Newbattle Abbey College
Colaiste Abaid a'Bhatail Nuaidh

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE POLICY

Gender-Based Violence Policy and Support Framework

1. Purpose and context

At Newbattle Abbey College, we are committed to fostering a community where all staff, students and visitors are treated with dignity and respect, and where people feel safe, supported and able to participate fully in learning and work.

We recognise that gender-based violence can affect individuals in different ways, impacting wellbeing, confidence and the ability to engage with College life. We also recognise that such experiences can affect people of all genders and backgrounds.

The College is clear that behaviours associated with gender-based violence are not compatible with our values or with the environment we seek to create. We are committed to taking a proactive approach to ensuring that the College is safe for learning and working, and that harmful behaviours are recognised and addressed.

This policy sets out how we will seek to prevent gender-based violence (GBV), respond appropriately and proportionately when concerns are raised, and ensure that individuals are able to access support in a safe and supportive environment.

This policy has been developed with reference to national guidance and good practice, including Scotland's Equally Safe strategy and the College Development Network's *Creating Safer Colleges: A Practical Toolkit to Strengthen College Responses to Gender-Based Violence and Harassment* (2026).[1] The policy reflects Newbattle Abbey College's commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for learning and work.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals engaging with the College, including:

- students (including visiting students)
- staff
- residential users
- visitors, partners and contractors

It applies to conduct:

- on College premises, including residential accommodation
- during College activities (on or off site)
- in digital or online environments where this impacts the College community

3. Definition of Gender-Based Violence

In Scotland, GBV is defined by the Equally Safe strategy as, "*A function of gender inequality and an abuse of male power and privilege. It includes actions that result in physical, sexual, and psychological harm or suffering to women and children, or affront to their human dignity, including threats, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life*."[2]

In the UK-wide context, GBV is understood as: "*Any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will that is based on socially ascribed gender differences*."[3]

These definitions include:

- Domestic abuse
- Rape and sexual assault
- Stalking
- Forced marriage
- So-called 'honour' crimes
- Sexual harassment
- Commercial sexual exploitation/ Sextortion/ Human Trafficking
- Female Genital Mutilation

GBV can affect people of all genders, particularly where intersecting inequalities exist

4. Principles

The College's approach to gender-based violence is guided by the following principles:

4.1 The College will create and maintain an environment that is safe for learning and working and explicitly unsafe for abuse, where harmful behaviours are recognised, challenged and addressed.

4.2 All responses will be compassionate, non-judgemental and sensitive to the impact of trauma. Individuals will be supported at their own pace and will not be required to disclose more than they are comfortable with.

4.3 Individuals will be listened to, their concerns taken seriously, and supported to make informed choices about what happens next. Where there are safeguarding or legal obligations, the College may be required to take appropriate action to ensure safety and wellbeing.

4.4 The College will respond to concerns in a way that is fair, consistent and proportionate, ensuring that risks are identified and managed appropriately.

4.5 Information will be handled sensitively and shared only where necessary, with clear explanation of any limits to confidentiality.

4.6 All members of the College community share responsibility for maintaining a respectful environment and contributing to the prevention of gender-based violence.

4.7 The College recognises that gender-based violence is rooted in inequality and may be experienced differently across individuals and groups. Responses will take account of individual circumstances.

5. Prevention and Culture

The College adopts a whole-college approach to prevention, including:

- promoting a respectful and inclusive culture
- challenging inappropriate behaviour and language
- supporting awareness and understanding of gender-based violence
- promoting awareness of gender-based violence, wellbeing and respectful relationships, including where appropriate within learning activities
- working with external partners where appropriate

6. Responding to a Disclosure

The College recognises that individuals may disclose experiences of gender-based violence.

Specialist support is provided by the College's Student Wellbeing and Support Team and safeguarding team, who are responsible for responding to disclosures and ensuring appropriate support and action.

Staff who receive a disclosure are not expected to investigate or manage the situation. Their role is to respond appropriately and ensure that the individual is supported to access the appropriate team.

Where a disclosure is made, staff should:

- respond in a calm and supportive manner
- avoid asking detailed or investigative questions
- explain that support is available through the Student Wellbeing and Support or Safeguarding Team

- offer to put the individual in contact with an appropriate member of staff
- share relevant information with the safeguarding team where there are concerns about safety or wellbeing

All concerns will be considered in line with the College's Safeguarding Policy.

7. Support, Reporting and Response

The College will respond to concerns of gender-based violence through a combination of support, safeguarding and, where appropriate, formal processes.

Individuals will be supported by the College's Student Wellbeing and Support Team and safeguarding team, who will:

- consider any immediate safety concerns
- identify appropriate next steps in line with the College's Safeguarding Policy
- support access to external specialist services where appropriate

Support is available whether or not the individual chooses to make a formal report.

Where concerns relate to the behaviour of a member of the College community, the matter may be addressed through relevant disciplinary procedures. Any action taken will be proportionate, fair, and informed by safeguarding considerations.

10. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information will be handled sensitively and in line with data protection legislation.

Information may be shared where necessary to:

- protect individuals from harm
- meet safeguarding obligations

11. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff

- contribute to a respectful environment
- respond appropriately to concerns
- report safeguarding risks

Managers and SMT

- ensure appropriate response and oversight
- support staff and students
- ensure alignment with safeguarding processes

Student Wellbeing and Support

- coordinate student support
- act as a key point of contact

12. Review

Please refer to the College 'Policies and Procedures Lists and Status' for review timetable.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant College policies, procedures and guidance documents, whether specifically listed below or subsequently published or amended:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Dignity and Respect Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Disciplinary Policies

The College reserves the right to update, introduce, or revise policies and procedures from time to time.

Compliance with the most current versions of applicable policies and procedures, as published, is expected.

13. References

1. College Development Network (2026) *Creating Safer Colleges: A Practical Toolkit to Strengthen College Responses to Gender-Based Violence and Harassment*. Stirling: College Development Network.

2. Scottish Government (2018) *Equally Safe: Scotland's Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

3. Abogados Gold (n.d.) *What are the laws for gender-based violence in the UK?*

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Title:	Gender Based Violence Policy
Lead Officer:	Depute Principal
Date last reviewed	June 2026
Next Review date:	June 2029
Approved By:	Board
Date first approved:	June 2026