



## Student Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy

1.0	July 2020	Alice Ludgate	Not applicable	New policy
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### **Policy contents**



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6.2. In the event of a third party (e.g. another student/a friend) disclosing an incident of SVM on

## Student Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy

- 7.2. Once a report has been made, the student making the report (if they give their name) will be contacted within 3 working days by a representative from Student Services with more information about their options and support, including how we will carry out a risk assessment (see the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure). The options will vary depending on if the responding party is another student or a member of staff (see Section 11).
- 7.3. If the student wants to make a report but does not want any further action taken by the University, such as an investigation, we will put support in place, the priority being to enable them to carry on with their studies or engage in their research and access any wellbeing support. The only instance we might take action without the student's consent is where there is a safeguarding or 'Fitness to Practise' concern.
- 7.4. If the student wishes, they may report the incident to the police (see Section 8) regardless of whether they want to report to the University. A decision not to report to the police does not prejudice any University response to a student report.

### **8. Police involvement**

- 8.1. It is the student's choice about whether to report the incident of SVM to the police. We will not provide named reports to the police or any other agency without the nBT/F1 11.04 Tf3cDg reW\*9E

## Student Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy

8.5. Where a student has been convicted of a criminal offence or accepts a police caution in relation to behaviour that falls within the scope of this policy (or any other relevant policy), the conviction/caution will be taken as conclusive evidence that the behaviour took place and may be pursued as part of the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure.

### **9. Support for students**

9.1. We are committed to providing support to any students



## **11. The procedure for handling reports from students**

- 11.1. Experiencing SVM can be very harmful and students may not initially recognise this harm, or may need to wait some time before making a formal report. Because of this, there is no time limit within the University for making a report of SVM, and we encourage students to report (either anonymously or with their name) to help us keep other students and staff safe. It is important to note that some legal avenues open to people who have experienced SVM do have deadlines.
- 11.2. Before taking any action, the reporting party will be invited to attend an initial meeting with a member of staff from Student Services. The decision about whether to launch an investigation will be explained at this initial meeting; the University will not formally investigate the incident or inform the responding party prior to this meeting, except in cases of safeguarding or 'Fitness to Practise' concerns. Any action taken will be handled sensitively to protect all parties. For allegations against a member of staff, the investigation process will be advised by Human Resources.
- 11.3. If the reporting party does not give consent for the responding party to be informed of the allegation against them, an investigation will not proceed. There may be, however, certain circumstances where the University is required to take appropriate action to prevent potential harm to the reporting party, others at the University or members of the public (e.g., Fitness to Practice concerns). Where this is the case, the reasons for taking such action will be fully

- 11.7. Following an investigation, should the University find the allegation of SVM to be proven, and in turn a breach of this policy, sanctions may be placed upon the responding party. For students, this may be up to and including expulsion from University. For members of staff, sanctions may be applied up to and including dismissal from employment with the University.

## **12. Impact on academic progress**

- 11.1 Any student whose studies are affected or impacted by SVM can apply for extenuating circumstances in accordance with the Extenuating Circumstances Policy. This includes the reporting students and others who may be affected (the responding student and witnesses, for example). Policies are available online:  
<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/regulations>
- 11.2 Students engaged on programmes where there is also a 'Fitness to Practise' policy are expected to exhibit the highest standards of professional conduct and behaviour. Accordingly, any complaints made of SVM may be addressed via these policies.

## **13. Monitoring and record keeping**

- 13.1. The University maintains a central record of incidents to effectively engage in prevention and response initiatives. Student Services and Human Resources maintains a record of anonymised reports of SVM incidents students for trend monitoring purposes.
- 13.2. All records are maintained in accordance with the University's Records Retention Schedule:  
[https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/5/5951/Records\\_Retention\\_Schedule\\_v1.0.pdf](https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/5/5951/Records_Retention_Schedule_v1.0.pdf)

