

## WEA Sexual Harassment policy (Students and volunteers)

### 1. Policy statement and aims

The WEA is committed to:

- Providing a teaching and learning environment where students can achieve their full potential free from all forms of sexual harassment and where they treat each other with dignity and respect.
- Ensuring that no student is treated less favourably because of any of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including gender and gender reassignment.
- Raising staff and student awareness of sexual harassment.
- Providing a supportive culture which encourages the reporting of incidents.
- Reinforcing a clear management expectation that staff take seriously all reports of sexual

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**Sexual harassment** includes a wide range of behaviour such as:

- Sexual comments or jokes, sometimes described as “banter”
- Displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photos
- Suggestive looks, staring or leering
- Propositions and sexual advances
- Making promises in return for sexual favours
- Sexual gestures
- Intrusive questions about a person’s private or sex life, and discussing own sex life
- Sexual posts or contact on social media
- Spreading sexual rumours about a person
- Sending sexually explicit emails or text messages
- Unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing
- Criminal behaviour, including sexual assault, stalking, indecent exposure and offensive communications.

**Sexual violence** is any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion which takes place without consent.

**Consent** is providing permission for something to happen or agreement to do something with a full understanding of the facts and without coercion. Consent cannot be deemed to have been given if it is provided under pressure or in situations where someone is not capable of providing it. Consent can be withdrawn at any time. Consent therefore involves:

- The capacity to consent.
- Freedom to consent.
- Steps taken to obtain consent.
- Reasonable belief in consent.

#### **4. Procedure and guidance**

##### **Preventing sexual harassment:**

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Behaviour that normalises or trivialises sexual harassment will not be tolerated. The WEA is committed to raising awareness of sexual harassment by:

- Staff training: All tutors, education staff and volunteers receive mandatory training in Safeguarding procedures, including

## Roles and responsibilities:

There are clear lines of responsibility for managing disclosures of sexual harassment within the WEA.

All staff and volunteers must apply relevant WEA policies and understand the incident reporting procedures outlined in the Safeguarding policy: <https://www.wea.org.uk/about-us/policies>

The **Director of Curriculum, Quality, and Safeguarding** is responsible for the overall strategic management of Safeguarding and sexual harassment.

The **WEA National Safeguarding and Complaints Managers** are responsible for managing and reviewing any sexual harassment disclosures or concerns involving students, in association with the relevant Safeguarding Designate Officer who is responsible for investigating any incidents or concerns and liaising with the external agencies and/or the police, as appropriate. The National Safeguarding and Complaints Managers will liaise with HR as appropriate, if the complaint involves an employee, or with the volunteer manager, if the complaint involves a volunteer.

**HR Department** is responsible for managing and reviewing any sexual harassment disclosures involving employees, in liaison with the Safeguarding and Complaints managers, as appropriate.

**The Volunteer and Membership Team** are responsible for managing and reviewing any sexual harassment disclosures involving volunteers, in association with the relevant Head of region who is responsible for investigating any incidents or concerns according to the Volunteer Policy and Code of Conduct, and in liaison with the Safeguarding and Complaints managers, as appropriate.

## Reporting sexual harassment:

- The WEA will listen to and take seriously all disclosures of sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- The WEA will address these concerns/disclosures promptly and sensitively but will not promise confidentiality either to the individual reporting it, or to those involved.
- Reporting procedures will follow existing Safeguarding procedures.
- Reporting sexual harassment will be made explicit in the Safeguarding policy.
- All reports alleging sexual harassment by a student towards another student will be investigated by the relevant Regional Safeguarding Officer in consultation with the WEA national safeguarding leads.
- A student disclosing sexual harassment will be supported by the WEA and, where appropriate, be referred to external agencies and/or the case will be referred to the police.
- In cases where the evidence and investigation show that sexual harassment has taken place and the perpetrator is a st6 (n)21.5 ( c)9 (o)21.5 (21.5 (t)4.4 (h)2) (d-.174nt)27 (af)26.1 notd-.1



- A report alleging sexual harassment by a WEA volunteer will be investigated according to

