ST. BEDE'S COLLEGE, SHIMLA

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

FOR THE INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (ICC)

SOP No.: ICC/SOP/01/2026
Effective From: Academic Session 2026-27
Year of Establishment of ICC: 2020
Approved By: Principal
Responsible Unit: ICC
Version: 1.0

1. PURPOSE

The Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of St. Bede's College shall provide a safe, inclusive and dignified environment for women employees and students and shall prevent, prohibit and redress complaints relating to sexual harassment at the workplace.

The ICC shall function in accordance with the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**, the Rules framed thereunder, applicable UGC/University provisions and Government instructions.

2. COMPOSITION OF ICC

The ICC shall be constituted by the Principal/competent authority in accordance with the applicable provisions of the POSH Act.

The Committee shall include:

1. **Presiding Officer** - Senior woman faculty member
2. **At least two members** from among employees committed to the cause of women or having experience in social work/legal knowledge
3. **One external member** from an NGO/association committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with issues relating to sexual harassment

The composition shall comply with the statutory requirements in force.

The names and contact details of ICC members shall be displayed on the College website/notice board as appropriate.

3. FUNCTIONS OF THE ICC

The ICC shall:

- receive complaints of sexual harassment;
- provide information regarding the complaint mechanism;
- undertake inquiry in accordance with law;
- recommend appropriate action to the competent authority;

- promote awareness regarding prevention of sexual harassment;
- organise sensitisation/orientation programmes;
- maintain records of complaints and their disposal; and
- prepare statutory reports.

4. PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

The ICC shall undertake periodic awareness activities for students and employees, including:

- orientation programmes;
- awareness lectures/workshops;
- display of information regarding the POSH Act;
- dissemination of the complaint procedure;
- sensitisation regarding respectful behaviour and gender equality.

The College shall make the ICC contact details and complaint procedure reasonably accessible.

5. WHO MAY MAKE A COMPLAINT

A woman employee or student who alleges sexual harassment at the workplace may submit a complaint in accordance with the POSH Act.
Where the complainant is unable to make a complaint in writing because of physical or other incapacity, the ICC shall provide reasonable assistance as prescribed by law.
Complaints shall be dealt with sensitively and without discrimination.

6. SUBMISSION OF COMPLAINT

A complaint shall ordinarily be made in writing within the period prescribed under the **POSH Act**, subject to the provisions relating to extension of time.
The complaint should contain sufficient details of:

- the alleged incident(s);
- date/time and place;
- persons involved; and
- available supporting documents or names of witnesses, where applicable.

The ICC shall assist the complainant in reducing the complaint to writing where required.

7. RECEIPT AND REGISTRATION

Upon receipt of a complaint, the ICC shall:

i. acknowledge its receipt;
ii. register the complaint confidentially;
iii. determine whether the complaint falls within its jurisdiction;
iv. inform the complainant about the procedure; and

v. proceed in accordance with the POSH Act and Rules.

The identity of the complainant, respondent and witnesses shall be kept confidential as required by law.

8. INQUIRY

Where an inquiry is required, the ICC shall conduct it in accordance with the **POSH Act and Rules** and principles of natural justice.

The respondent shall be informed of the allegations and given an appropriate opportunity to present a response and evidence.

Both parties shall be treated fairly.

The ICC shall examine relevant documents, statements and evidence and may call witnesses as permitted by law.

9. INTERIM RELIEF

During the pendency of an inquiry, the ICC may recommend appropriate interim measures available under the POSH Act, including measures relating to:

- transfer of the complainant or respondent;
- leave to the complainant as provided by law; or
- other appropriate relief within the statutory framework.

The safety and dignity of the complainant shall be given due consideration.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

The proceedings of the ICC shall be treated as confidential.

The identity of:

- the complainant;
- respondent;
- witnesses; and
- details of the complaint and inquiry proceedings

shall not be disclosed except as permitted or required by law.

Members of the ICC shall maintain strict confidentiality.

11. INQUIRY REPORT

On completion of the inquiry, the ICC shall prepare its findings and recommendations in accordance with the POSH Act and Rules.

The report shall be submitted to the competent authority within the statutory period.

Where the complaint is proved, the ICC shall recommend appropriate action as prescribed under the applicable law/service rules.

Where the complaint is not proved, the ICC shall make its recommendation accordingly.

12. ACTION BY THE COLLEGE

The competent authority shall take action on the recommendations of the ICC in accordance with the POSH Act, applicable service rules and institutional regulations.

The ICC shall monitor compliance with its recommendations wherever required.

13. MALICIOUS COMPLAINTS

A complaint shall not be treated as malicious merely because it is not proved.

Action concerning a malicious complaint or false evidence shall be considered only in accordance with the provisions of the POSH Act and after following the prescribed procedure.

14. RECORD MAINTENANCE

The ICC shall maintain confidential records of:

i. Complaints received;
ii. Acknowledgements;
iii. Notices issued;
iv. Statements/evidence;
v. Inquiry proceedings;
vi. Inquiry reports;
vii. Recommendations;
viii. Action taken; and
ix. Annual reports.

Records shall be securely maintained with restricted access.

15. ANNUAL REPORT

The ICC shall prepare the annual report required under the POSH Act and applicable Rules and submit it to the competent authority/authorities within the prescribed time.

The report shall contain only the information that is required under law and shall not compromise confidentiality.

16. GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL

Any appeal against an order/recommendation arising from the proceedings shall lie before the authority specified under the applicable law/rules.

The ICC shall inform the concerned parties of the applicable statutory remedy wherever required.

17. NON-RETALIATION

No person shall be subjected to retaliation, intimidation or adverse treatment merely for making a complaint, participating as a witness, or assisting in proceedings under the POSH framework, subject to applicable law.

The College shall endeavor to ensure that the complaint process does not result in victimization of the complainant or witnesses.

18. REVIEW OF SOP

The SOP shall be reviewed whenever there is an amendment to the **POSH Act/Rules, UGC regulations, H.P. University provisions or other applicable Government instructions**. In case of any inconsistency, the applicable statutory provisions shall prevail.

Approved by: Principal, St. Bede's College, Shimla

Signature: Sr. Rosily

Officiating Principal
St. Bede's College
Shimla -171002

Date: 27-10-2026

Convener: Dr. Sapna Sharma

Signature: