

Mermaids Sexual Misconduct Policy

Mermaids Performing Arts Fund does not tolerate sexual misconduct of any form. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment and assault. Sexual misconduct can happen to anyone and be perpetrated by anyone, of any gender or sexuality, and is a form of gender-based violence. As a subcommittee of the Students Association, there are rules and structures for how we handle claims of sexual misconduct, and these are outlined below, so that all Mermaids members know how to approach instances of sexual misconduct and understand their options in reporting or not doing so.

It is important to note that without a formal, non-anonymous complaint, Mermaids cannot take any action against anyone accused of sexual misconduct. Mermaids committee is not qualified to undertake any investigation and the Union and University may only begin investigations with formal complaints. Mermaids, the University and the Union have support and resources available for those who wish to make their complaint only informally/anonymously, but we are unable to pursue any further action, nor will informal complaints impact proposal or casting decisions.

Whatever the situation, and whatever action you choose to take, you can always reach out to committee if you would like support from Mermaids or advice on available resources.

If you experience sexual misconduct:

At the time of the incident

Your safety is the priority always. Remove yourself from the situation when possible or move into more of a group setting. You can reach out to the appropriate safety and security team members if you think this would help (CS Team at the Union are able to help and in more serious situations, the University Security and Response Team- 01334 468999). At any Mermaids event, there are always at least two sober members present and they will have been identified prior to the event and will be wearing Mermaids jumpers. Informing them allows them to provide immediate support, as well as take any additional action necessary. The committee has undergone GotConsent's leadership training in bystander intervention. A sober member will not do anything other than support you or report anything without your permission, unless there is a threat to others at the event. If you believe you have been spiked, please see bar staff and ask for a test strip if you still have your drink. If you report to the Police, they may ask for blood and urine samples which could enable you to pursue criminal proceedings. If you desire to do this, please note most drugs leave the body in 12-72 hours, so you should seek medical attention as soon as possible.

After the Incident

I. You may independently formally report it to the appropriate group. If the incident occurs in the Barron @ the Byre or the Byre Auditorium (or any other University property), you would report to the University via the Support and Report tool (<https://reportandsupport.st-andrews.ac.uk/>). If it happens on Union property (including rehearsal and society rooms and the StAge), you would report the incident to the Customer Safety (CS) Team or [contact](#) HR Manager Iain Cupples (union@).

II. You may report to incident to Mermaids leadership. The best way to do this is to arrange to speak to the VP (ijm20@) or President (merpres@) either at their office hours or at another time if you prefer. They can help walk you through your options and provide a safe, confidential place for discussion and also offer resources where applicable. Please know that what you say is confidential, unless you explicitly permit otherwise or you discuss plans to harm yourself or others. Until you give your consent, a formal complaint will not be made and therefore, Mermaids will not be able to take any action against those implicated.

III. You may choose not to report the incident. You have the right to not report what has happened, or to report an incident after time has passed. You get to make your own decisions about what happens. If you do choose not to formally report, you can still report anonymously via the Support and Report Tool

(<https://reportandsupport.st-andrews.ac.uk/>) to help the University get a better understanding of sexual misconduct as it occurs.

Available Resources

In the University

- The Advice and Support Centre
 - The ASC are trained members of staff from Student Services, and they can help you to arrange appointments to speak with Student Services and get the support you need. You can book Student Services appointments online, new appointments are released DAILY <https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/StudentServicesUniversityofStAndrews@UniversityofStAndrews907.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/>
 - Phone: +44 (0)1334 46 2020
 - Email: theasc@st-andrews.ac.uk
- The Student Conduct Office (discipline@st-andrews.ac.uk)
- The Chaplaincy
 - Phone: +44 (0)1334 46 2866
 - Email: chaplaincy@st-andrews.ac.uk

Student and External Groups (All Fee-Free)

- St Andrews Nightline
 - Phone (term-time): 01334 46 2266
 - Instant Messaging (term-time): <https://nightline.st-andrews.ac.uk/>
 - Skype calling: StAndrewsNightline
 - E-Mail (24 hours): nightline@st-andrews.ac.uk
- [Samaritans](#)
 - Phone: 116 123
 - Email: jo@samaritans.org
- [Breathing Space](#)
 - Phone: 0800 83 85 87
 - Webchat available Monday to Friday, 6.00pm to 2.00am, Saturday and Sunday, 4.00pm to 12.00am
- [SHOUT](#)
 - Text 'Shout' to 85258
- [FRASAC](#)
 - A FRASAC worker will be based in St Andrews, working Monday to Wednesday, 9am to 4.30pm, and students can be referred through Student Services
 - Further Information on this partnership: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/sexual-misconduct/access-support/>
 - Should you want to report externally to the University, you can self-refer via
 - +44 (0)1592 642336
 - info@frasac.org.uk
- [Rape Crisis Scotland](#)
 - Helpline Phone: 08088 01 03 02
- [Women's Aid](#)
 - Helpline: 0800 027 1234
 - Email: helpline@sdafmh.org.uk
 - [Online Chat](#)
- [Survivors UK](#) (for men)
 - Online Chat Available Mon-Sun, 12 – 8pm
- [Galop](#) (LGBT+)
 - LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 999 5428

- [Self-Referral to Support Services](#)
- [Switchboard \(LGBT+\)](#)
 - Phone: 0300 330 0630, 10:00 – 22:00 daily

To Report Anonymously

- [Crimestoppers](#)
- [Report and Support](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if I choose to file a formal complaint?

Disciplinary procedures as laid out by the respective institutions ([University](#), [Union](#)). These will include a thorough investigation and upon their conclusion, one of two things may happen. If the accused is cleared of any wrongdoing, there is no permanent mark on their record and Mermaids is unable to do anything further. If the accused is found to have committed misconduct, a risk assessment will be done, based on the accusation and the punishment. In the instance that there is an impact on Mermaids involvement, the Vice President (or in cases of conflict of interest, the President) will work with the enforcement team of the respective institution to manage the situation in a confidential manner. This may include privately informing directors of recorded accusations or asking a cast member to step down from a cast, but this is all situationally dependent.

How does it work regarding committee members?

Everyone who is elected or chosen for a Mermaids committee role must be in good standing with the Union and the University. This means that they have no disciplinary action on their record and no open investigations against them. However, in the case where you experience sexual misconduct by a committee member or feel as though VP or President are biased and do not want to share with them, you can take any of the steps listed under “After the Incident” as you feel comfortable. You also may contact the DOES (Lucy, does@) or the DOSDA (Sam, dosda@) and report the incident to them. They oversee the subcommittee but remain impartial, and therefore, can similarly help navigate these sorts of issues.

What if I witness someone else being a victim of sexual misconduct?

First, we encourage you to step in if it is safe for you and you feel comfortable doing so (<https://www.facebook.com/GotConsentStAs/>). This can look like calling out a distasteful comment or asking someone if they would like you to walk them home. If you do not feel safe intervening, please ask staff to step in (CS Team at the Union are able to help and in more serious situations, the University Security and Response Team). After the incident, you may of course inform Mermaids committee of the incident, and with the victim’s permission, de-anonymize the situation. Mermaids committee members can check in on these people as appropriate and ask if they would like to make a formal complaint. However, without a complaint from the victim to the appropriate body, there is no further action Mermaids committee can take.

Mermaids takes sexual misconduct extremely seriously and has written this policy to ensure that the options that do exist are as clear as possible. If you have further questions or thoughts, please reach out to our VP, Isabelle (ijm20@), and she will be more than happy to discuss with you. Mermaids tries to create a safe, joyful community of creatives and each of you are an invaluable part of that.