshed considers that vigorous debate is proper and acceptable in the academic context, and staff and students have freedom within the law to voice a wide range of views and opinions on social, economic, political, cultural and religious issues, and to put forward new controversial or unpopular opinions. However, such freedoms do not give immunity from the law nor from personal liability. Academic debate will not amount to harassment when it is conducted respectfully and does not violate the dignity of others or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Sexual harassment/general harassment and/or bullying or sexual misconduct are a serious offence. Any student who feels s/he has been subject to harassment or bullying, or believe they have been the victim of sexual misconduct by another student or staff member, should make a complaint to Chickenshed using the student complaints policy and procedures and using the student support and mentoring processes and provision to help with any aspects of the reporting and/or complaints process.

This is the case where the complaint is against a fellow student

- To the relevant Head of Department (or Director) where their complaint is against a member of staff or an external contractor.

For advice, a student can speak in confidence to a member of the Student support/Mentor team or the member of the Chickenshed Safeguarding Team.

Where a complaint of harassment, bullying or sexual misconduct may constitute a criminal offence, the complainant will be encouraged to report the matter to the police. Victims can also report behaviour which may constitute criminal conduct direct to the police if they feel that direct route is needed – and support will also be given for this process where needed.

If a complainant is deemed to have known or to have reasonably been expected to know that a complaint was unfounded, the allegation of harassment or bullying may be judged to be vexatious or malicious, and disciplinary action may be taken against them. No action will be taken if a complaint which proves to be unfounded is judged to have been made in good faith.

All parties involved in a complaint (including any witnesses who may be interviewed as part of any investigation) should maintain the confidentiality of the process. Those involved in advising complainants should, where possible, seek the consent of the individual for the onward disclosure of relevant information to those with a clear need to know. Where such consent is not forthcoming, the person entrusted with the information should make it clear that, in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to disclose the information, taking account of the duty of care which may be owed to the individual and/or others and the need to action Safeguarding of young people and/or vulnerable adults/adults at risk processes.