



# Vedanta School of Nursing & Paramedical Science

*(A Unit of Vedanta Charitable & Private Trust.)*

## **ANTI SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

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## **POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL)**

### **Vedanta School of Nursing & Paramedical Sciences (VSNPS)**

#### **Statement of Commitment:**

VSNPS is committed to maintaining a **zero-tolerance policy** towards sexual harassment. We aim to ensure a **safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace and academic environment**, free from any form of sexual harassment. This is in accordance with the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**, and the **University Grants Commission (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2015**.

VSNPS actively works to **prevent incidents of sexual harassment**, encourages **prompt reporting**, and ensures **timely redressal** of complaints. This policy shall be interpreted in light of the above-mentioned Act and UGC Regulations, and is meant to clarify and address any ambiguities that may arise.

#### **SCOPE:**

This Policy shall apply to **all students, faculty, staff, employees, and third parties** associated with VSNPS. It covers all incidents of sexual harassment **occurring in connection with college activities**, including routine teaching, administrative work, or any program organized by VSNPS, whether **on or off campus**. It also applies to behaviour that **creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment** for any member(s) of the VSNPS community.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions shall apply:

- i. **Complainant/Aggrieved Person:**  
Any individual alleging an incident of sexual harassment, or on whose behalf such a complaint has been filed.
- ii. **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC):**  
The Committee constituted by the Principal of VSNPS to inquire into complaints of sexual harassment and ensure redressal.
- iii. **VSNPS:**  
Refers to **Vedanta School of Nursing & Paramedical Sciences, Azamgarh**.
- iv. **VSNPS Community:**  
Includes all **students, faculty members, and staff or employees** of VSNPS.
- v. **Respondent:**  
The person against whom a complaint of sexual harassment has been filed.





**vi. Sexual Harassment:**

Includes any **unwelcome conduct** of a sexual nature, whether **verbal, physical, textual, electronic, visual, or graphic**, and may include (but is not limited to):

- a) Physical contact or advances;
- b) Requests or demands for sexual favours;
- c) Sexually coloured remarks or communication directed at a specific person that causes humiliation or harassment;
- d) Sexually explicit gestures or content;
- e) Displaying or sharing pornography;
- f) Any single or repeated behaviour of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or academic environment.

**vii. Third Party:**

Any individual who is not a member of the VSNPS community but is present on the campus or associated in any capacity with VSNPS activities.

**viii. Staff or Employee of VSNPS:**

Refers to all individuals employed by VSNPS, including **administrative staff, full-time and part-time faculty, temporary, contractual or casual staff, researchers, trainees, and consultants**.

**1. Prohibition of Sexual Harassment**

All forms of sexual harassment at the workplace are **strictly prohibited** and shall be dealt with in accordance with the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**, the **UGC Regulations (2015)**, and this Policy.

**2. Constitution of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)**

The principal shall constitute, **through a formal written order**, a body known as the **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** to address complaints of sexual harassment.

**i. Composition of the ICC:**

The members of the ICC shall be nominated by the Principal and shall include:

- a) A **Presiding Officer (Chairperson)**, who shall be a **senior woman faculty member**.
- b) **Two faculty members** with experience or legal knowledge relevant to sexual harassment issues.
- c) **Two non-teaching staff members** with similar expertise or awareness of such issues.
- d) **One or two external members** from government, semi-government, or reputed non-governmental organizations who have experience in gender issues or sexual harassment matters.
- e) **Three student representatives** – **two from undergraduate programs** and **one from postgraduate programs**.

**ii. Conditional Modifications:**





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- In cases where the **complaint is against a faculty member, non-teaching staff and student representatives** will **not** participate in the inquiry.
- If the **complaint involves a non-teaching staff member, student representatives** will be excluded from the inquiry process.
- An **additional faculty member** may be nominated by the Principal, **if deemed necessary**.

### iii. Gender Representation:

At least **50% of the ICC members shall be women**, ensuring balanced representation and sensitivity.

*Note: The Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) is also referred to as the **Internal Committee** as per the amendment made by the II Schedule to the Repealing and Amending Act, 2016.*

### 3. Who Can File a Complaint

Any individual—**whether a member of the VSNPS community or a visitor**—may file a **written complaint** of sexual harassment at the workplace to the ICC, using the prescribed format (Annexure - A).

