



Secondary School

Student To Student Sexual Harassment

Protocol

**This Protocol is the companion support to
the Comprehensive Curriculum Document
*The Joke's Over -- Student to Student
Sexual Harassment in
Catholic Secondary Schools***

With the gift of the Catholic Faith, Our Mission is:

Learning, growing, and transforming the world
together as faithful disciples of the Risen Lord.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROTOCOL

W.C.D.S.B. Staff Resource

Sexual Harassment is a serious problem in our community and in our schools. It is a form of violence that greatly impairs the right of students to learn, grow and interact in a safe and affirming environment. However, over 80% of female students involved in a confidential survey of representative Ontario High Schools reported that they had been sexually harassed in a school setting. Sexual Harassment affected their school work, their safety, and their self-esteem. ¹

The two major resources that influence our response are the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the W.C.D.S.B. *Safe and Secure Schools Policy*. The Preamble of the Ontario Human Rights Code states that:

“It is public policy in this province to recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every person and to provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination.”²

The Code specifically includes “sexual harassment and inappropriate gender related comments.”

Sexual Harassment is an anathema to Christian community. It violates the Spirit and the principles of equality, freedom, and mutual respect in relationships. Any form of discrimination or harassment is unjust; it denies persons their basic dignity and worth.

All members of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board community are responsible for creating a harassment free environment. Learning flourishes in an environment of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and the worth of each individual and his or her diversity. (*For the Safety Of All* pp. 20 - 21)

Sexual Harassment is unwanted, uninvited sexual attention. It may involve remarks, gestures, sounds or actions of a sexual nature that make someone feel insecure, unsafe, degraded, demeaned or uncomfortable. It creates an intimidating, hostile and/or offensive learning environment. Certain individuals, because of their physical, cognitive and/or behavioural characteristics, may be more at risk and less able to respond to sexual harassment. They may require even more special education supervisory vigilance/protection on the part of school staff and society. W.C.D.S.B. School Social Workers will be able to consult with staff to develop modified strategies to protect the safety of students with special needs.

¹ THE JOKE'S OVER - Student to Student Sexual Harassment in Catholic Secondary Schools, p.1

² Policy Statement on Sexual Harassment and Inappropriate Gender-related Comment and Contact, Ontario Human Rights Commission, 1993.

Sexual Harassment Poisons Our Environment

Sexual harassment by a male or female student could include:

- unwanted, unwelcome physical contact such as touching, grabbing or patting
- gender-related comments about an individual's mannerisms, clothing, or characteristics
- rude jokes or suggestive remarks of a sexual nature
- cat calls, rating (i.e. "you're a 10"), embarrassing whistles
- insulting remarks about sexual orientation including impersonations of speech or manner (For resources & teacher reference material see Family Life Program Head for Integrated Units Gr. 9 *Homosexuality: Issues in Human Dignity* and Gr. 12 *Homosexual Orientation: A Holistic Investigation*)
- gender-related verbal abuse or taunting
- sexually insulting remarks about race, culture, ability, or class
- names written on walls or desks, (e.g. "For a good time, call _____")
- displaying pornographic, sexual explicit inappropriate materials
- leering, ogling or inappropriate staring
- refusal to take a "no" in response to requests for phone numbers or dates, etc.
- intimidating hallway behaviours such as physically blocking a person's way or pinning someone to a locker making movement impossible

Sexual Harassment does not include:

- welcome flirtation
- sincere and personal compliments
- welcome signs of affection between friends

Sexual Harassment may lead to criminal charges

Some examples of possible criminal charges are:

- assault
- sexual assault
- criminal harassment
- uttering threats
- intimidation
- extortion
- false information
- indecent or harassing phone calls
- breach of Court Orders
- hate propaganda
- defamation

Negative Effects of Sexual Harassment

On School Environment:

Sexual harassment creates a poisoned environment, an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment

On Students:

Sexual harassment affects victims differently depending on such factors as frequency, severity of incidents, the victim's personal history, temperament and supports.

On Physical Health of Individual (stress-related)

- headaches, stomachaches or backaches
- other physical aches and pains
- nausea
- sleepiness/sleep disturbances
- changes in eating habits, body weight, eating disorders

On School Performance

- increased absenteeism, lates
- acting out in classroom
- inability to concentrate/feeling distracted
- lower grades
- loss of trust in the educational system
- skipping classes, dropping classes
- switching schools, dropping out of school

On Emotional Health of Individuals

- anger, irritability
- anxiety
- depression
- mood swings
- embarrassment, humiliation, shame, feelings of dread
- fear
- detachment, isolation/withdrawal
- less trust of others
- feeling intimidated and powerless
- lowered self esteem
- nightmares

Ineffective Ways That Students Attempt To Deal With Harassment:

- accept it as inevitable
- blame themselves; the way they look; who they are
- avoid school, certain areas or peers
- verbal and physical fights
- tell others (i.e. friends most often 60%, parents/family 20% of time, teachers 10%, no one 10%)
- take on role of harasser --- it feels more powerful to be the victimizer than the victim, if the culture supports this

Possible Proactive Prevention Initiatives:

