Sexual Harassment Policy

Effective Date: 28.01.2026
Review Cycle: when applicable

1. Preamble

Saffron Kitchen Project (SKP) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all staff, volunteers, partners, and community members. Sexual harassment directly contradicts SKP's values and undermines individual wellbeing, team safety, safeguarding, and trust.

SKP has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind. This policy exists to prevent sexual harassment, provide clear guidance on reporting and response, and ensure appropriate support for anyone affected.

Sexual harassment is a safeguarding issue. It can cause significant emotional, psychological, and physical harm and must always be taken seriously.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All SKP staff
- All volunteers (local and international)
- Trustees
- External speakers, partners, contractors, and anyone representing or interacting with SKP

The policy applies across all SKP spaces and activities, including kitchens, offices, training sessions, events, online communication, and social media where SKP is represented.

3. Definitions

3.1 Sexual Harassment

SKP adopts definitions consistent with professional safeguarding organisations and international best practice, including those used in the United Nations system.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected, or be perceived, to cause offence, humiliation, distress, intimidation or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Sexual harassment may occur in the workplace or in connection with work or organisational activities, and can consist of a single incident or a pattern of behaviour. In assessing whether conduct is sexual harassment, the perspective of the person experiencing the behaviour will be considered.

- Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:
- Sexually suggestive comments, jokes, or gestures
- Staring, leering, or commenting on someone's body
- Unwanted sexual advances or physical contact
- Sending messages, images, or emails with sexual content
- Sexual propositions or pressure
- Displaying sexually explicit material in shared spaces
- Offers of benefit or reward in exchange for sexual attention
- Conduct that interferes with work or participation in activities
- Conduct that contributes to an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment

Sexual harassment is about impact, not intent. Behaviour that makes someone uncomfortable, distressed, or unsafe is unacceptable, even if the person responsible did not intend harm.

3.2 Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is any sexual act or behaviour carried out without consent, including physical, psychological, or emotional violations. Sexual assault is a serious criminal offence.

Unless otherwise stated, this policy uses *sexual harassment* as a broad term that includes sexual assault, while recognising that sexual assault requires an immediate and heightened response.

4. Team Awareness and Responsibilities

All members of the SKP team must understand that:

- Sexual harassment is never acceptable and is never “too minor” to address
- All reports will be taken seriously and handled sensitively
- No one will be blamed or disbelieved for raising a concern
- Retaliation, victimisation, or minimisation of reports will not be tolerated

Managers and senior staff have a duty of care to act if they witness, suspect, or receive reports of sexual harassment.

5. Speak-Up Culture

SKP recognises that speaking up about sexual harassment can feel daunting. We want to clearly state:

- Speaking up is brave and valid
- You will be listened to and supported
- Reporting helps protect not only individuals, but the wider team and community

No one is required to report an incident if they do not feel ready or safe, but reporting is strongly encouraged so SKP can take action and provide support.

6. Sexual Harassment in SKP Activities and External Contexts

Sexual harassment may occur:

- Between team members and volunteers
- From beneficiaries, participants, or external individuals
- At events, trainings, or off-site activities

SKP expects to be treated with respect by all individuals we interact with. If sexual harassment occurs in any SKP-related context, appropriate steps will be taken to prioritise safety, including withdrawing from situations, ending engagement, or suspending partnerships if necessary.

No staff member or volunteer will be required to continue working in a situation where they feel unsafe.

7. Sexual Harassment Within the Team

SKP operates a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual harassment within the team.

Sexual harassment by staff, volunteers, or trustees may result in:

- Immediate removal from activities
- Disciplinary action
- Termination of contract or role
- Reporting to relevant authorities where required

8. Reporting Sexual Harassment

Reports can be made:

- Informally or formally
- Immediately or at a later time
- In person or in writing - also through our Incident Report Form

Reports may be made to:

- The Project Manager - Stella Elmatzoglou: stella@saffronkitchenproject.org
- The Director - Evelina Eskenazi: evelina@saffronkitchenproject.org
- The Safeguarding Focal Point - Gabriella Herberstein gabriella.herberstein@hotmail.com
- Any trusted senior team member, who must escalate the concern appropriately

All reports will be handled with confidentiality, sensitivity, and respect, ensuring that actions are taken with appropriate consent.

9. Responding to Sexual Harassment

All reports will be handled:

- Promptly
- Sensitively
- Confidentially
- In line with safeguarding and legal obligations

Responses will be proportionate to the nature of the incident and prioritise the safety and wishes of the person affected.

Sexual assault or serious risk will trigger immediate safeguarding action and may involve external authorities.

10. Supporting Those Affected

SKP's primary concern is the wellbeing of those affected by sexual harassment.

Support may include:

- Time away from work or activities
- Adjustments to roles or schedules
- Emotional support and check-ins
- Signposting to specialist support services

Everyone responds differently to harassment. All responses are valid.

11. Confidentiality

Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis, unless safeguarding or legal obligations require escalation. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where there is risk of harm.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any serious incident.