

CONSENT FIRST: A STUDENT POLICY ON TRANSGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Kaat De Vis & Sofie De Smet

8/07/2026



VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL

- Founded in 1834 as part of ULB and independent since 1970
- Situated in the capital of Europe
- 25.000 students
- 25% international students



TRUE OR FALSE

"Consent can be withdrawn at any time, even without reason."

"Most perpetrators of transgressive behaviour are acquaintances of the victim"

A large orange circular graphic is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

A TRANSGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY FOR STUDENTS

THE NEED OF A TRANSGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

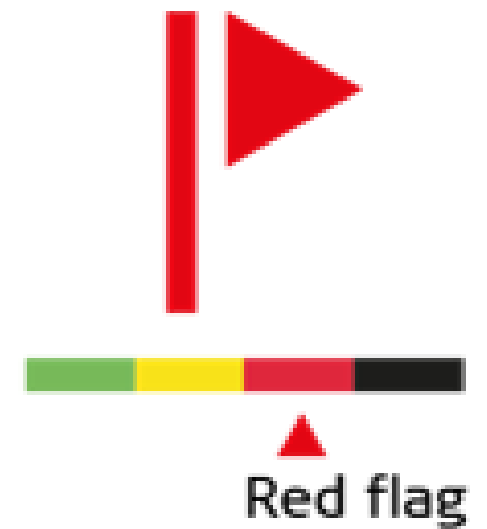
- **2016:** Alarming signals from student organisations
- **2020:** Lack of clear framework, demand for confidential persons within student organisations
- **2021:** During COVID-pandemic an increase of reports
- **2022:** Transgressive behaviour policy, approved by student council



GOAL?

TO ENCOURAGE POSITIVE
BEHAVIOUR AND TO DISCOURAGE
AND PREVENT BEHAVIOUR THAT IS
UNACCEPTABLE.

GUIDELINE: SENSOA'S FLAG
SYSTEM AND THE VUB CODE OF
CONDUCT



TRANSGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Preventive approach: Actions to promote desired behaviour and to prevent and deal appropriately with unwanted transgressive behaviour

Reactive approach: Responding to incidents of unwanted sexual transgressive behaviour and offering accompanying care, learning opportunities and recovery



PREVENTIVE APPROACH

- **Create general culture change**
 - Ask for Consent (Kick-Off VUB)
 - Presence VUB Meldpunt @Kick-Off
 - Sensibilisation initiatives during the academic year
 - Communication campaigns, f.e. “Party wisely” (Guidelines for safe nightlife, ...)
 - Training “power and abuse of power” for student organisations
- **Increase expertise (being able to detect and respond appropriately to unwanted transgressive behaviour)**
 - Interactive consenttraining
 - Bystander training student community
 - Training flag system confidential counsellors, VUB employees en administrators of student organisations



PREVENTIVE APPROACH

- **Instrumental efforts to intervene in situations of transgressive behaviour**
 - Safe space at every large-scale event
 - New visitors regulations: every visitor must behave in accordance with VUB code of conduct; transgressive behaviour will not be tolerated
 - Access control and visitor registration
- **Create a safe nightlife climate on campus, recognize signs of transgressive behaviour and prevent this**
 - Conflict management training for 'party presidents and vice president'.
 - Safety stewards
 - VUB-substance abuse policy



PREVENTIVE APPROACH

- **Student organisations**
 - New VUB initiation framework
 - Training and intervision moments for confidential persons
 - Protocol transgressive behaviour: guideline for student organisations



