

# Belle II Workplace Environment Guidelines

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## Purpose, scope, and how to use this document

We at Belle II are fortunate to have a culturally diverse collaboration of talented scientists at all stages of our careers, with many different backgrounds and nationalities. We work together and learn from each other as we make advances and discoveries in particle physics, detector hardware, and software.

A collegial, safe, respectful, and inclusive working environment is crucial for the wellbeing of all members of the Belle II community, and hence for the scientific success of the collaboration as a whole. In particular, the Belle II Bylaws state that “**members shall not engage in violent, harassing, sexist, racist, or discriminatory behavior**”, and that such behavior may even result in removal from the collaboration by a 2/3 majority vote of the Institutional Board.

This naturally raises several questions:

- How do I know where the line between acceptable behavior and harassment is?
- What is the difference between sexual harassment and appropriate romantic behavior?
- What should I do if I suspect that harassment may have taken place, against me or another person?
- What should I do if I unintentionally hurt someone with harassing or inappropriate behavior?
- How do I avoid being misunderstood and hurting someone, e.g., by email?
- If I am in a leadership position, what are my responsibilities? How do I ensure the safe and productive working environment of my group? How do I ensure that work gets done on time without harassing or bullying my group members?
- Overall, how do I help foster an increasingly inclusive and healthy environment at Belle II?

This document answers these questions and others. It attempts not only to explain what is appropriate and what is not, but also suggests what to do in unpleasant situations or when mistakes happen. Beyond Belle II, the document may be relevant also for the university office, lunch breaks, social events, and similar settings.

It is strongly recommended that every member of Belle II consult this document. This is particularly crucial for people in leadership positions.

Let's start:

## **Harassment and other inappropriate behavior**

Harassment involves belittling, threatening, vicious, or inappropriate conduct or speech directed at an individual. It may involve insulting remarks about, for example, a person's body, age, disability, religion, nationality, family, pregnancy, gender, sexual preference, style, or fashion. Criticism of a person's work or their ability that is derogatory rather than constructive, social exclusion, humiliation, discrimination, unwelcome touch, objectionable gestures, and other demeaning behaviors also constitute harassment. One form of harassment is sexual harassment, to which we dedicate a separate section.

Severe and/or repeated harassment is often easy to identify. But sometimes you might not be sure if harassment is taking place. For example, maybe the negative remark you just heard was unintentional or could be interpreted differently depending on culture? Should you do anything about it? The next section answers these questions.

# How to respond, how to intervene

## In case of potential harassment or inappropriate behavior

If an inappropriate remark or behavior is directed at you, or if you witness it directed at someone else, there is a good chance you will be surprised and confused. Your brain will raise various doubts: maybe it doesn't rise to the level of harassment; maybe I misheard something or read the situation wrong; maybe the speaker had no ill intention and it's just how they speak; maybe the person who was the target of the behavior wasn't hurt; maybe by saying something I will only make things worse; maybe I shouldn't meddle in other people's business; maybe I should have said something immediately, but by now it's already too late.

Even if the speaker had no ill intention, it is important to let them know that their remark or behavior may have been hurtful and made you feel uncomfortable, to prevent this from happening in the future. Furthermore, if you are a witness, your intervention is essential, as it lets the person who was the target of the negative behavior know that they have your support and are not alone. Your response doesn't have to be perfect. Even a small step toward stopping the inappropriate behavior is important.

In doing so, remaining calm and non-confrontational in your choice of words and behavior will help avoid an escalation and will give the speaker a chance to apologize and fix the situation (see more below).

Here are some examples of what you may choose to say if you feel that you are the target of the misbehavior:

- "you probably didn't mean that, but what you said hurt my feelings"
- "please don't speak this way"
- "that's not a nice thing to say"
- "I'm leaving this conversation"

Note that if you feel that you are being harassed, you don't have to stay and take it. Walking away can be an effective way to end the behavior early on and minimize its impact. It will allow you to take your time to think, as well as seek support from colleagues, your supervisor, or the diversity officers.