- staff in-services
- posters, brochures, student handbooks (dissemination of information on Sexual Harassment)
- seminars in Grade 9 orientation sessions
- anti-violence/harassment days, weeks, organizing various activities (plays, community speakers, crosswords, poster contests, contests/published writings, poetry, songs about the issues)
- scripture studies
- school assemblies
- reminders on p.a. announcements
- establishing student/staff/teacher/parent harassment committees in high schools
- teachers behaving as role models
- incorporation in curriculum whenever possible: deliberately implement the specific Family Life and Human Sexuality program expectations re: sexual harassment and violence (available through the Family Life Dept.)
- implementing the resource *The Joke's Over – Student to Student Sexual Harassment in Catholic Secondary Schools*
- processing the sexual harassment pamphlets, posters found in *The Joke's Over – Student to Student Sexual Harassment in Catholic Secondary Schools*
- all teachers to encourage students, to develop projects and units that promote diversity, and prevent sexual harassment or violence
- inclusion in liturgies and school prayers (samples available in Family Life Dept.)
- offer seminars to parents on Sexual Harassment/violence awareness and prevention, gender bias
- offer recognition and or rewards to students/teachers/staff who serve as positive role models by treating people with respect, dignity, and equity
- peer mentoring programs
- make use of teachable moments--i.e. following an incident in the media, use this as opportunity for class learning on Sexual Harassment/violence, and reinforce illegal nature of behavior (caution should be taken regarding the possible personal impact of these on students)
- awards and recognition to schools where they have developed, implemented successful, innovative anti harassment programs
- drama, educative theatre

What's the difference between Sexual Harassment and Flirting?

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

makes you feel:

bad
angry/sad
demeaned
ugly
powerless

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

results in:

negative self esteem

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

is perceived as:

one-sided
demeaning
invading
degrading

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

is unwanted
is power-motivated
is illegal

FLIRTING

makes the receiver feel:

good
happy
flattered
attractive
in control

FLIRTING

results in:

positive self esteem

FLIRTING

is perceived as:

reciprocal
flattering
open
a compliment

FLIRTING

is wanted
is equality-motivated
is legal

SECONDARY SCHOOL SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROTOCOL

DEALING WITH AN INCIDENT

1. Staff member should encourage student to immediately remove themselves from the harassing situation

It is imperative that students be aided in finding ways of not being submitted to repeated harassment situations. Everyone has a right to safety.

2. Student should speak to someone *safe* regarding the experience.

- a teacher, youth care worker, chaplain
- principal, vice-principal, guidance counsellor
- friend, parent

3. Staff person / team will:

- Provide support for victim as well as others involved in the situation
 - listen to their concerns, fears and needs
 - commend the student for coming forward
- Plan for the safety of the student and the school community
 - determine if the victim should return to their normal schedule
- Maintain the privacy of the individuals as much as is appropriate

4. Staff member should inform your on-site harassment contact person

- Your school's Contact is _____
- In consultation, determine level of investigation which is required and inform Administration of the incident and together discuss level of response that is required
- Provide information regarding the victim's rights and this Protocol
- Keep documentation (who, what, where, when) - fill out form (sample attached - pages 9-10) and keep in confidential Student to Student Sexual Harassment file in administration office. Form will be destroyed when student graduates or leaves the school. It is essential that a notation be placed in the OSR documentation file indicating the existence and location of the file but not its contents.
- Refer for counselling where appropriate

5. Role of designated harassment contact person

- Immediately inform school administrator
- Provide consultation for staff and students
- Gather information
- Evaluate level of severity of incident
- Consult School Social Worker when appropriate
- Collaboratively decide who informs parents (administrator, guidance, harassment contact, youth care worker, etc.)
- ensure that the Record of Intervention form is filled out by staff member and placed in confidential file

6. Principles for handling complaints:

- Refer to *For The Safety Of All* document p. 21
- Must reflect fairness, firmness, and sensitivity
- A team approach should be taken to investigation
- Fact finding must be impartial and credible
- Fact finders must be sensitive and knowledgeable about human rights, in general and the provisions of the Human Rights Code in particular
- Caution must be taken as to the safety, characteristics and vulnerabilities of both victim and perpetrator
- The physical and emotional safety of both students needs to be a primary consideration
- Both the impact on the victim and the school community as well as the intent of the harasser need to be taken into consideration when deciding on intervention strategies and consequences

7. Some possible intervention strategies for the victim

- Designated harassment contact person and school administrator determine if the police will be contacted
- Plan with student how to inform parents
- Collaboratively create action plan
- Arrange for counselling (where appropriate)
- Consider change of schedule or class (although the preference would usually be that the perpetrator's schedule be changed if needed)
- Mediation (when appropriate for victim and perpetrator and conducted by trained persons - the victim must be offered the opportunity to decline mediation)
- Classroom behaviour consultation
- Offer to pray with and for the student
- Arrange further checking back with student (set actual appointments)

8. Some possible intervention strategies for the harasser

- Police investigation (where appropriate)
- Inform parents
- Essay written on harassment
- Community service
- Change of schedule or class
- Mediation (when appropriate for victim and perpetrator and conducted by trained persons)
- Detention
- Suspension (see *For The Safety Of All* p. 21)
- Community conferencing
- Counselling



WATERLOO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

RECORD OF INTERVENTION: STUDENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

NOTE: When this form is filled out, it is kept in a confidential file in the Administrative Office. Under OSR/FOI procedures, however, one cannot have another file on a student outside of the OSR without a notation in the OSR documentation file indicating the existence and location of the file. The notation only states the existence of the file, not its contents.

Alleged Harasser: _____	Birthdate: _____
School: _____	Grade: _____
Name of Victim: _____ Grade: _____	
Staff person first involved: _____	Date: _____
Date of alleged incident: _____	Location: _____
Harassment Contact Person: _____	Date Informed: _____
Administrator informed: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____
Guidance Counsellor informed: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____
School Social Worker informed: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Name: _____

Reason for referral: _____

<u>Interventions for Victim:</u>			
Parent Informed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Counselling Referral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class Change	<input type="checkbox"/>	Class Behaviour Consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mediation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____	
Planned follow up meeting date: _____			