**14. Appendix 1 - Glossary**

**Alleged perpetrator**

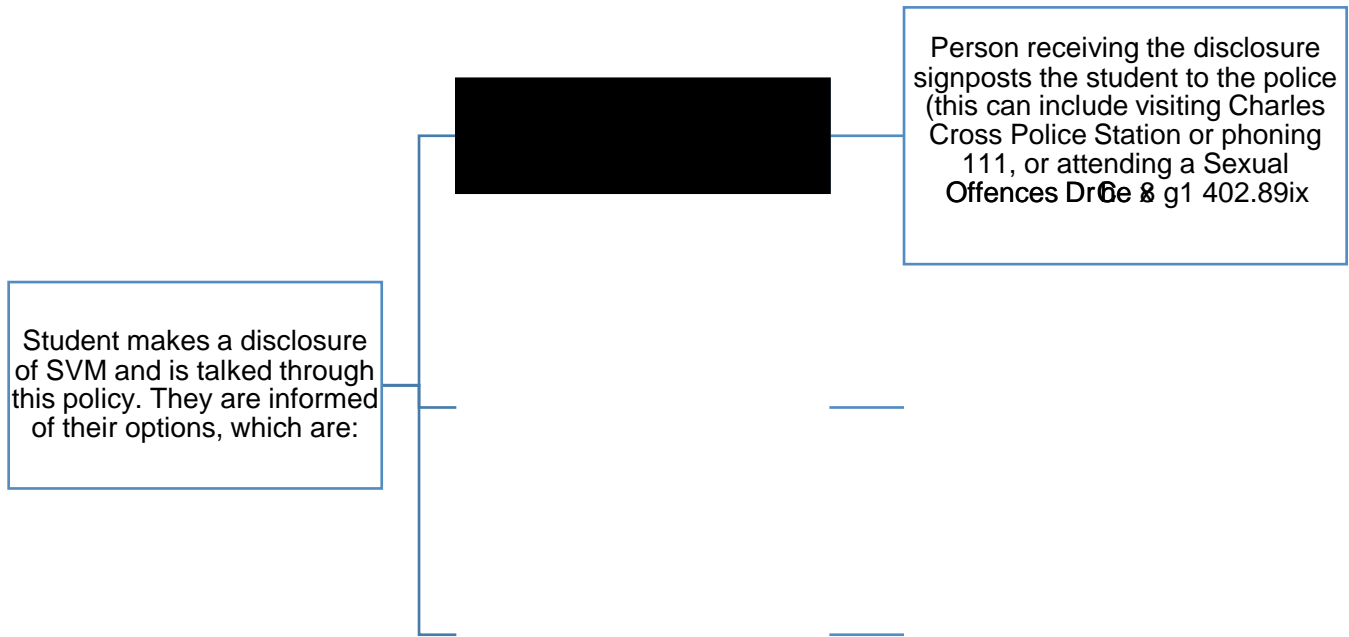
This language is often used by the police and criminal prosecution service to refer to the person who is alleged to have committed an act which may constitute a criminal offence. In the University, the I

## Student Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy

<b>Reporting</b>	When a victim/survivor chooses to make a formal report about an incident of SVM to the University and/or the police
<b>Reporting party</b>	The student who has made a report of SVM.
<b>Responding party</b>	The student who is alleged to have carried out the act of alleged SVM.
<b>Revenge porn</b>	See 'Non-consensual image sharing'
<b>Sexting</b>	Sending someone explicit photographs, videos or messages via mobile phone or online platform (when sent consensually, this is not considered SVM, however see "Non-consensual image sharing" in the Glossary).
<b>Sexual assault</b>	Sexual assault is an act or threat of physical, psychological and emotional violation in the form of a sexual act, inflicted on someone without their consent. It can involve forcing or manipulating someone to witness or participate any sexual acts.
<b>Sexual Assault Referral Centre</b>	A Sexual Assault Referral Centre is a place where anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted can go for specialist medical and forensic services.
<b>Sexual exploitation</b>	Actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power, or trust, for sexual purposes including but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
<b>Sexual harassment</b>	Any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which violates a person's dignity, makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, or creates a hostile or offensive environment.

## Student Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy

16. Appendix 3 – Disclosure and Reporting Flowchart



\* <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/services/student-services/speak-up>

**In all cases of disclosure**, a student will be signposted to support services as described in Appendix 4.

**If a student discloses a sexual assault**, depending on the nature of this assault it may be appropriate for them to self-refer to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (see Appendix 5).



## Student Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy

**Women's Aid:** <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>

**Survivors UK:** a charity dedicated to supporting male survivors of sexual abuse and rape:  
<https://www.survivorsuk.org/>

**Operation emotion:** a charity dedicated to supporting male survivors of sexual abuse:  
<https://operationemotion.co.uk/>



## 18. Appendix 5 – How to handle a disclosure of SVM

### ***Training to accompany this guidance is bookable via employee self-service***

Students wishing to disclose SVM may approach a member of staff they feel comfortable talking to and/or who shares a similar identity to them, e.g. trans or non-binary students may wish to disclose to a member of staff who is trans or non-binary (although this is not a requirement).

**Check that the student is safe**, if they are in danger or in need of immediate medical attention, call 999

**Let the student use their own words:** do not replace their words with your own, ensure any notes you make reflect exactly what the student said, even if it includes swearing/words you wouldn't use yourself. For instance, if the student says "s/he had sex with me, but I didn't want to", do not write "s/he was raped" nor should you ask "are you saying you were raped?", because this is a leading question. Anything the student tells you, if they later decide to go to the police, could be used as evidence to support a conviction and you could be called as a witness (with the University's support)

**Let the student know we support them:**

- o "Thank you for telling me this, I am so sorry to hear this happened"
- o "We will support you á "s the t

### **19. Appendix 6 – The role of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre**

Across the UK there are Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs). These are specialist medical and forensic services for anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted. In Plymouth, the SARC is located in Estover, and open 24 hours a day (you need to phone first or refer online – 0300 303 4646 or <https://sarchelp.co.uk/get-help/>).

**To find out more, visit the website: <https://sarchelp.co.uk/>.** A SARC offers support from a crisis worker along with forensic medical facilities and examination facilities, sexual health and contraception information, HIV medication, follow-up emotional and practical support from an