If you witness what might be harassment, you can use essentially the same phrases to stop the behavior, e.g.,:

- "This is hurtful. Let's not speak this way"
- "Please don't use this word"
- "I'm not comfortable with such language. Can we make the conversation more pleasant?"
- If things escalate and you feel that stronger statements are needed, you can say something like
  - "I don't think saying this is appropriate"

- “I think this is starting to become harassment/bullying”

Even if you ended up saying nothing at the moment, you can still approach the speaker later and express your concern. In doing so, keep in mind that non-confrontational approaches are more likely to be effective. As a witness, consider showing your support by also approaching the person who was the target of the inappropriate behavior. Even just saying something like “sorry I didn’t say anything - it all happened so fast - but what they said to you wasn’t nice” can be empowering and helpful.

In a group setting, acquiescing to harassment or even going along with it can multiply its hurtful impact. In such situations it is particularly important to stop the harassment, e.g., with one of the comments above.

There are situations where people talk about a third person who is not present. This by itself is not necessarily inappropriate. For example, if a faculty member is considering hiring a postdoc or a student is considering selecting an adviser, it is common and appropriate to ask for and to give an honest opinion about the candidate. The key is that this must be done in a professional way. In contrast, hateful, demeaning, or ridiculing remarks about a third person are not appropriate. This constitutes gossip that creates a negative impression about the third person in the mind of the listener, contributing to a poisonous atmosphere that is harmful to the collaboration’s mission and to its individual members. In such situations, in addition to the responses above, we may help stop the behavior by saying, e.g.,

- “I’d rather not talk about someone behind their back”
- “Let’s not engage in gossip”

In any case of suspected harassment or inappropriate behavior, whether mild or severe, you are encouraged to consult with the diversity officers. Their role is to provide support and guidance. If appropriate, they can help to find a solution or even take action against a harasser. In any case, anything you say will be strictly confidential, and no action whatsoever will be taken without your consent and the consent of the person being targeted by the harassment.

## **If you unintentionally make an inappropriate remark**

Despite our best efforts, any of us may sometimes hurt another person unintentionally. If we take a step back during a busy B2GM coffee break and spill someone’s coffee on their shirt, we apologize and get napkins to help them clean up. Similarly, if we unintentionally hurt another person with a remark, it’s good to apologize. In some cases, that person or someone else may call us out on our misbehavior, e.g., with some of the phrases above. But very often, it is up to us to realize that we may (even if not necessarily) have hurt a colleague.

If possible, apologize in person. But otherwise, apologize by email or other electronic means rather than waiting until your next meeting. (See the section on electronic communication.)

In apologizing, it's OK to say that you had no intention of hurting the person and that you made a mistake. However, make sure to respect their feelings even if you don't feel that what you said to them was that bad. Minimizing their experience by saying, e.g., "it was just a joke", "I didn't think you would take it so badly", or "you are too sensitive" is unhelpful.

## **Sexual harassment vs. appropriate romantic behavior**

As Belle II collaborators, we spend many hours every day on our research. The office and lab are like a second home and play a significant role in our identities and in how we feel about ourselves. This is a natural environment for forming relationships based on appreciation, trust, partnership, respect, friendship, and possibly also romance.

Our work environment naturally involves power imbalance. For example, an advisor, working group convener, or person in a management position has influence over the success of a student's work, their status in the collaboration, and their future employment prospects. This puts them in a position of power over the student.

The Belle II work environment is also multicultural. People with different backgrounds are sometimes used to different norms of what constitutes appropriate behavior and may misunderstand each other's intentions and feelings.

The combination of these factors may sometimes create a potentially complicated dynamic. To ensure a productive and pleasant work environment, particularly one that is free of sexual harassment, we must be aware of personal boundaries and engage in mutually respectful behavior.

Sexual harassment is behavior involving unwelcome and/or inappropriate sexual statements or physical advances in the workplace or other professional or social situation. Sexual harassment is illegal and punishable in many countries, including Japan.

Sexual harassment is different from welcome and appropriate romantic advances, which are allowed in the workplace and are socially acceptable in the right circumstances.

So how can we tell the difference between sexual harassment and appropriate romantic behavior? To determine if certain behavior crosses the line into sexual harassment in a given context, we ask the following questions:

- A. Is the behavior welcome? Has the other person expressed clear willingness and interest?
- B. Are the willingness and interest truly free, i.e., there is no power imbalance between the people involved?
- C. Is the behavior appropriate for the workplace and respectful of others?