REACTIVE APPROACH

- **Report It Helpline**
- **Internal partners**
- **External partner**

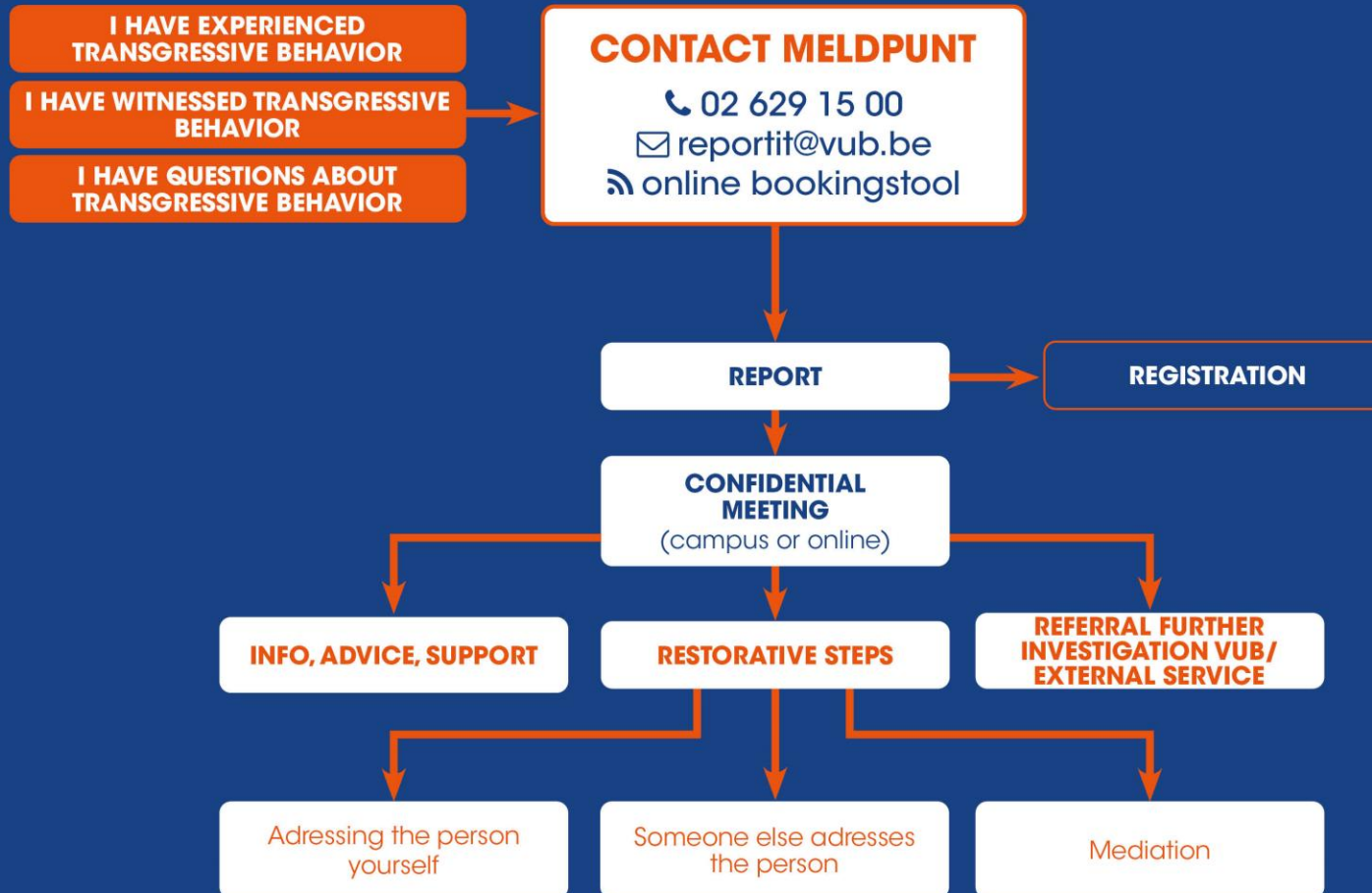


■ For who?

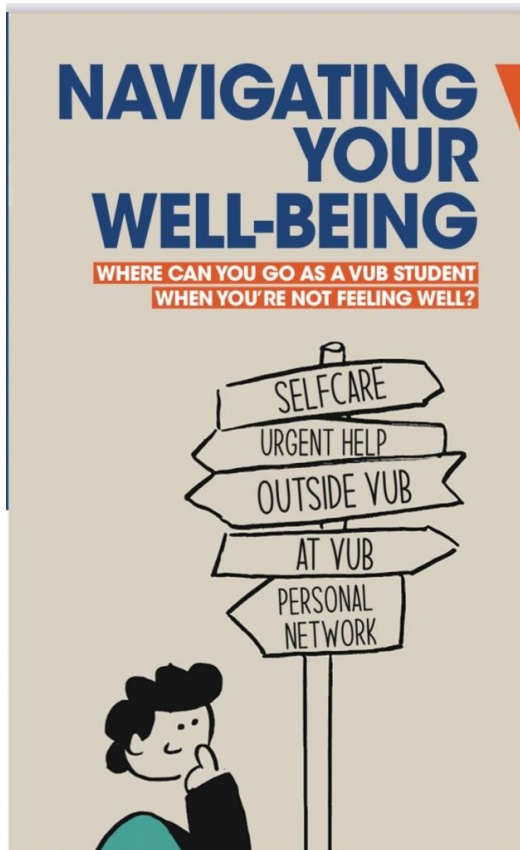
- a victim or directly involved person
- a witness or bystander
- If you think your own behaviour is or may be inappropriate
- If you have (general) questions

■ Fundamentals

- Professional secrecy
= no sharing of any information unless explicit permission
- Work independently



INTERNAL PARTNERS



- **Confidential counsellors for students**
 - A listening ear for problems or interpersonal conflicts on campus
 - Search for possible solutions, together with the student
- **Campus security**
 - First point of contact for incidents
 - Will accompany students on campus
- **Student psychologists**
 - Psychological guidance, individually or in group
 - Referral to more fitting external aid

EXTERNAL PARTNER: ZSG

- Sexual violence as a VUB–student in Brussels
- Transport from Main Campus or Health Campus to ZSG
 - Only by contacting the campus security
 - Costs covered by Student Affairs departement
- Provide training to confidential counsellors



Zorgcentra
na Seksueel Geweld



THANK YOU!

**IF YOU HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:
KAAT.DE.VIS@VUB.BE
SOFIE.DE.SMET@VUB.BE**