If the complainant is **unable to submit the complaint in writing** for any reason, the ICC may permit **another person to file it on their behalf**, provided the Committee finds it **reasonable and appropriate**.

### 4. Filing of Complaint

1. The complainant (or aggrieved person) should file a complaint **in writing or via email** to the **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)**, using the prescribed format, **as early as possible and within three months** from the date of the incident. In case of a **series of incidents**, the complaint must be filed within **three months of the last incident**.
  - The ICC may extend this time limit by **up to three additional months, if it records valid reasons in writing**.
2. The complaint can be submitted:
  - By hand or post to the **Presiding Officer/Chairperson of ICC**
  - Visit [www.vedantasnps.com](http://www.vedantasnps.com) Or via email at [icc@vedantasnps.com](mailto:icc@vedantasnps.com)
3. If the complaint is submitted electronically, a **signed hard copy** must be submitted to the ICC office **within 7 working days**.
4. The ICC shall provide **necessary assistance** to the complainant to help them file the complaint in writing, if they are unable to do so themselves.





5. The complaint should be **specific**, clearly stating the nature of the incident(s) and, if possible, include **a list of witnesses**.
6. Before starting the formal inquiry process, the ICC may, **at the request of the complainant**, take steps toward **conciliation** to resolve the matter.
  - **However, no monetary settlement** shall be considered as the basis of such a resolution.

## **5. Inquiry into the Complaint**

1. Once the complaint is received, the ICC will issue a **formal notice** to the respondent **within 7 working days**, enclosing a **copy of the complaint**.
2. The respondent is required to submit a **written reply**, along with **a list of witnesses (if any)**, **within 10 working days** from the date of receiving the notice.
3. During this time, the complainant may be called for a hearing, where their **handwritten statement** will be formally recorded by the ICC.
4. After receiving the respondent's reply, the ICC shall provide a **copy of the same to the complainant** within **5 working days**.
5. The inquiry will be conducted with full **fairness and impartiality**, following the **principles of natural justice**.
6. To ensure **confidentiality and decorum**, the ICC may instruct all parties and witnesses to **avoid carrying mobile phones or recording devices** during depositions.
7. If the complainant requests, the ICC may attempt a **conciliation process** before continuing with the inquiry.
8. The ICC shall take care that **no party feels intimidated** during the proceedings. If face-to-face interaction is required, it will only be done with the **consent of the complainant**.
9. The ICC may call upon **any individual as a witness**, and ask questions necessary for the inquiry. Statements may be taken **on oath**, where required.
10. If either the complainant or the respondent requests to **cross-examine a witness**, the ICC will facilitate this appropriately and record the statements.
11. **No documents or statements** will be shared with anyone other than the parties involved, to **maintain strict confidentiality**.
12. All inquiry-related **notes, statements, and documents** will be kept **confidential** and accessible only to ICC members during meetings, solely for the purpose of the inquiry.





13. All proceedings conducted by the ICC shall be **recorded in writing**. The statements of witnesses and minutes of each session shall be **signed and authenticated** by those present, including ICC members and the individuals involved.
14. As far as possible, the **minutes of each meeting** should be prepared and authenticated **on the same day**. In exceptional cases, they may be finalized **by the next working day** and signed via **hard or soft copy** as per the availability of members.
15. ICC members may take **written notes** while listening to the statements of parties or witnesses to ensure accurate documentation.
16. After completing the inquiry, the ICC shall prepare a **detailed report** outlining its findings and reasons, and submit it to the **Principal** for further action.
17. If the ICC concludes that the respondent is **guilty of sexual harassment**, it will recommend **appropriate disciplinary or remedial action**.
18. Once the report is finalized, it shall be shared with the **Principal**, and **copies of the findings** shall be provided to **both the complainant and the respondent**.
19. If the respondent is a member of the **VSNPS community**, action will be taken in accordance with the applicable **service rules or institutional regulations**.
20. The ICC must exercise **utmost care** while handling complaints of sexual harassment. The complainant should be offered **supportive conditions** that help build trust and confidence. All hearings shall be conducted **in camera** (privately).
21. Both parties are expected to submit **handwritten statements** during the hearing. If any party is unable to write or read, the ICC will offer **appropriate assistance**, ensuring that **confidentiality** is maintained at all times.
22. Care must be taken to **prevent any form of victimization** or disadvantage to either the complainant or the respondent during or after the proceedings.
23. The ICC must ensure that **no witness or complainant is harassed, threatened, or discriminated against** during or after the inquiry process.
24. The **identity of both the complainant and the respondent** must be kept **strictly confidential** throughout and after the inquiry.
25. If either party (complainant or respondent) is **absent without reason** for **three consecutive hearings**, the ICC may **terminate the inquiry** or proceed with an **ex-parte decision** (in the absence of the party), provided a **15-day written notice** has been served in advance.
26. The entire inquiry process should be **completed within 90 days** from the date of receipt of the complaint. The ICC shall submit its **final report within 10 days** after conclusion. Based on this, the **Principal/employer** must initiate necessary action within **60 days**.