If the answer to any of these questions is “no”, then the behavior constitutes sexual harassment, either directly or by creating an unwelcoming and negative working environment for the people around.

Specifically, sexual harassment is

1. Repeated offers of a sexual nature directed at a person who has expressed lack of interest in these offers (see below).
2. Repeated remarks to a person about their sexuality when they have expressed lack of interest in or displeasure with these remarks (see below).
3. Reference to sexuality or sexual orientation in a degrading or humiliating way. This may take place verbally or nonverbally, e.g., by touching or staring.
4. Dissemination of sexual-content media or text.

The harassment may be directed at a specific person or generally at people in the environment, e.g., by making general degrading statements of a sexual nature.

## **What is an expression of interest or lack of interest?**

In items 1 and 2 above, a key question is whether the person has expressed lack of interest in the sexual or romantic advances. Lack of interest can be expressed in different ways:

- Explicitly, by saying, e.g.,
  - “I’m not interested”
  - “I’m in a relationship”
  - “I’m busy”
  - “Please stop”
- Implicitly:
  - With body language, e.g., clearly ignoring the speaker, moving away, avoiding eye contact, facial expression of displeasure.
  - Changing the topic, e.g., “enough, let’s talk about the analysis”, or “what do you think of the comments from the review committee?”

Note: implicit expression of lack of interest is sufficient to communicate that the behavior is not welcome and that its continuation would cross the line into sexual harassment.

In contrast, one should conclude that a romantic advance or offer is welcome only if it is met with a positive response.

## When a power imbalance exists

When a power imbalance is involved, repetition (in items 1 and 2 above) might not be required for the behavior to constitute sexual harassment.

For example, if an adviser asks their student out on a romantic date, this may constitute sexual harassment even if it happens only once, as the student may not be in a position to freely express their lack of interest. On the other hand, suggesting to have a meal on a working day is acceptable social behavior among coworkers even in the presence of a power imbalance. Whether behavior is acceptable or not may depend on the individual persons, circumstances, and cultural context.

To clarify the difference from the case of no power imbalance: when there is no power imbalance, asking someone out on a date can be appropriate. However, asking them out repeatedly after they have expressed lack of interest constitutes sexual harassment.

When two persons with a relative power imbalance have a genuine interest in a romantic relationship, it is the responsibility of the person in power to dissolve the power imbalance. Note that many universities and labs have a policy that requires the people involved to report their relationship to the human resources department, to ensure that the power imbalance is satisfactorily dissolved.

## What to do if I see a situation that might involve sexual harassment?

Should I get involved or stay out of it?

As in any case of harassment, it's important to get involved, and there are various ways to do it:

- During the harassment incident:
  - Approach the harasser by saying, e.g., “please don’t talk like that”, “can’t you see he/she/they is/are not interested”, “enough”.
  - Approach the person being harassed, e.g., make eye contact, “are you OK?”, “this must be upsetting”, “let’s go for coffee”.
- After the incident:
  - Talk to the harasser, e.g., “that was out of line / sexual harassment / upsetting”.
  - Talk to the person who was harassed, for example: “I heard the conversation. It was really inappropriate”, “if you would like to speak about this with the diversity officers, I’ll support you”.

Your reaction doesn’t have to be perfect. The important thing is that simply by getting involved you send a message that the behavior was not acceptable, and empower the person being harassed.

Perhaps you heard only part of the conversation or are not sure if sexual harassment actually took place. Even in this case, you can break up the conversation casually, e.g., “let’s get coffee”, “Can I go over the slides with you?”. Even just joining the conversation and saying “hi” can help change its tone.

The Belle II diversity officers are the assigned point of contact for reporting or seeking consultation on sexual harassment and harassment in general. Such consultations are strictly confidential. The identity of the people involved will be protected, and no action will be taken against the wishes of the person who was harassed. With the agreement of the victim, the incident may be reported to the spokesperson and/or to the chairs of the Institutional Board and the Executive Board. According to the Belle II Bylaws, in extreme cases, a harasser may be removed from the collaboration by a 2/3 majority vote of the Institutional Board, and KEK and Japanese authorities may be notified.

KEK also provides a harassment counselling and reporting service, which the diversity officers will consult as well.

Note that retaliation against a person who reports sexual harassment is forbidden by anti-sexual-harassment legislation. Legal advice may be sought as relevant.

