CASPIAN
SCHOOL OF ACADEMICS

Procedure 7.14

CONSENT AND BYSTANDER INTERVENTION POLICY & GUIDELINES

Student Support and Engagement | August 2026

Consent and Bystander Intervention Policy and Guidelines

E6-03 - Student Support and Engagement

Document Control

Document title	Consent and Bystander Intervention Policy and Guidelines
Document reference	Procedure 7.14
Policy category	Student Support and Engagement
Document type	Policy / Guidelines
Status	Current
Policy owner	Principal
Approved by	Board of Governance
Publication classification	Public
Current controlled version	Caspian Policy Library - caspianschool.ac.uk/policies/

Version History

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Next review date
1.0	Board of Governance	14 August 2026	14 August 2026	14 August 2027

Printed or downloaded copies may be uncontrolled. Refer to the Caspian Policy Library for the current version: caspianschool.ac.uk/policies/

Table of Contents

Consent. **4**
Objectives. **4**
Why is it important to respond as a bystander? **4**
It doesn't have to be that way! 4
1 . Direct **5**
2 . Distract **5**
3 . Delegate **6**
4 . Delay **6**
5 . Disapprove and document **7**
c. "I" STATEMENTS **7**
d. Silent Stare/ Body Language **7**
e. Humour **7**
f. Group Intervention **7**
g. "Bring It Home" (Empathy) **7**
h. "We're Friends, Right..." **8**
i. Distraction/Interruption **8**
Remember: 8
Whatever response you choose, remember the following: 8

Printed or downloaded copies may be uncontrolled. Refer to the Caspian Policy Library for the current version: caspianschool.ac.uk/policies/

Consent.

Consent isn't just about teaching students and indeed staff to say "yes" or "no" in certain situations. It's about fostering a deeper understanding of what respectful, consensual interactions look like, and importantly, where the line of harassment begins. Often, sexually harassing behaviours, in particular, are dismissed as "banter" or brushed off as harmless fun, which only perpetuates the problem. Our policies and approaches aim to education students on what constitutes harassment, and through this to empower individuals to recognize, report, and most importantly, avoid perpetuating harmful behaviour.

Objectives.

The goal of consent and bystander awareness raising is, ultimately, to foster long-term cultural change. Education settings are melting pots which bring together staff and students from a variety of diverse backgrounds, with a range of pre-existing attitudes and value. While this diversity is an asset, it can also lead to misunderstandings and harmful behaviour if not addressed openly.

By normalising conversations about consent and harassment and encouraging active bystander behaviour, education providers can shift campus culture towards one where mutual respect and safety are paramount. The more ingrained these principles become, the less likely individuals will be to engage in harassment—and the more likely those who do will be held accountable, either by formal reporting or peer intervention.

Why is it important to respond as a bystander?

Experiencing harassment related to your identity is always frightening and unpleasant. Whether it's about your race, colour, religion, or immigration status; about your gender presentation or sexual orientation; about your size, age, or a disability you live with, it is personal and damaging. In addition, this can be made worse by you being harassed in public whilst surrounded by bystanders who see it happening but do nothing about it.

It doesn't have to be that way!

In recent times, many of us have been witnessing a spike in disrespect, harassment, and hate violence as well as sexual harassment and misconduct. Around 80% of women in the United Kingdom (UK) report that they have experienced harassment and around 47% of men. As bystanders, we must be especially vigilant and aware of what these incidents can look like, so that we're ready to stand up and intervene.

When we intervene, not only do we reduce the trauma of the harassment for the person who is being targeted, but we also slowly chip away at the culture of harassment and replace it with one support and kindness. However, first we need to notice that something unpleasant is taking place and be aware of the impact that the harassment or sexual, racial or other misconduct is having on the person who is being targeted.

The **Bystander Intervention Model** in the diagram below, sets out what needs to happen for a situation to be seen as one which requires intervention. The individual close to the harassment taking place need to: [1]

1 Right To Be: Bystander Intervention Training

Printed or downloaded copies may be uncontrolled. Refer to the Caspian Policy Library for the current version: caspianschool.ac.uk/policies/

1. • Notice that something is happening
2. • Interpret the event as unpleasant or threatening
3. • Take responsibility for providing help
4. • Decide how to provide help
5. • Take action to provide help

To help prevent harassment **the 5 'Ds'** approach has been developed as part of bystander intervention. Through using the 5Ds, anyone can support someone who is being harassed and emphasise that the behaviour is not acceptable and help make the community safer for everyone.

We can all use the 5Ds as they are designed to be safe and not to escalate or inflame situations. The

5Ds were developed by an organization called 'Green Dot' who first introduced 3 Ds: Distract, Delegate and Direct. 'Right to Be' then worked with Green Dot to develop tools to help people intervene when they saw harassment, and in 2015 expand the 3Ds to include Delay and Document.2

1 . Direct

'Direct' is the most active form of bystander intervention and is about directly addressing the people involved. It works best among friends or people you know as they're more likely to listen to you and care about your opinion of them.

What might a direct intervention look like? Intervention can include saying for example, the following:

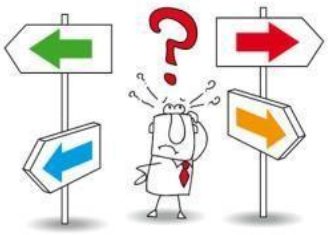
"That's not okay," and/or "Leave them alone."

