

ST EUPHEMIA COLLEGE

K-12



SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROCEDURES

2014

Sexual Harassment - Procedures

Procedures

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated at this School.

The purpose of these procedures are to:

- create a working and learning environment that is free from sexual harassment and where all members of St Euphemia College are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect
- implement training and awareness raising strategies to ensure that all employees and students know their rights and responsibilities
- provide effective procedures for responding to complaints based on the principles of natural justice
- treat all complaints seriously in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner
- guarantee protection from any victimisation or reprisals
- encourage the reporting of behaviour which breaches the Sexual Harassment Policy
- promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times.

Sexual harassment may include:

- unwelcome jokes and comments of a sexual nature
- leering and whistling
- displaying of offensive pictures and publications
- subtle or explicit requests for sexual activity
- unwanted and unnecessary physical contact such as patting, stroking, pinching, etc
- offensive messages sent by email, telephone, answering machines, faxes, notes, etc
- harassment around a person's presumed or actual sexuality.

Sexual harassment can have a serious adverse impact on the work satisfaction and performance of teachers and students. For example it can:

- affect work performance and opportunities
- create a hostile or unpleasant environment
- make employees feel insecure and anxious
- lower morale
- cause work health and safety problems, including stress related illnesses
- reflect on the integrity and reputation of the School
- be costly for employers in terms of time, money and other resources when having to deal with and resolve complaints.

Implementation

Sexual harassment is a broad responsibility. It involves more than responding once an allegation has been made. It involves minimising the possibility of the harassment occurring in the first place.

Strategies for prevention include:

- disseminate information to the total School community and workplace about the nature of sexual harassment, its causes and effects in the School community
- provide leadership in making it clear that sexual harassment will not be tolerated in the school or workplace
- monitor the School to ensure that appropriate standards of behaviour are maintained
- take immediate action on complaints of sexual harassment, in accordance with the procedures set out in this Policy and Procedures
- arrange appropriate in servicing of staff and students
- ensure that sexual harassment is addressed in the curriculum.

Procedures to Respond to Reported or Observed Incidents of Sexual Harassment or Violence

This Policy and Procedures aims to deter sexual harassment and to deal with cases of alleged sexual harassment promptly and objectively.

The main aims of sexual harassment procedures are to ensure:

- the behaviour stops
- that there are no reprisals for having made the complaint
- where disadvantage has occurred, that the situation is redressed as far as possible to the complainant's satisfaction.

Suggested Procedures for Students

1. All sexual harassment is unacceptable. No one at St Euphemia should ever be made to feel unhappy, undervalued or humiliated. Students must be informed that sexual harassment will not be tolerated and is against the law.
2. Student's complaints, in the first instance, may be reported to any staff member, but preferably to the Year Coordinator or to the Student Counsellor.
3. Any report of sexual harassment should be treated seriously and result in appropriate action. The person receiving the complaint should record it in writing.
4. The student who is sexually harassed should be assured that he/she has acted correctly in reporting the harassment.
5. In any incident involving sexual harassment, the teacher/Year Coordinator/Faculty Coordinator will interview the students, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the students concerned. Everyone involved should complete an Incident Report giving their account of the incident.
6. The aim of the intervention will be to stop the harassment. The most effective way of stopping the harassment is to ensure that the perpetrator changes his/her behaviour. As a follow up, the student who is sexual harassing will be spoken to, to explain clearly why their action was wrong and to ensure a commitment from the student not to repeat the harassment.
7. The student responsible for the harassment will be made to recognise that not only is his/her behaviour damaging the victim, but that other people in the School do not like the behaviour. Staff need to be aware that comments such as "It was just a bit of fun", "But I didn't mean it", "I was only joking", and "We were only mucking around" does not excuse harassment behaviour.
8. Counselling will be made available to both perpetrator and victim if this is felt appropriate.
9. Serious cases of sexual harassment will be referred immediately to the Principal/Delegated Authority.
10. In serious cases parents or caregivers will be informed and asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem.
11. Some sexual harassment could be considered sexual abuse and the terms of the School's Child Protection Policy would apply in such instances. Usually serious forms of sexual harassment involving students will constitute grounds for mandatory notification to Community Services. After the notification, the School will be guided by Community Services regarding appropriate follow up. At the completion of all investigations, the Principal will decide whether suspensions or exclusions are warranted.

Suggested Procedures for Staff

Staff expectations towards other staff and students are outlined in the School's Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Sexual harassment constitutes mandatory reporting to the Ombudsman.