Respect at IDS Policy

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Policy Statement

The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment where every member of our community feels welcome, respected and valued.

Our values are Respectfulness, Inclusivity, Excellence and Resourcefulness. Being respectful and inclusive are essential elements in how we work, as well as contributing to our global impact and outcomes as an Institute.

We believe that if we are to be successful, we need to 'walk the talk' when it comes to inclusion and respect. Every member of our community has a role to play in co-creating a working environment where dignity, fairness, and empathy are the norm. We expect all members of our community to uphold our values by treating each other with respect, taking accountability for our behaviour and impact on others, building positive relationships with anyone who is part of the IDS community, and creating a culture of mutual trust and support.

We collectively shape the culture at IDS. We all need to be accountable, self-aware of our behaviours and on our impact on others and committed to building and maintaining positive relationships with anyone who is part of the IDS community.

IDS adheres to its legal responsibilities under the UK Equality Act 2010. IDS does not tolerate discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation. If such behaviours occur, IDS is committed to ensuring all members of our community feel safe and supported to challenge, report, and resolve them.

Our approach is person-centred and restorative. Concerns around behaviours that fall short of our values will be taken seriously and, wherever possible, resolved through early and constructive dialogue. This may involve facilitated conversations, mediation, coaching, mentoring, team facilitation or team building, and, where needed, formal investigation.

Behaviours that contravene this policy could be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, or termination of contract for partners and third parties.

Where IDS students are involved, procedures will usually be led by the University of Sussex, and addressed under the Student Discipline Regulations. Where a student's behaviour is being investigated, the Student Discipline Procedures will be followed and, in very serious cases, this can result in suspension or expulsion from the university.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to:

- Outline IDS's approach to creating and sustaining a respectful and inclusive culture.
- Outline IDS's expectations around standards of behaviour (underpinned by our shared Principles of Respect).
- Provide an overview of key definitions.

- Clarify how an individual can challenge and address any discrimination, bullying, harassment or disrespectful behaviour that they have experienced or witnessed in association with IDS or its work.
- Explain what support and routes to resolution are available.
- Clarify the actions that will be taken by IDS should any member of our community not uphold this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of IDS's community, including staff on all types of employment contracts, students, partners, trustees, research participants, consultants, and third parties that have a relationship with IDS.

IDS's expectations around respect and inclusion apply both in our role as an employer, learning provider, and in our consultancy and partnerships. This is relevant in the IDS building, in online interactions, in social events, and in the settings we work in around the world.

Our approach

IDS has developed this policy and its approach around respect following an independent Equity and Inclusion Review which resulted in a number of actions and recommendations. It also follows an extensive period of ongoing engagement with staff (including student-focused staff), IDS's Board of Trustees, IDS's Strategic Leadership Group, IDS's Trade Union representatives (UCU and Unison), and external consultants.

As part of this engagement, colleagues shared what is important to them in their working relationships at IDS and the culture they want to work in. This helped shape this policy and our shared 'Principles of Respect'. These guiding principles are designed to support the IDS community to be clear on the behaviours IDS's staff, students and the wider IDS community.

Our principles of respect are outlined below, with examples of what these principles look like in practice.

Our Principles of Respect

When we treat each other with respect we live by the following principles:

Listening

What does this look like in practice?

- Actively listening and seeking to understand different perspectives to enable effective collaboration.
- Treating others with dignity and understanding so people feel heard.
- Understanding how and when to moderate our voice and when to support others to use their voice.
- Showing people that their voice matters both in our words and actions.

- Supporting people to contribute meaningfully.

Inclusion and allyship

What does this look like in practice?

- Acting with integrity and positive intent.
- Role modelling behaviours that make people feel included, valued and supported.
- Being self-aware - recognising our own power and privilege in a space and considering how we can be an ally to others.
- Valuing and respecting the differences between people.
- Recognising our audience and using accessible and inclusive language.
- Recognising, challenging, or reporting any discrimination, bullying and harassment that we experience or witness and supporting others to do the same.

Empathy and appreciation

What does this look like in practice?