Direct interventions may not work well with strangers as they could redirect hostility toward you. If you feel unsafe, consider one of the other 5Ds instead.

Printed or downloaded copies may be uncontrolled. Refer to the Caspian Policy Library for the current version: caspianschool.ac.uk/policies/

2 . Distract

‘Distract’ involves interrupting the harassment or harm to defuse tension. By distracting attention, you can help stop harm in its tracks.



What might a ‘distract’ intervention look like?

‘Asking for the time’ or ‘Asking for directions’ or ‘Starting a conversation with the person being harassed’.

3 . Delegate

‘Delegate’ involves asking someone else to help. You might choose to delegate if you don’t feel comfortable intervening alone.

What might a ‘delegate’ intervention look like?

Asking someone with more authority to intervene e.g. bar staff, teacher, bus driver, security guard or the police if you’re worried someone is in immediate danger.

Asking someone nearby to support you to intervene.

4 . Delay

‘Delay’ means waiting for the situation to pass and offering support to the person that has experienced harassment or harm. It doesn’t mean ignoring what happened, it’s offering help, support or kindness to someone who has been through an unpleasant experience.

What might a delay intervention look like?

Asking if the person is okay.

Asking if they need any help.

Letting them know you saw what happened and it wasn’t okay.

Printed or downloaded copies may be uncontrolled. Refer to the Caspian Policy Library for the current version: caspianschool.ac.uk/policies/

5 . Disapprove and document

‘Disapprove’ involves sending a strong signal that behaviour is unacceptable. As with ‘direct’ it works best with people you know as your opinion of them matters to them.

Don’t do that

That is really out of line

Leave them alone.

If it is possible try and record the event which is taking place, either on your phone or through making a note of what you saw as soon as you can. Report what you saw to someone in authority.

Some Bystander Intervention Strategies.

Take a look at the following strategies which may give you an idea of how you can intervene in a situation where someone is being targeted.

Ask the Question.

If you see someone who looks like they are in trouble, ask if they are ok.

Don’t level them alone.

Ensure that friends who are incapacitated don’t leave without you or go to secluded places with someone. If a person is trying to get you to leave so that they can take advantage of someone, refuse to leave the area or call the police.

c. “I" STATEMENTS

There are three parts you can refer to:

State your feelings, 2

) Name the behaviour,

3) State how you want the person to respond.

Focus on your feelings rather than criticising the other person. Example: I feel _____ when you _____. Please don’t do that any more.

d. Silent Stare/ Body Language

Remember, you don’t have to speak to communicate. Sometimes a disapproving look can be far more powerful than words.

e. Humour

Reduces the tension of an intervention and makes it easier for the person to hear you. Do not undermine what you say with too much humour. Funny doesn’t mean unimportant.

f. Group Intervention

There is safety and power in numbers. Best used with someone who has a clear pattern of inappropriate behaviour where many examples can be presented as evidence of their problem.

g. "Bring It Home" (Empathy)

Prevents someone from distancing themselves from the impact of their actions. EXAMPLE: "I hope no one ever talks about you like that." Prevents them from dehumanizing their targets as well.

Printed or downloaded copies may be uncontrolled. Refer to the Caspian Policy Library for the current version: caspianschool.ac.uk/policies/

EXAMPLE: "What if someone said your girlfriend deserved to be raped, or called your mother a slut?"

h. "We're Friends, Right..."

Reframes the intervention as caring and non-critical.

EXAMPLE: "Hey, Dave. As your friend, I've got to tell you that your t shirt isn't doing you any favours, it's killing your rep with the ladies. Do yourself a favour and don't wear it again – chuck it out."

i. Distraction/Interruption

Most effective for street harassment. Snaps someone out of their "sexist comfort zone." EXAMPLE: Ask a man harassing women on the street for directions or the time.

j. **Providing Individualised Normative Feedback** (i.e. "most people our age don't think it's ok to…)

Remember:

Approach everyone as a friend.

Be a good listener and give respectful attention.

Do not be antagonistic.

Avoid using violence.

Be honest and direct whenever possible.

Recruit help if necessary.

Keep yourself safe.

If things get out of hand or become too serious, contact the police.

Whatever response you choose, remember the following:

Consider frequency, duration and intensity/severity when evaluating a situation.

Determine the barrier for the person if possible — motivation, ability or environment.

Know your limits as a helper — engage others as necessary.

Be sensitive, understanding and non-judgmental.

Challenge misperceptions – Express your true feelings/beliefs.

Identify the red flags; Anticipate problems.

Determine the priority goal; Formulate a plan; Prepare/practice what you want to say.

Interrupt/distract/delay a situation you think might be problematic — before it becomes an emergency!

Set boundaries — do not make excuses for the person or otherwise enable them.

Conduct conversations in a safe environment. Maintain mutual respect and mutual purpose.

Remember the Law of Delivery — Who (person/s), What (content), When (timing), Where (location/privacy), Why (reasons) and How (tone).

Acknowledgements.

Much of this guidance has been drawn from:

'Bystander Intervention' published by the Stanford University Office.

The Step Up Programme.

Printed or downloaded copies may be uncontrolled. Refer to the Caspian Policy Library for the current version: caspianschool.ac.uk/policies/