Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s)

What do I do if I am the victim of sexual discrimination, harassment, assault, and violence?

Anyone who believes he/she is a victim of sexual violence or unwanted sexual contact is strongly encouraged to IMMEDIATELY report these situations to the college.

- Security personnel is available 24 hours a day in the main campus and residence hall. Security can be contacted at 718-429-6600, ext. 130 (main campus), ext. 300 (residence hall) or ext.329 (annex building) or via email martin.capunay@vaughn.edu.
- Students may confidentially explore the situation and options available with the Office of Counseling and Wellness. You can contact Dr. Nancy Adegoke in the office of counseling and wellness at 718-429-6600, ext. 350 or via email at nancy.adegoke@vaughn.edu.
- Students can submit a formal complaint to the Title IX Coordinator for students who will investigate internally. You can contact the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, Ms. Jerima DeWese at 718-429-6600, ext. 221 or via email at jerima.dewese@vaughn.edu.
- Faculty and staff members can submit a formal complaint to the Title IX Coordinator for faculty and staff who will investigate internally. You can contact the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources, Ms. Mary E. Durkin at 718-429-6600, ext. 105 or via email at mary.durkin@vaughn.edu.
- Everyone has every right to report the situation to the New York Police Department (NYPD) by calling 911. If the student chooses to file a police report, a member of the college staff may accompany the student throughout the charging process.

How do I make a formal report with the College?

A victim is encouraged to report the incident promptly. The Office of Student of Affairs, the Security Department, the Dean of Students, or members of the Residence Life staff are designated college officials to receive and address incident reports. The College will interview the victim and conduct a thorough investigation. When an investigation is conducted, the Dean of Students will initiate the College’s fact-finding and judicial process.
If I do make a formal report with the College, do I have to go to the police?

No, but if the situation is reported to the police, a College official may accompany the student to the New York City Police Department. Vaughn College encourages any student who is the victim of a sexual violence to notify the College immediately and to report the incident to the NYPD. In certain cases, the College reserves the right to notify local law enforcement as required by statute. Students always have the right to report any alleged crime to law enforcement directly.

What if I want to make a formal complaint with the College (but not to involve NYPD), what happens?

A victim is encouraged to report the incident to the College. When a member of the administrative staff is notified of a potential sexual assault or sexual violence an immediate investigation (informal and/or formal) is initiated. A member of the Student Affairs staff will contact you to schedule a meeting and take your complaint. The College may then interview the alleged attacker and any witnesses. In certain cases, the College reserves the right to notify local law enforcement as required by statute.

Will the person who did this know I am talking with the College?

If a student meets with the Office of Counseling and Wellness to explore options, that meeting is confidential. If the student reports the incident to another member of the Student Affairs staff and/or the Security Department, the alleged attacker may be interviewed as part of the investigation process.

If I do make a formal report, will I have to face the person in the fact-finding process?

No. Vaughn’s process does not involve having to see or speak with the alleged attacker or to be questioned by his/her representatives. Processes outside the College, such as those in the criminal justice system, may require this. Vaughn will support and may accompany the student as these details are explained by outside authorities.

If I do make a formal report, will I have to participate in mediation with this person?

No. The College handles the investigation with each party separately.

What if someone retaliates against me for making the complaint?

An individual reporting sexual discrimination, harassment, misconduct, assault, or violence is entitled to protection from any form of retaliation following a report that is made in good faith, even if the report is later not proven. Retaliation violates College policy. Any member of the College community who attempts to interfere with, restrain, coerce, discriminate against, or harass (whether overtly or covertly) any individual (complainant, bystander, or investigator) pursuing a complaint of sexual discrimination, harassment, misconduct, assault, or violence will be subject to prompt and appropriate disciplinary actions. Any student, faculty, or staff member who files a false, malicious, or frivolous charge of sexual discrimination, harassment, misconduct, assault, or violence may be subject to disciplinary action. The procedure for reporting retaliation and other violations is outlined HERE.
Will I have to move from the residence hall?

No. A reported victim of a sexual assault or violence will not be required to move. In the majority of cases, once a report is made and the investigation begins, the alleged attacker is moved to another location if he/she lives on campus and in proximity to the reported victim.

I have heard that investigations at other schools take a long time. How long will Vaughn's process take?

Vaughn’s judicial process for sexual assault or violence typically takes about one month. Some cases are more rapid while others can take longer depending on the details of the case, the time of year and other factors. Vaughn works to make things move as quickly and judiciously as possible.

Do I have to prove that I have been the victim of a sexual offense?