- Considering the needs, opinions and feelings of others before acting.
- Having empathy for other people's challenges and thoughtfulness about how our actions will affect other people.
- Appreciating people and respecting their abilities, skills and time.
- Recognising people's professional knowledge, integrity and judgement.
- Saying thank you and recognising and celebrating people's achievements.
- Contributing to an environment where people feel safe, can build positive working relationships, and work effectively.

Respectfully challenging

What does this look like in practice?

- Calling out behaviour that does not align with our principles of respect.
- Being constructive by sharing and acknowledging different perspectives and alternative solutions.
- If discussing an issue or idea, challenge the idea without attacking the person.
- Avoiding generalisations and assumptions.
- Disagreeing respectfully - being kind and considerate even if you disagree.

Repairing and resolving

What does this look like in practice?

- Being open to receiving feedback about our behaviour.
- Taking accountability and apologising for our behaviour if we behave in a way that disrespects or upsets someone.
- Speaking directly with a person or team to try to repair and resolve issues.
- Working together to come up with shared solutions to challenges and developing reasonable timelines for interdependent work.

Your responsibilities in relation to this policy

Board of Trustees

- Provide governance and oversight of this policy and related policies (e.g. IDS's Safeguarding policy and Grievance procedure).
- Ensure IDS maintains a culture of respect at inclusion through appropriate risk management, oversight and leadership.
- Model inclusive and respectful behaviours and uphold IDS values in all governance and advisory contexts.

Strategic Leadership Group (SLG)

- Model inclusive and respectful behaviours, leading by example.
- Behave in ways that align with IDS's principles of respect and expectations.
- Champion, support and monitor the implementation and adherence of this policy.
- Ensure robust systems are in place for addressing concerns promptly and proportionately.
- Take accountability for addressing concerns and issues that emerge at IDS pertaining to this policy (and related processes) and support with action as appropriate.

Managers and Cluster Leaders

- Model inclusive and respectful behaviours and ensure a psychologically safe culture within their team or cluster.
- Promote awareness of this and related policies within teams or clusters, and encourage early, informal resolution of concerns where appropriate.
- Address issues promptly (in a team / cluster where appropriate in the first instance) and/or seek to resolve issues using the relevant procedure.

Staff

- Read and adhere to the expectations in this policy.
- Behave in ways that align with IDS's principles of respect.
- Raise concerns early, constructively, and in good faith.

- Communicate any issues related to this policy with appropriate colleagues at IDS so that they can be reviewed and resolved.
- Engage with any learning and development opportunities (including mandatory training) associated with this policy in good faith and follow any associated policies and procedures.

Students

- Read and adhere to the expectations in this policy.
- Behave in ways that align with IDS's principles of respect.
- Abide by the [University of Sussex's Student Discipline Regulations](#), the [University of Sussex's Dignity, Respect and Inclusion policy](#), as well as any other associated University of Sussex policy.
- Engage with IDS's shared culture of respect and contribute to a positive learning environment.

Partners

- Commit to being part of a respectful partnership, free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and any form of disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour.
- Communicate any issues related to this policy or any [safeguarding issues](#) directly with IDS so that they can be investigated and resolved.

Visitors and third parties

- Contribute to a respectful environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and any form of disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour.
- Communicate any issues related to this policy directly with IDS so that they can be investigated and resolved.

Expectations

IDS does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment and third-party harassment), bullying or inappropriate behaviour. This includes behaviour which goes against IDS's values, harms someone's wellbeing, or creates an unsafe environment for another person within the IDS community.

IDS has the following expectations of all members of IDS's community:

- Treat all members of the IDS community with dignity and respect, building positive working relationships grounded in positive assumptions about others' intentions.
- Recognise the right of staff, students, trustees, and visitors to hold opposing opinions and share ideas, so long as they respect IDS's values and do not break the law.
- Seek to express views in a way that does not create an environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating to others.
- Identify and challenge inappropriate behaviour (including if the behaviour happens to someone else).

- Role model inclusive and respectful behaviours.
- Be accountable for the impact of our behaviour and be open to feedback when actions for short of IDS's values and expectations.
- Raise and respond to concerns constructively, seeking early resolution wherever possible and committing to a resolution process wherever it is felt safe to do so.