27. In cases where a **settlement** is reached, copies of the settlement shall be given to **both the complainant and the respondent** for their records.

28. Where a **conciliation-based settlement** has been reached at the request of the complainant, the ICC shall **record and forward the terms of settlement** to the Principal/employer for necessary action as per the recommendations.

## **6. Interim Relief**

During the course of the inquiry, if the **complainant makes a written request**, the ICC may recommend to the Principal that **appropriate interim relief** be granted. This may include, but is not limited to, temporary changes in the complainant's work or class arrangements to ensure safety and comfort.

Once the recommended interim relief has been implemented, the **Principal shall inform the ICC** in writing about the action taken.

## **7. Initiation of Action**

Upon receiving the final **inquiry report** from the ICC, the **Principal shall act upon the recommendations** as per the findings and implement the decision without undue delay.

## **8. Appeals**

1. Once the ICC has submitted its **final report**, it becomes **functus officio**, meaning it has **no further role** in the matter and will not entertain any further communication from the complainant, respondent, or witnesses regarding that case.
2. If either party is **dissatisfied with the ICC's decision**, they may file an appeal. The **Appeals Committee** shall consist of:
  - The Principal
  - One senior faculty member
  - One external member (independent and impartial)
3. An **appeal must be filed within 90 days** from the date of receiving the ICC's decision.
4. If the appeal is filed **after the 90-day period**, the Appeals Committee may still consider it, **provided the delay is explained and justified** in writing to the Committee's satisfaction.

## **9. Confidentiality of Proceedings**

1. The ICC and the Institution are **duty-bound to maintain confidentiality** regarding the identity of the complainant, respondent, and all parties involved.
2. If any ICC member is a **witness, or related to either party**, they must **recuse themselves** from the proceedings to ensure neutrality and integrity.





3. The **identity of the parties, witnesses, ICC proceedings, recommendations, and actions taken** shall **not be disclosed or published** in any manner, including the press, media, or public domain. These details are **not subject to the Right to Information Act, 2005**.
4. **No legal representatives or advocates** are permitted to appear before the ICC on behalf of either party. The inquiry is intended to be a **confidential and non-adversarial process**.
5. Only the **final report of the ICC or the decision of the Appeals Committee** may be disclosed, if required. **All other discussions and documents** shall remain strictly confidential.

#### **10. Obligations of the Institution / Duties of the Employer**

To ensure fair, smooth, and effective implementation of this policy, the Institution shall:

1. **Promptly forward all complaints** of sexual harassment to the ICC without delay.
2. **Provide the ICC** with necessary resources such as office space, computers, secretarial support, and any other assistance required to **conduct inquiries smoothly and efficiently**.
3. **Facilitate access** to professional **counselling or medical services** for the complainant, if such support is required.
4. Offer an **honorarium and travel allowance** to the **external ICC member(s)** in recognition of their time and contribution during meetings.
5. **Monitor and ensure timely submission** of reports by the ICC to uphold accountability and prevent procedural delays.

#### **11. Considerations While Preparing the Inquiry Report**

While preparing the **findings and recommendations**, the ICC shall keep the following points in mind to ensure fairness and objectivity:

- a) Whether the **language (spoken or written), images, gestures, or physical behaviour** alleged by the complainant were of a **sexually inappropriate nature**.
- b) Whether the **allegations are supported by logical reasoning and credible evidence** available during the inquiry.
- c) The **credibility, consistency, and reliability** of the statements made by the complainant, the respondent, and witnesses, along with the corroborating documents or materials.
- d) **Any other relevant details**, such as a known history or prior incidents involving either the complainant or respondent that could impact the context of the case.
- e) Both the complainant and respondent **must be given a fair opportunity to be heard** during the inquiry process.





f) A **copy of all statements** and relevant documents should be made available to both parties, ensuring that they have the chance to **respond or make representations** before the final decision is taken.

