



HARRASSMENT PROCEDURES

Purposes

- To minimise the possibility of harassment occurring at the school.
- To provide guidance in appropriate course of action in dealing with harassment.

Definitions

- Harassment is illegal and is a form of discrimination.
- Harassment is unsolicited verbal or physical conduct by a person or group and is:
 - Unwelcome or offensive or might reasonably be perceived by the victim as unwelcome or offensive
 - of a serious nature or persistent to the extent of having a detrimental effect on the individual's employment, job performance or opportunities.
- Harassment can involve:
 - personally offensive verbal comments
 - racial references
 - sexual or smutty jokes
 - repeated teasing or comments about a person's gender, race, body type, alleged sexual activities or private life
 - persistent unwelcome social attentions or telephone calls to workmates at work or at home.
 - being followed home from work
 - offensive hand or body gestures
 - unwanted and deliberate physical contact such as patting, pinching, touching, or putting an arm around another person's body
 - provocative posters with sexual connotations
- The above is not a complete list - other behaviours may constitute harassment.

GUIDELINES

Prevention of harassment

School teaching programmes

The principal will ensure that teaching and learning programmes include aspects designed to protect students from sexual abuse and racial harassment ensure that students know the steps to take when making a complaint and also where to go for support

Harassment of students

Harassment by members of the staff

Where a staff member becomes aware of the alleged harassment of a student by a member of the school staff the matter will immediately be referred to the principal.

The principal's obligations are to ensure the protection of the child(ren) and the fair treatment of the staff member(s) against whom allegations have been made.

The principal will follow the procedures set out in the relevant Collective Employment Agreement for complaints against members of the staff.

Harassment by other students or adults outside the school

Where members of staff observe or become aware of allegations of harassment or abuse of pupils by other pupils the matter will immediately be referred to the principal.

The principal will ensure that the best available information relating to the alleged harassment is gathered.

The principal will, in consultation with senior staff, decide on the course of action to take. This may involve:

- Referral to child protection agencies
- Informing and consulting parents
- Consultation with GSE support staff.

Harassment of staff members

In the first event:

In the event of harassment the complainant should in the first instance notify the offender that he/she does not condone such behaviour and it must stop.

In the event of repetition:

Should harassment be repeated the complainant should choose another member of the school staff to act as "buddy" and mediator.

The principal should be informed that there is an harassment matter being dealt with.

The person responsible for the harassment should be confronted by the chosen mediator and informed that the behaviour is unacceptable and must stop.

Assurances should be sought that the behaviour will stop and that an apology will be made. The principal is to be informed that the matter is resolved.

If the complainant, harasser and mediator can't resolve the matter:

The principal (or, in the event that the principal is the alleged harasser, the Board chairperson) is to be informed in writing by the complainant of the nature of the harassment.

The principal (or Board chairperson) will promptly investigate the complaint.

In enquiring into a complaint related to alleged sexual harassment under no circumstances will the complainant's actual or alleged sexual experience or reputation be inquired into or referred to.

If the principal (or chairperson) is satisfied that the harassment has occurred (s)he will take all practical steps to prevent a similar situation recurring.

The principal (or chairperson) may contact the complainant's union representative.

Care must be taken during the investigation and afterwards to prevent any disadvantage to the complainant and also to protect the position of other parties if the complaint is found to be unwarranted.

If the principal (or Board chairperson) does not satisfactorily resolve the matter

The complainant can lay a personal grievance complaint against the employer (the Board and/or principal) under

the terms of their employment contract, or
sections 210, 212, and 221 of the Labour Relations Act, or
the Human Rights Commission Act.

An employee who belongs to a union may seek the support of their union's field officer or counsellor.

Mediation

The Board of Trustees will fund a staff member being trained as a mediator for sexual abuse.

A staff member is free to seek support from the trained mediator or any other person they choose

If the support person / mediator fails to resolve the issue, the Board should set up a Grievance Committee to deal with the issue. The Grievance Committee would have membership to suit the situation.

Reporting to the Board of Trustees

The principal will report to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees any alleged incident of abuse or harassment. In doing so the privacy of individuals will be protected.

The Board chairperson will decide on the extent to which the Board will be informed and involved. In making this decision the Chairperson may seek guidance from the School Trustees Association field officers.