



International House

I-House Policy: Preventing Sexual/Discriminatory Harassment

The Mission of International House supports the values of leadership, tolerance, respect and friendship among individuals of all nations and backgrounds in a community environment that encourages programmatic and residential interaction. Accordingly, we are committed to maintaining an environment for all members of the community that is safe, supportive and free of bias, prejudice and harassment. Sexual harassment, misconduct and assault; stalking; and discriminatory harassment, whether based upon race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, veteran or military status, citizenship status, or physical or mental disability, or any other legally protected basis are contrary to these values, are illegal and will not be tolerated. This policy covers all members of the International House community and those who affect the International House community such as vendors or visitors.

Definitions of Prohibited Harassment

International House's policy against sexual harassment prohibits sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature, either against a person of the opposite sex or of the same sex, when submission to or rejection of such conduct is either an explicit or implicit term or condition of resident member status, or is a basis for participation in an International House activity, benefit or standing within the community, or such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive residential or community environment.

Prohibited discriminatory harassment is persistent verbal or physical conduct, or the use of written or pictorial materials, which may or may not be sexual in nature, that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, veteran or military status, citizenship status, or physical or mental disability, or that of the individual's relatives, friends or associates, that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive residential or community environment.

What Is Sexual Harassment?

While it is not possible to list all the circumstances that constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Requests for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised benefits;
- Use of sexual epithets, jokes, written or verbal references to sexual conduct or one's sexual activities;
- Sexually oriented comments about an individual's body;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;
- Other acts of Sexual Misconduct or Sexual Assault that are considered criminal under the New York State Penal Code.

Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Assault

Sexual misconduct and sexual assault are sexual acts that are against the will and without the consent of the victim or where the victim is incapable of giving consent. Examples of these behaviors encompass a

range of acts of a sexual nature that are classified as criminal under New York State Penal Code including but not limited to: lewd behavior, indecent exposure, intentional physical conduct of a sexual nature, and rape.

Stalking

Stalking is a persistent and unwanted pursuit of an individual by another that would cause a reasonable person to fear. It may or may not be sexual in nature. It is an intentional course of conduct that can be annoying, intrusive, intimidating, threatening and harmful. Examples of stalking include, but are not limited to: following a person; keeping a person under surveillance; loitering near a person's room or place of work; initiating unwanted contact or communications through deliveries, telephone calls, mail, email, social media or any other medium.

What Is Discriminatory Harassment?

The following are types of conduct that, when persistent and based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, veteran or military status, citizenship status, or disability and directed towards an individual or specific group, are examples of discriminatory harassment: use of words, pictures, symbols or physical actions to deliberately insult, stigmatize, threaten or intimidate; use of words, pictures, symbols or physical actions that are, as a matter of common knowledge, understood to convey direct hatred or contempt; verbal abuse or hostile behavior such as teasing, mocking, degrading or ridiculing.

The Role of the Resident Social Worker

The Resident Social Worker (Lorraine Pirro, 212-316-7184 9am-5pm or 914-673-9010, emergencies) is available to provide confidential counseling and support to any resident member who believes they have been a victim of harassment. In addition to counseling and guidance, she can offer information regarding an individual's options for reporting such an incident internally to the appropriate International House staff member or to external authorities and, if requested, can assist in making such a report.

Reporting a Complaint of Harassment

The most appropriate recipient of complaints is the Resident Social Worker (Lorraine Pirro, 212-316-7184 9am-5pm or 914-673-9010, emergencies) or the Director of Public Safety (Anthony Gordon, 212-280-7673).

If you need immediate assistance or if it is an emergency, contact the House Manager (on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) by dialing x5555 or x8448. After assisting you, the House Manager will make a report of the incident for follow-up by the Director of Admissions and the Director of Public Safety. Depending on the circumstances of the complaint, they may consult with the Resident Social Worker and President of International House.

Since the medical, emotional and legal needs of a sexual assault complainant may differ from those of other harassment complaints, sexual assault victims should in addition to filing a complaint with International House, report the assault to the police and pursue counseling and other service available through the Resident Support Services Team.

