



INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (ICC) POLICY

HOLY CROSS COLLEGE (Autonomous), Nagercoil

An ISO 9001: 2015 Certified Institution

Accredited with A⁺ Grade (CGPA 3.35 – IV Cycle) by NAAC

Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli

Tamil Nadu, India

INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (ICC) POLICY

Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Nagercoil, upholds the principles of dignity, equality, and respect in all areas of campus life. The College is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for students, staff, and faculty. This policy outlines the framework and procedures established by the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) to prevent and address issues related to sexual harassment, following the guidelines of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and applicable laws, including the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013.

Objectives

- To raise awareness about the prevention of sexual harassment and promote respectful conduct within the College.
- To establish a supportive environment that encourages individuals to speak about harassment without fear of retaliation.
- To set up an impartial committee to investigate complaints, ensuring that each case is addressed promptly, fairly, and with sensitivity.
- To establish a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment on campus.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders of Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Nagercoil. It addresses complaints related to sexual harassment occurring within the campus premises, during off-campus college-related activities, and in virtual interactions associated with the College.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication) such as:

- **Physical Harassment:** Unwanted physical contact such as touching, pinching, patting, or intentionally blocking a woman's path. More extreme cases involve assault or any physical behaviour that violates personal boundaries.
- **Verbal Harassment:** Includes inappropriate comments, jokes, or sexual remarks about a woman's appearance, body, or private life. This can also involve suggestive or derogatory comments, name-calling, or threats.

- **Non-Verbal Harassment:** This includes leering, staring, or gestures that are sexual in nature. Non-verbal cues like winking, suggestive facial expressions, or showing sexually explicit materials also fall under this category.
- **Cyber Harassment:** Harassment over digital channels, including unsolicited sexually explicit messages, stalking, or distribution of private photos without consent. Online harassment can happen via social media, email, or text messages.
- **Psychological Harassment:** This involves manipulating, pressuring, or intimidating someone for sexual favours, often with implications of reprisal for refusal. This can happen in professional settings, especially with abuse of power or authority.
- **Sexual Coercion and Blackmail:** Threatening negative consequences unless an individual consents to sexual activity. This could involve threats to employment, academic performance, or personal reputation.
- **Visual Harassment:** Displaying sexually explicit images, cartoons, or written content in a shared space where an individual work, study, or live, which can make the environment uncomfortable or hostile.
- **Stalking:** Repeatedly following, watching, or contacting someone in a way that is threatening or causes them fear. Stalking may be in-person or through virtual means.

Composition of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)

The ICC will consist of:

- Principal
- Vice Principals
- Controller of Examinations
- Deans of Student Affairs
- One non-teaching staff member
- One representative from a non-governmental organization or an expert familiar with issues relating to sexual harassment.
- Student representative

Tenure

The members of the ICC shall hold office for a term of three years.

Functions

- To receive and address complaints of sexual harassment
- To conduct fair and objective inquiries
- To recommend actions based on inquiry findings
- To maintain confidentiality throughout the process
- To organize awareness programs to educate stakeholders about policies and prevention measures

Complaint Procedure

1. Informal Resolution

Complainants are encouraged to approach the concerned personnel informally to resolve issues. They may speak to the class teacher or mentor, department head, or counsellor to seek guidance before filing a formal complaint.

2. Formal Complaint

If informal resolution fails, a formal complaint can be submitted. Complaints should be lodged in writing with the ICC Presiding Officer or by email to icc@holycrossnsl.edu.in. The complaint should detail the nature of the grievance, relevant incidents, and any supporting documents.

3. Acknowledgment

The ICC will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two working days.

4. Preliminary Inquiry

A preliminary inquiry will be conducted within seven working days to determine the admissibility of the complaint. This may involve an initial interview with the complainant.

5. Investigation Process

- If the complaint is admitted, a full investigation will be carried out by the ICC within 7 working days.
- The complainant and respondent will have the opportunity to present their statements and supporting evidence, if any
- Witnesses may be called upon, and all parties involved will be treated with respect and fairness.

6. Findings and Recommendations

The ICC will communicate its findings and recommendations to the college administration within ten working days after concluding the investigation. Possible

actions may include counselling, disciplinary measures, and other corrective steps as deemed appropriate.

7. Appeal

If the complainant or respondent is dissatisfied with the resolution, they may appeal to the Principal within 10 working days of receiving the decision. The Principal will review the appeal and issue a final decision within 15 working days.

Confidentiality

All proceedings, documents, and outcomes related to the complaint will be kept confidential. Disclosure will only occur when legally mandated or deemed necessary for resolving the grievance.

Policy Awareness and Accessibility

The ICC policy will be accessible to all stakeholders and displayed on:

- The College website
- Student and faculty handbooks
- College notice boards
- Regular awareness sessions conducted by the ICC

Monitoring and Review

The ICC will submit an annual report summarizing cases received, actions taken, and recommended improvements. This report will be reviewed by the College administration to ensure policy efficacy.

Conclusion

Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Nagercoil, is dedicated to providing a safe and respectful environment for all members of its community. This policy aligns with the UGC guidelines and aims to foster a campus culture based on mutual respect, safety, and accountability. The ICC policy ensures a structured process for addressing sexual harassment issues and supports the College's commitment to gender equity and a harassment-free learning and working environment.


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