## **12. Punishments for Members of the VSNPS Community**

If the ICC concludes that an act of **sexual harassment** has taken place, it may recommend **one or more of the following actions** based on the **severity and circumstances** of the case. These actions will be documented in the **respondent's permanent academic or service record**, as applicable.

### **A. In Case of Students**

Based on the gravity of the violation, one or more of the following actions may be taken:

1. Verbal or written **warning, reprimand, or censure**
2. **Withholding privileges**, such as access to the library, transportation, scholarships, identity card, etc.
3. **Cancellation of hall ticket** for an upcoming examination
4. **Temporary suspension** from the Institution or restricted entry for a specified time
5. **Expulsion** from the Institution
6. **Denial of readmission**, in cases of serious misconduct
7. A **written public apology**
8. **Debarment from representing** the Institution in any academic, cultural, sports, or exchange programs
9. **Mandatory counselling** sessions
10. **Compulsory attendance** in a gender-sensitization workshop
11. **Community service** assigned by the Institution
12. **Disqualification from holding positions** of responsibility within student committees
13. **Any other disciplinary measure** recommended by the Principal, depending on the situation

### **B. In Case of Employees**

If the respondent is a **staff or faculty member**, and the offence is proven, or in the rare case that the complaint is found to be **frivolous or malicious**, the following actions may be taken in accordance with **service rules**, institutional policy, and applicable laws:

1. **Censure, reprimand, or written warning**
2. Requirement to submit a **written apology**





3. **Withholding of increment or deferral of promotion** for a specified period
4. **Suspension** from duties
5. **Termination** of employment
6. **Any other disciplinary action** permitted under the service rules, relevant Acts, or UGC Regulations

### **C. Penalties for Third Parties**

In cases where an individual **not belonging to the VSNPS community** (i.e., a third party such as a visitor, vendor, or external participant) is found guilty of sexual harassment, the ICC may recommend **one or more of the following penalties**, depending on the severity of the offence:

1. **Denial of access** to the VSNPS campus, either temporarily or permanently.
2. **Revocation of any certificate, reward, or recognition** received for participation in VSNPS-organised conferences, seminars, programmes, or competitions.
3. Issuance of a **formal warning or written reprimand**.
4. **Any other action** deemed appropriate as per VSNPS policies and applicable rules.

Additionally, the ICC shall notify the **employer or institution** of the third party, informing them of the complaint, inquiry, and the penalty recommended or imposed.

### **13. Annual Reports**

The ICC shall prepare an **Annual Report** that documents:

- The number of complaints received during the year,
- The status and outcome of each case, and
- Any steps taken to promote awareness and sensitization on the issue of sexual harassment.

This report shall be submitted to the **Principal of VSNPS** by the end of each academic year.

### **14. False, Frivolous, or Vexatious Complaints**

While the ICC strives to provide a safe and fair platform for all complainants, it also recognizes the importance of protecting individuals from misuse of the process.

- If, upon thorough inquiry, a complaint is found to be **deliberately false, malicious, or intended to harass the respondent**, the ICC may recommend to the Principal that **strict disciplinary action** be taken against the complainant.
- However, **inability to substantiate a complaint or provide adequate evidence** will not automatically amount to a false complaint unless it is proven that the intent was malicious.





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- In cases where the ICC concludes that the allegations **could not be proven**, it may recommend that **no action** be taken against the respondent.