Complaints should be promptly reported so that appropriate action may be taken in a timely manner. However, the later reporting of complaints may not prevent appropriate remedial action.

International House will maintain the confidentiality of the complaint to the greatest extent consistent with its goal of conducting a thorough and complete investigation. Effort will be made to safeguard the privacy and rights of all persons involved. Effort shall be made to complete the investigation of a complaint in a timely manner.

International House will take steps necessary to protect the complainant and any witnesses against retaliation for reporting the harassment or for participating in the investigation of a complaint. Any member of the community who retaliates against any party to a harassment complaint – for example, the person filing the complaint, witnesses, or participants in the investigation -- will be in violation of this policy and may be subject to sanctions up to and including termination of membership.

Procedure and Options for Making a Complaint

1. Informal Complaint

An individual making a complaint of harassment may choose to file an Informal Complaint. If an Informal Complaint is filed, efforts will be made to resolve the problem through discussion with the other party, either by the complainant, by an appropriate representative of International House, or by both the complainant and such representative. The fact of the complaint and the outcome will be reported to the Director of Admissions.

2. Formal Complaint

An individual making a complaint of harassment may choose to file a Formal Complaint. A formal complaint is one that is in writing, signed and dated, and submitted to the Director of Public Safety, who will investigate the complaint.

Changing Complaint Status

At any time, an individual making a complaint of harassment may change an informal complaint to formal, or a formal complaint to informal.

Investigation

The Director of Public Safety will conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation in the manner deemed necessary. The parties to the complaint will each have an opportunity to be heard during the investigation.

Upon completion of the investigation, the Director of Public Safety will submit the results of their investigation to the Admissions Committee, the International House panel that is charged with considering applications for resident member, non-resident member and alumni status, readmission and scholarships as well as complaints of misconduct, harassment, and other violations of policy.

Complaints will ordinarily only be investigated when the complaining party so elects. In extraordinary circumstances, however, International House may determine on its own to investigate egregious allegations even when the complaining party does not choose to pursue such charges.

Process Transparency

If an interim decision is made during any part of the Complaint and/or Investigation process, that decision will be communicated to all parties.

Disposition

If the Admissions Committee determines that a violation of the International House Sexual Harassment Policy or Discriminatory Harassment Policy has occurred, a recommendation for remedial action will be made to the President of International House. The nature of the remedial action and the process for its implementation will depend upon the particular facts and circumstances. The findings and intended action, will be communicated to all parties as soon as possible.

What to Do if You Are Sexually Assaulted

1. Get to a safe place and call for assistance. The police can be contacted by calling 911. The House Manager on duty can be reached at x5555 or x8448 or the Resident Social Worker (Lorraine Pirro) at 914-673-9010 or 212-316-7184. You might also call someone you trust such as a friend or your family. Do this even if you think you might have overreacted or feel embarrassed – if you feel in any way uncomfortable about the incident, contact someone.
2. Seek medical attention. If you have been physically assaulted or think you may have been, while intoxicated for example, it is important that you seek immediate medical attention. In addition to treating injuries, prompt medical examination can secure evidence that can be used later should you wish to have the assailant prosecuted. If you have been victim to an assault, you shouldn't drink, bathe, douche, brush your teeth, change your clothing or comb your hair. You may want to do these things but this will destroy evidence that can be used to prosecute the assailant. If changing clothes is necessary, clothing worn during the assault should be placed in a bag.
3. Document the incident. As soon as you can, write down every detail about the incident, including who, what, when, where and how. It is helpful to refer to those notes if being questioned on the matter later.
4. Request counseling. Do not hesitate to seek counseling by contacting the Resident Social Worker or the counseling service at your school or place of work. Counseling can help you cope with the experience of a traumatic event.
5. Report the matter to the police. You can file a report with the police at the 26th Precinct at 520 W. 126th St. between Old Broadway and Amsterdam Ave. (212-678-1311). The detectives can help you determine the avenues available to you under criminal law. If, in the future, someone else is victimized by that person and lodges a complaint, the police will be aware that there were prior complaints.