Consequences of inappropriate behaviour

Bullying, harassment, discrimination and / or victimisation hinder the development of a positive and inclusive culture and environment and can negatively impact the affected person's self-worth, productivity, and wellbeing.

The Institute will take allegations of these behaviours seriously and will take the necessary action appropriate to the situation, while providing support to all parties involved. Where IDS students are involved, procedures will usually be led by the University of Sussex, and dealt with under the Student Discipline Regulations.

IDS advocates taking early resolution approaches to resolution in the first instance (e.g. facilitated restorative conversations, mediation, or coaching) if this is appropriate. If the concern cannot be resolved through local or early resolution approaches, or the issue is sufficiently serious that such approaches are not appropriate, IDS will undertake a formal process, under the Grievance procedure.

If behaviours that contravene this policy are found to have taken place, it could be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. In cases involving students, the University of Sussex Student Discipline procedures will be followed and, in very serious cases, this can result in suspension or expulsion from the university.

Our legal obligations

As a UK-based organisation with an international reach, IDS acts within the legal framework of the UK Equality Act 2010, whilst recognising the differences in what is legally or culturally unacceptable in international contexts.

As part of our duties under the Act we will take appropriate action to support colleagues who experience unlawful discriminatory behaviours, sexual harassment, or harassment based on 'protected characteristics'.

'Protected characteristics' include age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act, employers are required to take reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation of employees on any type of contract. The UK's Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) outlines that by law, all employers must:

- Make sure they do not unfairly discriminate in any aspect of work
- Take steps to prevent discrimination
- Do all they reasonably can to protect people from discrimination by others

- Look after the wellbeing of their employees (this is called a 'duty of care')

In addition, IDS has legal obligations under the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023. This is a law that came into effect on 26 October 2024 that requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

Charities must also adhere to a specific legal and regulatory framework concerning safeguarding under The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This legislation outlines the responsibilities of organisations, including charities, to protect vulnerable individuals from harm.

Though this policy is underpinned by the legal framework above, we believe in commitment beyond compliance. This means going beyond our legal obligations and taking a person-centred and intersectional approach (not just focused on the protected characteristics defined by law) that also factors in the wider context and power imbalances.

The legal terms used above are defined in more detail below.

Definitions

Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of a 'protected characteristic' as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Types of discrimination can include:

- **Direct discrimination** – this can occur when a decision, behaviour, rule or policy directly treats someone less favourably or disadvantages someone because of their particular characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** - can occur where a rule or policy that applies to everyone equally but disadvantages someone (or a group) with a particular protected characteristic. However, it may not be discrimination if it can be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Discrimination by association** - is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.
- **Discrimination by perception** - is direct discrimination against a person because of an assumption that the person has a particular protected characteristic (this can happen even if the person does not have or share that protected characteristic).

Harassment

The Equality Act defines harassment as: 'Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the complainant or violating the complainant's dignity'.

Examples of harassment could include (but are not limited to) spoken or written words, abuse on the grounds of a protected characteristic (e.g. racist or sexist abuse), mimicry or jokes that humiliate a person based on their identity, unwanted or degrading

behaviour (e.g. intentionally and repeatedly misgendering a trans or non-binary person), creating a hostile environment for someone because of their identity (e.g. ignoring a colleague because they are gay or excluding a disabled person from a work activity).

Harassment may be a persistent or an isolated incident. Employers are potentially liable for harassment of their staff by people they don't employ (third parties).

Third-party harassment

Third-party harassment at work refers to any sort of harassment towards an employee instigated by someone outside of the workplace. For example, harassment towards an employee by a customer, client, supplier, or contractor. These third parties are not employed by the same organisation as the employee but regularly come into contact with them through their course of work.

While there is no specific protection against third party harassment under the Act, employers should still take reasonable steps to prevent third-party harassment. Employers who do not take reasonable steps to prevent or respond to third party harassment may be liable under other sections of the Act or other legislation (e.g. the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974).

Abuse of power

Abuse of power is where someone uses their position, which can present an implied power imbalance, or authority in an unacceptable manner. Abuse of power can take various forms and may include, but is not limited to, belittling, intimidation, grooming, manipulation, coercion, punishment, or putting pressure on others to engage in conduct they do not feel comfortable with. It could also take the form of excluding people from work or research activities.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of either violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or less favourable treatment as a result of the submission to or rejection of harassment.

