

Policy for social interaction at Vestjyllands Højskole

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Guidelines for socializing at Vestjyllands Højskole

Vestjyllands Højskole is a place where people meet across age and cultural divisions, and the meetings between people are absolutely central to our educational culture at the school. Education and detailed rules for socializing and behavior do not go hand in hand. There must be room to fail, to learn new things and to become wiser.

Therefore, the purpose of a policy for social interaction at Vestjyllands Højskole is to have clear guidelines for how we behave towards each other, what we can expect from each other in our community, what our responsibilities are - and what the consequences are if there is offending behavior.

To put it briefly, it is about how we want to be towards each other, what values we appreciate and what culture we want to be part of and create together at Vestjyllands Højskole, both among staff, students and course participants.

The policy for social interaction has been drawn up based on the school's core values, as well as input from management, staff and student groups, among other things through a cultural mapping of Vestjyllands Højskole and several educational workshops with a focus on coexistence and values.

In order for the policy for social interaction to be transformed into a culture of education, it is necessary that the school's values are displayed for the people who are together at the school at all times. It assumes that everyone, staff and students, knows and respects the policy. A culture where people meet will always be dynamic and under development, but the shared values are our references.

The policy for social interaction must contribute to

- That it is nice and safe to be at Vestjyllands Højskole
- That there is a culture of togetherness based on mutual respect
- That students, course participants and staff agree that Vestjyllands Højskole does not accept violations such as racism, sexism, violent behavior or other forms of physical, verbal or digital harassment
- That students, course participants and staff know how to act and seek help if they witness violations
- That there are procedures for implementing sanctions if the Policy for social Interaction is not respected

Vestjyllands Højskole's values for interaction

The school's foundation of values has a view of people that emphasizes personal empowerment, the common conversation and the democratic process. Seeing one's fellow man is central, and the school values curiosity, courage and seriousness, as well as knowledge, creativity and intellectual development - both in life's big questions and in the closely lived life, for everyday life as well as celebrations.

This view of humanity, and the culture that supports it, is based on values such as:

- Inclusiveness, which requires trust, respect and friendliness even towards what you do not understand or can identify with
- Curiosity, which promotes bridge-building across cultural gaps of all kinds, so that you can put your views into play, while at the same time being curious about others'
- Care and respect for the integrity and personal boundaries of others, including respectful tone and attitude

Everyone is welcome at Vestjyllands Højskole, as long as you are prepared to strive for these values.

In practice it means,

- That we take care of each other and thereby avoid illegal and offensive behavior
- That everyone can expect to be both respected and challenged on their views or their behavior
- That you approach every dialogue with curiosity
- That a perceived violation IS a violation for the person who experiences it. But that does not mean that it is a crime or that the person who is perceived as the offending party, per definition is a violator in the legal or ethical sense

Indispensable rules for togetherness

- Physical intimate/sexual relationships between staff and students/students at Vestjyllands Højskole is not tolerated by the Højskole and can be either be the reason for dismissal and repatriation
- No forms of illegal or deliberate sexual, digital or verbal abuse, bullying, violence or physical force are accepted

Principles for dealing with abusive behaviour

- Students and course participants are encouraged to speak up or intervene if they experience or witness offensive behavior
- Employees have a duty to intervene if they witness abusive behavior unless they themselves are in danger
- Employees have a duty to pass on information about abusive behavior to the management team
- Employees who have information about any iviolations, is subject to a duty of confidentiality towards everyone else, but is in return obliged to share information with the management team

Procedure for handling abusive behavior at Vestjyllands Højskole

- a) If a student or employee has been exposed to or witnessed violations at the school or perpetrated by persons associated with the school, the person concerned should, as a starting point, report this to the school's management, alternatively to a member of the school's board
- b) The procedure will then be that the principal and vice principal, as management responsible, together with two employee representatives from the working environment committee, hold an interview with the complainant and the alleged harasser (collectively or individually) to investigate the course of the case
- c) This must be done as soon as possible after the matter has come to the management's attention. In certain cases, several interviews may be necessary
- d) A memorandum is drawn up regarding the case

- e) The management has no authority to take a position on legal issues in concrete situations

Sanctions

If the report is found to be justified, the school's management must decide what sanctions should be applied against the harasser. Serious cases of violations result in permanent expulsion from school and a police report, while in other cases there may be a warning or periodic expulsion.

Implementation

The policy for social interaction and the values it is based on will become a permanent part of the culture at Vestjyllands Højskole, by

- informing everyone about the policy before an employment relationship
- introducing the policy on all courses
- taking the policy up for debate every approx. 6 months in connection with evaluations

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