## **Environmental sexual harassment**

Environmental sexual harassment is unwelcome speech or behavior that is not directed at a particular person, but still has demeaning or otherwise workplace-inappropriate sexual connotations. For example, it could be jokes of a sexual nature, talking about sexual experience, posting, displaying, or viewing pornographic images or objects, or sexually suggestive behavior. Although no specific person is being directly harassed, such behavior is uncomfortable and hurtful for the listeners and strains the working relations among them and the speaker. These negative impacts exist even if the remarks are made after hours or in non-work settings. Feeling unpleasant, the listeners might feel compelled to smile, laugh, or ignore the remarks, but this is not to be taken as indication that the behavior was welcome. In fact, the behavior constitutes sexual harassment.

If you are in such a situation or witness it, you can stop the behavior by saying, e.g.,

- “Let’s change the topic”, or just starting a new topic
- “I find this conversation uncomfortable”
- “Please stop” if the speaker persists

In some situations, you might find it easier to just leave rather than saying anything.

## **If you are in a leadership position**

As a leader (manager, convener, coordinator, etc.) of Belle II or any of its groups, you are responsible for the smooth and efficient functioning of your group, as well as for the protection of its members from harassment and discrimination. Therefore:

- Familiarize yourself with all parts of this document.
- Remember that your behavior sets an example for all members of your group. Avoid even the appearance of harassing or discriminatory behavior on your part.
- Require that your group members follow the guidelines laid out in this document. Keep in mind that even a remark that seems only slightly unfriendly may be hurtful to its recipient. Even if this catches you by surprise, be ready to intervene - see the section above on how to intervene. Doing nothing may send a message that you perceive the behavior as acceptable.
- When assigning people to work together, be sensitive to potential issues in their relationship, such as unwelcome romantic advances (see the section on sexual harassment).
- It can be helpful to arrange for your group members to interact more directly, e.g., via face-to-face meetings, using video meetings rather than voice only, welcoming new members, etc..
- When appointing people for positions, avoid discrimination and unconscious bias by making sure to fully consider all suitable candidates and keeping an open mind to possibilities that may not have been obvious initially.

## **Succeeding as a leader: bullying vs. support**

A supportive leader fosters a comfortable and productive working-group environment and seeks to remove issues that may result in ineffective or hostile situations.

Leaders are often expected to finalize an important task by a certain deadline. In such a situation, you might feel that the work of a group member (let's say, a student) takes longer than it should or doesn't have the expected quality. The way you address such situations and challenges is important.

An unsupportive leader would get frustrated and blame the student, potentially resulting in bullying and even harassment. Furthermore, there is a good chance that this would not have the desired results and would also have long-term negative effects on the performance of the student and the group. Avoid degrading or insulting colleagues, or making unreasonable demands.

Supportive leaders set a good example and communicate to provide constructive instruction. To be effective in this situation, have an open and honest conversation with the student. Understand what the problem is: it might be just technical, but may also involve competing tasks and deadlines, difficulty to seek assistance, or even personal issues. It's your responsibility to

help solve the problem by providing or arranging for technical support, coordination of tasks with other leaders, or even just showing empathy as a colleague. This is likely to raise not only the student's ability to complete the task but also their motivation. It's best to have such a conversation one-on-one and in person, or by video conference if not possible (read the section on electronic communication).

## At meetings

Meetings are one of the major settings (in some cases, the only setting) in which Belle II members communicate. This makes the interactions that take place during meetings particularly important. In addition, electronic participation in meetings more easily leads to misunderstanding (see also the section on electronic communication), primarily since body language and attitude cannot be conveyed effectively. Here are a few tips to help make meetings smooth and effective:

- At meetings, we often review and potentially criticize the work of others. The goal of the critique should be to bring about an improvement, while causing resistance or animosity is counterproductive.
- Keep in mind that the presenter applied their talent and effort to the results presented. Avoid appearing to blame or criticize them personally.
- Before pointing out what you didn't like, consider mentioning something that you did like about the work presented. It can also be something general, such as "thank you for the nice presentation / your work". Try to see (and consider pointing out) what you can learn from what others are saying/presenting.
- Use professional, considerate, and friendly speech. Let people finish what they are saying and avoid cutting them off. Avoid giving the appearance of bullying, belittling, or ridiculing.