In a case of sexual harassment, aggravating factors such as abuse of power, for example if a concern is raised by a more junior colleague about someone in a senior position, should be taken into account in deciding what action will be taken.

Bullying

Although there is no legal definition of bullying, ACAS describes bullying as unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting. It can be an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone.

The bullying might:

- Be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident.

- Happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or calls.
- Happen at work or in other work-related situations and not always be obvious or noticed by others.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance related to discrimination, bullying or harassment; or because they are suspected of doing so.

An employee is not legally protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint (see vexatious complaints below).

Other forms of disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour

There is no absolute definition of disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour as it is often the effect and impact the behaviour has on the recipient or community that can determine this.

However, inappropriate behaviour in relation to this policy might be behaviour which goes against IDS's values, seeks to diminish or belittle someone's contribution, harms someone's wellbeing, or creates an unsafe environment for another person within our community.

Impact of these behaviours

Disrespectful behaviour including discrimination, bullying, and harassment (including sexual harassment) can have a significant impact on individuals and on the wider IDS community.

People who experience these behaviours may feel isolated, anxious, or unsafe, and may be reluctant to speak up due to fear of reprisal or not being believed. Even witnessing such behaviour can be distressing and impact wellbeing.

At an organisational level, these behaviours can lead to poor morale and poor employee relations, loss of respect for leaders and managers, poor performance, lost productivity, absence, resignations, damage to an organisation's reputation, or legal and financial implications.

By addressing concerns early and constructively, we aim to reduce harm and support a culture of respect, accountability and psychological safety.

What should I do if I experience or witness discrimination, bullying, harassment or inappropriate / disrespectful behaviour?

If you are a staff member at IDS

If you experience or witness discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour, there are a number of channels and approaches that you can use to report and address the issue, including local resolution, IDS's online platform - Report + Support, and by

submitting a [Request for Resolution](#) to [resolution@ids.ac.uk](#) . This email inbox is monitored daily by a designated HR Advisor.

Local resolution

IDS is committed to resolving concerns in a way that feels proportionate, respectful and safe for all parties.

If you are a member of staff at IDS on any kind of contract and you experience discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour, you should feel confident and empowered to challenge the behaviour in the moment.

Challenging a behaviour can come in different forms and does not need to be combative. It may be simply speaking to the individual(s) involved and letting them know how the behaviour made you feel and that it is not acceptable. You may prefer to have a conversation with the individual(s) at a later point.

If you do not feel safe or comfortable taking this approach, you can raise the issue with your manager, cluster leader, or a more senior manager if the concern is related to your manager or cluster leader.

It might be helpful to make a note of incident(s) as they occur with date(s) and time(s) so you can remember details when you discuss it with your manager or cluster leader.

Central support for resolution

If you would like support from IDS to address and resolve your concern you can [contact an HR Advisor](#) directly for support. They will discuss the issue with you, offer support, and ask you to complete a [Request for Resolution](#) form.

If you are not ready to do this, or if you would like to make an anonymous report, you can share your concerns via [Report + Support.](#)

If using [Report + Support](#), you can either share your concerns anonymously or provide your contact details for a response. Please note that IDS can only follow up with you to provide tailored support, and work with you to resolve the issue if you give your contact details.

There is a 'two-way messaging' feature within [Report + Support](#) for anonymous reporting. This allows users of the platform to opt-in to message within the platform to a Responder (who will also be anonymous). This will offer you the opportunity of further support and guidance beyond the initial report to share your concerns, maintaining your anonymity. Further details about this feature are available in the [FAQs in this support article](#).

If you share your contact details on [Report + Support](#), you will be offered an informal conversation with one of IDS's [Respect Responders or HR Advisors](#) (depending on your choice within the platform) who will offer you support, talk to you about how IDS's resolution processes work and explain the different resolution pathways that could be available to you. You can then decide if you would like to proceed.

Please note that many of our Respect Responders are also Mental Health First Aiders, and both Respect Responders and HR Advisors are fully trained in responding to reports of gender-based violence and taking an anti-oppressive and trauma-informed approaches.