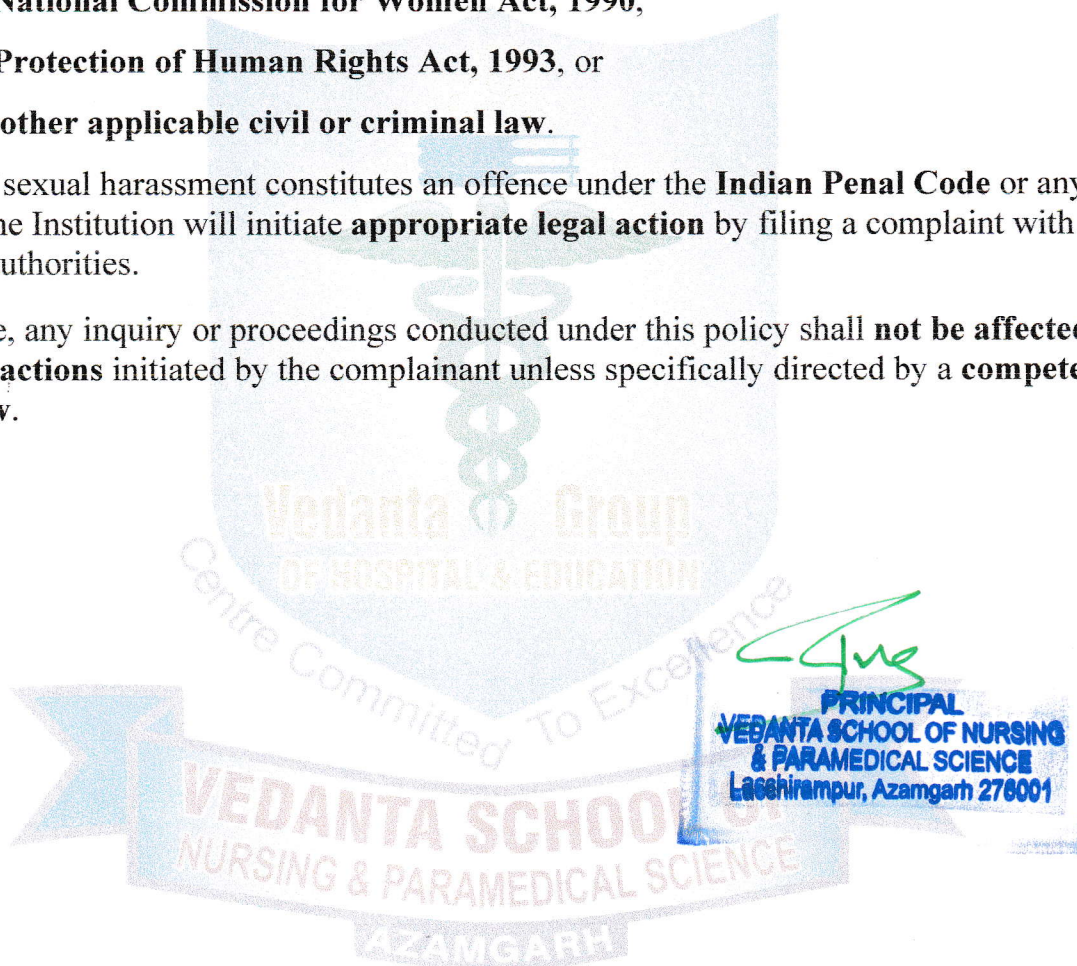
### 15. Saving Clause

This policy does **not restrict or override** any legal rights available to individuals under the law. All employees, students, and third parties retain their **right to seek legal redress** under:

- The **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**,
- The **National Commission for Women Act, 1990**,
- The **Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**, or
- **Any other applicable civil or criminal law**.

If the act of sexual harassment constitutes an offence under the **Indian Penal Code** or any other law, the Institution will initiate **appropriate legal action** by filing a complaint with the concerned authorities.

Furthermore, any inquiry or proceedings conducted under this policy shall **not be affected by other legal actions** initiated by the complainant unless specifically directed by a **competent court of law**.





## ANNEXURE - A FORMAT OF THE COMPLAINT

*Handwritten or detailed email including the details required as per the format below is also sufficient for the ICC to take cognizance of an issue.*

### Complaint Form: Sexual Harassment Incident

<b>Complainant Details:</b>	
Name	
Job Title/Position:	
Contact Information (Address, Mobile, Email):	
Employer's Name:	
Employer's Position:	
<b>Incident Details:</b>	
Date & Time of Incident:	
Brief Description of Incident(s):	
<b>Respondent Information:</b>	
Name:	
Relationship to Complainant:	
Position/Title:	
Employer's Name (if different):	
<b>Witnesses (if any):</b>	
Name(s):	
Contact Information:	
Relationship to Incident:	
<b>Previous Grievances/Incidents (if any):</b>	
Details:	
<b>Timeliness of Complaint:</b>	
Was the complaint filed within 3 months of the incident? (Yes/No)	
If not, reasons:	
<b>Mode of Filing Complaint:</b>	
Handwritten/Typed	
Hand-delivered/Mailed	