Finally, if you feel that someone is being inappropriately treated, it will be helpful if you intervene. You don't necessarily have to be confrontational - just saying something like "I liked this and that about your presentation" could be enough to show your support. The meeting chair, group convener and generally more senior collaborators have a particular responsibility to diffuse such a situation (see also the section on "If you are in a leadership position").

## Electronic communication

Electronic communication, particularly email, but also text messages or group chat, is perhaps the most common means of interaction in our global collaboration.

A main problem with electronic communication is that it only uses text, which is very different from the type of interaction that humans have evolved for. In natural, face-to-face conversation, much important information is conveyed nonverbally: the listener determines the speaker's state

of mind, mood, and intentions mostly from their facial expression, body language, and tone of voice, not from their words, which convey only “dry” information.

In contrast, the recipient of an email message inevitably reads between the lines of dry text to determine – sometimes wrongly – the sender’s “tone of voice”. When misunderstanding occurs, it is both unpleasant and negatively affects our work. Misunderstanding can more easily occur when we don’t know the other person, the situation that they happen to be in at the moment, or when there are cultural or language differences.

Keeping this in mind can help us avoid unnecessary misunderstanding and friction. Here are some suggestions for email senders:

- Remember that the recipient’s impression of your “tone of voice” is determined in the first sentence or two. Therefore, to avoid potentially giving a wrong impression, you might want to start off with something positive, even if you discuss a problem later. E.g., “Thanks for the useful presentation yesterday. I think there might be a mistake on slide 3.” rather than starting with “You had a mistake on slide 3.” Similarly, avoid negative words in the subject line.
- Last impressions are also important. Particularly if the email body contains some criticism, it can help to reduce potential friction if you end with “Thanks again for the interesting/useful/hard work/presentation/effort” rather than only “best regards”.
- As in the example above, consider softening criticism with words such as “there might be” or “perhaps”. It is common to allow for the possibility of a misunderstanding with, e.g., “I might be wrong, but it seems that...”.
- Avoid use of blaming, judgmental, or angry words. Stick to facts and opt for professional and respectful words.
- You might need to send an email about work that is overdue. In this case, consider softening your message by saying, e.g., “I know you are very busy, but it’s critical to have this by Tuesday” rather than “Please finish it by Tuesday”. (See also the subsection on succeeding as a leader.) It helps to provide an explanation to avoid sounding arbitrary, e.g., “we need this by Tuesday in order to meet the conference deadline”.
- Before hitting “send”, read your message again to avoid unintended misunderstandings. Consider the desired result of the message, e.g., that the recipient will willingly do what you ask them. Make sure you are not just expressing frustration or other negative emotions, which might be less effective.
- If your message was misunderstood, consider whether sending a rebuttal or even an explanation might just escalate the situation. If possible, seek to talk to the recipient face-to-face or by video.
- If a response to your message is delayed, keep in mind that email is not always used for instant response. People may take time to reply when they have other commitments, take time off on weekends, etc.

If you are the recipient of an email that you find offending:

- First, try to avoid a misunderstanding. Keep in mind the possibility that the message may simply contain dry information with no intended offense. Consider the message in the

context of your overall relations with the sender: how do they behave toward you in face-to-face conversation, what is their usual email writing style? If you do not know the sender, it's probably best to allow for a large systematic uncertainty in your interpretation.

- Consider meeting the sender in person or by zoom. This will allow both of you to understand each other better. If you email them to ask to meet, focus on technical points that you want to better understand rather than saying something that would escalate the situation. For example, you can say "I want to make sure I understand what you meant. Can we meet tomorrow?"
- Email that contains harassment, humiliation, or strong offense, particularly if this happens repeatedly, is not acceptable. What you should do in such a situation depends on many details. You are always welcome to consult on such issues with one or both of the diversity officers, with full confidentiality.

Just as with direct communication, email that is harassing, insulting, humiliating, or contains abusive words or content is forbidden and unacceptable at Belle II. (See the section on harassment.)

If you or someone you know has encountered such behavior, whether electronically or otherwise, we encourage you to consult with the diversity officers, who will try to help you determine the best course of action and may refer you to additional resources as relevant. Confidentiality is guaranteed, and no action will be taken against your will or the will of the person who was affected.