Routes to resolution

IDS advocates for a person-centred approach to resolution. This means taking what you share seriously and working with you to ensure issues are addressed and resolved in a way that is fair, proportionate, and appropriate to the circumstances.

A wide range of resolution pathways are available depending on the nature of the concern. These may include facilitated restorative conversations, mediation with an external mediator, conflict coaching, mentoring, team facilitation or team-building sessions, or more formal methods such as investigation.

To help determine the most appropriate route, IDS uses a structured triage tool, the IDS Resolution Index. This considers factors such as duration and/or frequency of the concern, severity of the issue, previous attempts to resolve the concern, the impact on individuals and organisation, the needs of all parties involved, and the level of risk to IDS or its people. This process allows us to make a fair and objective recommendation about the best starting point for resolution.

We recognise that if you experience an issue with another colleague, you may simply want the behaviour to stop rather than wanting formal action to be taken. This is where early resolution pathways like mediation can be useful to help things get back on track.

Mediation can be especially effective as it creates a safe space for all perspectives to be heard and supports the development of a mutual plan to move forward. IDS uses external mediators to ensure that participants in the process feel safe, supported, and that the process is impartial.

No matter which resolution process is used, all steps will be taken to ensure that colleagues involved feel supported throughout, and every effort will be made to ensure the concern is resolved in a way that feels meaningful and appropriate.

IDS's Resolution Index is designed so that if the issue scores highly on any of the criteria (e.g. is very serious or is high risk) a formal investigation will be undertaken.

Formal investigations

If your concern cannot be resolved through local or early resolution approaches, or the issue is sufficiently serious that informal approaches are not appropriate (based on an assessment using IDS's Resolution Index), IDS will undertake a formal investigation, under the Grievance procedure.

Witnessing discrimination, bullying, harassment or disrespectful behaviours

If you witness someone experiencing discrimination, bullying, harassment, or any kind of disrespectful behaviour, and if you feel it's safe to do so, you might step in and try to stop the behaviour in the moment. You should also approach the person experiencing

the behaviour and see what they need. This might simply mean listening or asking if they are okay. You can help by encouraging them to seek advice or report the concern if they feel comfortable doing so or offering to do so yourself.

You might also talk with someone else, such as a trusted colleague, your manager, cluster leader, HR Advisor or Respect Responder to get advice and support about what to do. If you're unsure whether to report something yourself, they can help you consider the options and how to proceed in a way that aligns with the other person's wishes.

It can often be helpful to make a note of what happened, with the date(s) and time(s) and people present, in case you need to refer to it later.

If you find that witnessing or being involved in a situation has caused you distress, you can also raise concerns of harassment on behalf of yourself if you have been personally affected. Support is also available for you – please see the support section below.

Raising concerns about students, partners, visitors and third parties

We support staff in raising concerns about any member of the IDS community in line with this policy. This includes students, partners, trustees, visitors, and third parties.

In the first instance, you could discuss the issue with your manager or cluster leader, or share your concerns via Report + Support.

If using Report + Support, and if you choose to share your contact details in doing so. Your concerns will be addressed via the appropriate channel depending on the nature of your complaint. This could be via the student complaints procedure, security team, via the Head of Contracts and Compliance in relation to partnership contractual arrangements, or via the Grievance procedure.

Raising concerns about a member of IDS's Strategic Leadership Group or a Board Trustee

If you wish to share a concern related to a member of IDS's Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) or a Trustee of the Board we encourage you to discuss it with your manager or a senior manager, the Director of HR, or share your concerns on Report + Support.

However, if you do not feel comfortable raising your concerns via these routes you can contact our Respect Champion on the Board, Mike Bellamy.

 Please find his contact details below:

- Mike Bellamy – Respect Champion on the Board – Email address: m.bellamy@ids.ac.uk

The Respect Champion will consider whether the complaint would be most appropriately investigated internally or by an external third party or by a combination thereof, supported by IDS's Resolution Index.

Safeguarding

IDS has a separate policy on safeguarding the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm. IDS has zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse, intimidation, bullying or harassment, or other exploitation or abuse of power, particularly of vulnerable people.

Staff should flag any safeguarding concerns immediately with IDS in line with the safeguarding policy.

