

## REPORTING HARASSMENT



**Take notes.** After the fact, write down what you experienced as a target or witnessed as a bystander, in case it is needed in the future.

**Become informed**—Article E.2 in all local collective agreements outlines the rights of the target of sexual harassment and the responsibilities of the employer with regards to investigating and resolving alleged incidents.

**Contact your local president** for advice on how to proceed. They may advise you to contact **your administrator or human resources** to discuss an appropriate course of action. This could include informal resolution options or a formal complaint with your district and/or with WorkSafe BC. If contacting WorkSafe, call the Teleclaim line a 1-888-967-5377. They will connect you with a specialist in the area of sexual harassment.

Once the issue has been dealt with, you might want to consider restoring a positive relationship in the workplace. If so, you can **access the BCTF Internal Mediation Service**. Contact your local office or Sherry Payne, BCTF Assistant Director, Internal Relations, at 604-871-1803 or [spayne@bctf.ca](mailto:spayne@bctf.ca).

## RESOURCES



For more information, including lesson plans to increase students' understanding of gendered violence, strategies promoting a culture of consent, and a list of support services, visit the **Gender-based Violence web pages** under the Issues in Education tab on the BCTF website: [bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation/SexualHarassment/](http://bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation/SexualHarassment/).

*Division XV.1 of Part III of the Canada Labour Code establishes an employee's right to employment free of sexual harassment and requires employers to take positive action to prevent sexual harassment in the work place.*

*The Code defines sexual harassment as any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature that is likely to cause offence or humiliation to any employee; or that might, on reasonable grounds, be perceived by that employee as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any opportunity for training or promotion.*

Information on Labour Standards, 12 Sexual Harassment, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, page 1



RESPONDING TO  
**SEXUAL**  
HARASSMENT  
IN SCHOOLS

RECOGNIZE | REACT | REPORT

The #MeToo movement has brought to the forefront the alarming prevalence of sexual harassment in society. This has highlighted the need for teachers to tackle this issue and to develop knowledge and strategies to support colleagues who may be targets of sexual harassment.

## RECOGNIZING HARASSMENT



Article E2 of teachers' collective agreements provides the following definition of sexual harassment:

### E.2.2.b. Sexual harassment includes:

i. any comment, look, suggestion, physical contact, or real or implied action of a sexual nature which creates an uncomfortable working environment for the recipient, made by a person who knows or ought reasonably to know such behaviour is unwelcome; or

ii. any circulation or display of visual material of a sexual nature that has the effect of creating an uncomfortable working environment;

OR

iii. an implied promise of reward for complying with a request of a sexual nature;

OR

iv. a sexual advance made by a person in authority over the recipient that includes or implies a threat or an expressed or implied denial of an opportunity which would otherwise be granted or available and may include a reprisal or a threat of reprisal made after a sexual advance is rejected.

## HAVE YOU BEEN A TARGET?



**Always assess for safety first**—before responding, it is crucial to determine whether intervening can be done safely, without putting yourself at risk. If it is safe, you can respond in the way that you feel most comfortable with.

**Respond directly in the moment**—be assertive. Say what feels natural to you. In a clear and steady voice, look your harasser in the eye and say, “Do not speak to me like that. It is inappropriate and unwelcome.” Or tell them, “What you are saying or doing is harassment, and I will not accept it.” Do not be apologetic.

OR

**Engage later**—you may feel shocked or surprised in the moment, or the immediate context may make it difficult or unsafe to engage. If so, find your harasser at another time, in a place you feel comfortable, and speak to them directly. In a clear and steady voice, describe the behavior, how it makes you feel, and that it needs to stop. You may also remind your colleague that they are violating your right to work in a safe and comfortable working environment.

OR

**Seek support from an ally**—If you don't feel safe or comfortable acting alone, ask for help.

## HAVE YOU BEEN A WITNESS?



You have an important role to play if you have witnessed a colleague being sexually harassed. Remember to assess for safety before intervening. Consider acting in a group to avoid putting yourself at risk.

**Confront the harasser in the moment**—use calm, polite and precise language to call out the negative behavior. “What you're saying is harassment. You need to stop,” or “Your behaviour is harassment, and it's making people uncomfortable.”

AND/OR

**Run interference**—begin a conversation with the target, help them to remove themselves from the harasser, or redirect the focus of the conversation.

AND/OR

**Delegate**—if you feel unable to speak, find someone else to step in.

AND/OR

**Discuss the situation with the victim later**—if it is difficult or dangerous to act in the moment, walk away and speak with the target in private. Ask them how they felt and if they would like support.

AND/OR

**Talk to the aggressor in private later**—when and if you feel safe and comfortable doing so, let the person know their behavior was harassment and ask them to stop.