No. Vaughn does not place the burden of “proving” that an attack has occurred on the student. As the incident is investigated, the Dean of Students works with a standard called “preponderance of evidence.” This means that the dean will use his/her judgment based on all available information from Security, the victim, the alleged attacker and witness interviews to determine whether there is enough information to confirm that a violation of College policy has occurred and what the appropriate action by the College will be.

Do I have to tell my story before a panel?

No, the Vaughn process of investigation is confidential. Meetings and interviews are private and may include the victim, a support person and the Dean of Students only. The alleged attacker is interviewed separately with his/her own support person. If a student appeals the outcome of the investigation, however, it is possible that the victim would be called by the Judicial Conduct Board or designated appeals officer. Calling of a victim by an appeals board is strongly discouraged. In the event that an appeal is filed the Dean of Students will present all relevant information to the board.

What if I have class with the person who attacked me?

While every case is different, efforts will be made to assist the student victim in eliminating or minimizing contact with the alleged attacker. When a situation is reported and/or being investigated, all parties are warned to avoid contact or risk adjudication. In some cases, the alleged attacker may be removed from the residence hall or campus pending the outcome of the case. Unless notified that the alleged attacker has been removed, the student should be prepared for the possibility of seeing the alleged attacker on campus. Student victims are encouraged to inform the College as soon as possible if he/she has classes or lives nears the alleged attacker. In any case, it will be important to avoid contact with this person.
Can I make a report about someone with whom I have been in a relationship?

Yes, a student can file a report anytime he/she feels they have been a victim of sexual assault or violence about anyone they believe has violated their rights and the College’s policy on sexual offenses, assault or violence. There may be times when this person has an existing relationship with the attacker. People in relationships can violate the sexual offenses, assault or violence policy and it is important for the victim to receive assistance and know their options for reporting the incident. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Student Affairs if they have been sexually assaulted.

What if the incident involves a staff or faculty member?

You may use any of the reporting options listed above, but responses will be handled by the Title IX Coordinator for faculty and staff, Ms. Mary Durkin, the assistant vice president of human resources (mary.durkin@vaughn.edu, 718-429-6600 ext. 105, Annex building). The security department and Ms. Durkin will coordinate and conduct the investigation for any complaints involving faculty or staff.

Where can I see how many violations of Vaughn’s sexual offense policy are reported?

All crime statistics are shared with faculty, staff and students on an annual basis. The College routinely reviews security reports and publishes items from which names and identifying information have been removed for privacy.

See the Annual Security Report (ASR) at: http://www.vaughn.edu/student-services.cfm#security

What if I am a bystander and see something is wrong? How should a bystander intervene if she/he suspects or sees something is wrong?

If someone suspects a friend, acquaintance, or stranger may be in a high risk situation for becoming a victim, is being victimized, or has been victimized in any form of sexual offense, assault or violence, it is important to decide as a bystander whether there is a safe and reasonable way to intervene effectively.

Do’s:

- Remind friends that “consent” is the difference between sex and sexual assault and that someone can be too intoxicated to consent;
- Take the initiative to help friends who aren’t thinking clearly from becoming targets of violence (or) take steps to stop a friend who chooses to use violence;
- When possible, prevent an intoxicated friend/person from going to a private location with an acquaintance or friend;
- Contact Vaughn College Security, the Dean of Students or another person of authority who can assist.

Don’ts:

- Walk / run alone in secluded areas or at night;
- Leave a friend or acquaintance alone at a party;
• Leave your residence hall door unlocked;
• Place yourself in a vulnerable situation where you are unable to voice consent or say “no” to unwelcomed sexual advances.

Am I required to intervene and act as a bystander?

No, there is no legal obligation in New York State for a bystander of a potentially violent situation or crime to intervene or act.

Who should I contact with any questions about the policies and procedures in this FAQ?

The best sources of information are the dean of students, the director of student affairs, or the security department:

  • Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, Jerima DeWese at 718-429-6600, ext. 221 or via email at jerima.dewese@vaughn.edu
  • Assistant Vice President of Human Resources, Mary E. Durkin at 718-429-6600, ext. 150 or via email at mary.durkin@vaughn.edu
  • Security department at 718-429-6600, ext. 130 (main building), 300 (residence hall), or 329 (annex) or via email martin.capunay@vaughn.edu.
  • Dean of Students, Mr. Jack Gormley at 718-429-6600, ext. 302 or via email at jack.gormley@vaughn.edu
  • Director of Counseling and Wellness, Dr. Nancy Adegoke at 718-429-6600, ext. 350 or via email at nancy.adegoke@vaughn.edu
  • Director of Student Affairs, Ms. Kamla Holland at 718-429-6600, ext. 170 or via email at kamla.holland@vaughn.edu