If you are a manager or cluster leader at IDS

If you are a manager or cluster leader, and a staff member in your team or cluster has raised an issue with you pertaining to discrimination, bullying, harassment or disrespectful behaviour, we encourage you to listen without judgement and focus on offering support. Your colleague's wellbeing is the priority first and foremost.

You can then follow the steps outlined for staff above.

If you need further support, you can contact an HR Advisor to discuss the available options, or for advice and guidance in relation to this policy.

If you are a student at IDS

If you are a student, we encourage you to share your concerns via Report + Support. If using IDS's Report + Support, you will be signposted through to the University of Sussex's Report + Support platform.

When using Report + Support you can either share your concerns anonymously or choose to include your contact details for follow-up. Please note that the University of Sussex can only follow up with you, provide tailored support, and work with you to resolve the issue if you share your contact details.

You can also feedback your concerns via University of Sussex's Student Complaints procedure - OSCAR

If you are a partner, visitor or third party

If you are a partner, visitor, or third party working with or visiting IDS, and would like to report any concerns related to this policy or make a complaint about something you have witnessed or experienced whilst working with or visiting IDS, you can share your concerns via IDS's Report + Support platform or directly use IDS's Complaints procedure.

If using Report + Support, you can either share your concerns anonymously or choose to include your contact details for follow-up. Please note that we can only follow up with you, provide tailored support, and work with you to resolve the issue if you share your contact details.

Your feedback will be directed to and addressed by the appropriate department at IDS.

Reporting a serious assault or incident of sexual violence

If you witness or experience a serious incident, including sexual violence or any behaviour that makes you feel unsafe, **call 999** or seek help immediately.

You do not need to be certain that a crime has taken place or wait until something escalates further.

If an emergency happens on campus, **call the Security Team via 01273 873333**. They can also help direct emergency services on campus.

Emergency services are there to support people in moments of fear, confusion or risk—not just in the most extreme circumstances. It's better to make a call and find out it wasn't needed than to stay silent and hope a situation will pass.

We also recognise that under-reporting is common, particularly in cases involving sexual violence or abuse of power. You will be listened to and taken seriously. If you're not ready to speak formally, you can still reach out for support or share your concerns anonymously.

If you are working internationally, many countries use the **global emergency number 112**. We recommend you familiarise yourself with the emergency numbers when preparing to undertake work or visits internationally.

Once immediate danger has passed, we strongly encourage you to report the incident via the channels offered above, especially if it involves someone connected to the IDS community. This allows IDS colleagues to take steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of others, offer support to all those affected, and respond appropriately within our organisational remit.

IDS will handle such reports sensitively, confidentially, and in accordance with our safeguarding, respect and resolution procedures. In certain cases, IDS may also have a duty of care to act—for example, if there is an imminent risk of harm, or if a vulnerable person is involved.

We understand that deciding whether to report a serious incident can be difficult, and you don't have to make that decision alone. Staff are welcome to speak confidentially with a Respect Responder, HR Advisor, or access support via IDS's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), without pressure or judgment. Whatever you choose, support is available.

Whistleblowing

If you wish to report concerns about IDS or its people, exposing malpractice or other similar matters, then you should follow the process set out in IDS's Whistleblowing policy.

Vexatious complaints

IDS takes the issue of discrimination, bullying and harassment (including sexual harassment) seriously, and we encourage you to raise concerns without fear of recrimination or reprisal.

If a complaint is not upheld following investigation, this will not in itself result in disciplinary action against you. However, if following careful review, a complaint is found to have been made dishonestly, maliciously, or with the intent to mislead, this will be treated as a serious matter. Making false accusations undermines trust in our systems and may lead to disciplinary action.

If a staff member believes that someone has deliberately raised a false concern against them, they may raise it as a concern under IDS's Grievance procedure. Situations will be handled with care and fairness, and IDS will seek to understand all perspectives before drawing any conclusions.

The handling of complaints

IDS takes all concerns raised under this policy seriously. When a complaint is made, our priority is to ensure that it is handled promptly, fairly, sensitively, and with care for everyone involved. We will work to resolve the issue in a constructive and proportionate way, ensuring that appropriate support is offered throughout the process.

