



PINELANDS HIGH SCHOOL

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. PHS will be proactive with regard to encouraging and promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment for girls and boys in personal, social, academic and cultural arenas at this school. Gender issues will be addressed in all grades as part of the Life Orientation curriculum.
2. We further seek to provide a consistent, sensitive, and appropriate response when sexual harassment occurs within the school community.
3. The school undertakes to offer unequivocal support for and protection to the victims of sexual harassment.
4. Reports of staff involved in any incidents of sexual harassment will be dealt with immediately in accordance with the codes and practices of the SA Council of Educators or other appropriate organisation.

DEFINITION

Sexual harassment is defined as any unsolicited and unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, physical, verbal or non-verbal, implicit or explicit. It includes sexual humour, remarks and innuendo, obscene gestures and comments, subtle pressure for sexual activity, any non consensual physical contact, including physical aggression such as pinching, patting, unwelcome brushing or touch, and sexual assault.

Sexual attention becomes harassment in the following instances:

1. If/when it has been made clear that the behaviour is offensive and unacceptable, and/or
2. If the perpetrator *should have known* that their behaviour is unacceptable to the victim, and/or
3. If the alleged perpetrator's behaviour causes the victim to be embarrassed, frightened, hurt, angry or uncomfortable.

The perpetrator's intentions do not determine whether or not their behaviour constitutes harassment. A single incident of unwanted conduct can constitute sexual harassment.

CONSEQUENCES

Sexual harassment constitutes serious misconduct and will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary policy of the school. Anyone who believes him/herself to be a victim of sexual harassment has the right to seek redress without prejudice. Each case of infringement on the above will be dealt with individually and all circumstances and all information will be taken into account. Confidentiality will be maintained unless or until such time as the complainant gives permission to the investigating body to disclose details of the case. Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that both parties adhere to the decisions taken. Rumours containing false information should be dealt with promptly and this may require some public disclosure.

The sanctions to be imposed will depend on the frequency and seriousness of the offence(s) and may include

- A contract drawn up between the learner and school, with parental consultation, outlining the actions required by the learner, and will include a written apology to the victim. This contract is to include the consequences for the learner if these actions are not carried out.
- Withdrawal of certain rights and privileges.
- Prescribed appropriate community service and/or courses designed to encourage responsible behaviour.
- The writing of an essay on an appropriate topic relating to the offence.
- Friday night detention.
- A public statement may be made to the school, giving the nature of the charge and the findings of *all* disciplinary committee outcomes, and the penalties imposed.
- Suspension in order that appropriate counselling may be received.
- Intervention by an appropriate legal agency of the victim's choice.
- Expulsion.