Alleged perpetrator(s) – students

If you would like to report a student's behaviour you can raise it through the University of Sussex at this link: Report a student's behaviour : University of Sussex

Allegations about students would be handled by the University of Sussex under their Student Discipline procedure.

Alleged perpetrator(s) – staff

Allegations against staff are addressed through the appropriate route to resolution following a triaging process using IDS' Resolution Index. If a formal investigation is undertaken and behaviours that contravene this policy are found to have taken place, this could be grounds for disciplinary action under IDS's Disciplinary procedure.

Alleged perpetrator(s) – partners, suppliers, contractors, and third parties

Allegations made against any partners, suppliers, contractors, or third parties providing IDS with any form of engagement or contract of services are typically handled via our terms of engagement with the individual or company. They may also be managed using IDS's complaints process or Whistleblowing policy. Depending on the nature and severity of the concern, and in the event misconduct is found, IDS may terminate the relationship or contract.

Sources of support for your wellbeing

Internal support for staff

Support is available to all colleagues affected by a concern, including the person raising it, the person the concern is about, and anyone else impacted.

If you have any concerns that may impact your health and wellbeing at work, we encourage you to raise these with your manager or cluster leader so that they can offer or signpost you to support.

If you need to speak to someone in the HR Team you can find the appropriate contact at the following link: Human Resources Team

Other sources of support for IDS Staff include:

- Respect Responders – trained to offer confidential guidance and support, using trauma-informed and anti-oppressive approaches.

- Mental Health First Aiders – If you need to talk to someone urgently about your mental health, or signpost a student who does, our Mental Health First Aiders are on hand to support you.

- Employee Assistance Programme – If you would like confidential, independent advice or counselling, our EAP is available by telephone, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They can support you with mental and physical health and wellbeing advice, debt counselling, and budget management. Its counselling service is for up to eight telephone or face to face sessions, offered near your home or at IDS.

- Flexible working – IDS prides itself on flexible working and we recognise the benefits of it in supporting work-life balance, workload and wellbeing.

- Travel Clinic and Occupational Health – If you need specific health advice or support, our Occupational Health provider, Cordell Health, can offer advice on work-related health issues, including travel health assessments. They can also offer advice on workplace adjustments if you need them.

- Employee Welfare Loans – If you are experiencing short-term cash flow problems, IDS may be able to support you with an interest-free loan.

- Managing Stress – If you are looking for tools and advice to help manage stress, a Stress Risk Assessment and other tools are available.

- [Health and Safety at IDS](#) – If you have any health and safety questions or concerns, information and support are available.

- [Mentoring](#) – If you would find mentoring helpful, staff are welcome to benefit from IDS's mentoring scheme.

- [Learning and development or coaching](#) – if you are a staff member at IDS and would find learning and development opportunity or coaching helpful, we work with a selection of external coaches. We can also provide resilience training, wellbeing workshops, and a variety of other development opportunities.

Support for Students

The University of Sussex offers support on a range of welfare issues via the Student Centre. Further information can be found at the following link: [Student support : Student life : Study with us : University of Sussex](#)

External Support

Mental Health Support

Remember: mental health is health. If you're struggling with stress, anxiety, trauma, or anything else, you deserve support just as much as you would for a more obvious physical illness.

If you feel you would benefit from mental health support, we would suggest the following resources, recommended by [MIND Mental Health Charity](#)
- Contact your GP
- Call Samaritans on 116 123 for a listening ear, 24/7
- Call the NHS on 111 for 24-hour non-emergency health guidance
- It can be very helpful to talk to friends and family

Monitoring this policy

This policy will be monitored at least annually to ensure it remains effective, legally compliant, and aligned with IDS's values and practices. It may be updated from time to time to reflect current practice and legal changes.

Related policies and guidance

[Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy](#)
[IDS Code of Conduct for Employees](#)
[IDS Code of Conduct - Contractors, volunteers, associates and trustees](#)
[IDS Email Code of Conduct](#)
[Student Discipline Regulation](#)

Resolution process and guidance notes
Grievance procedure
Disciplinary procedure
Safeguarding policy
Whistleblowing policy
IDS Complaints procedure
Student Complaints procedure
Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy