



# Sexual Harassment: Information for Youth

## What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is when someone treats you in a way that you don't like because of your sex or gender. It may make you feel embarrassed, scared, uncomfortable or sad. You may not be sure how you feel about it.

Sexual harassment can happen to people of all genders, but it is directed at someone because of their sex or gender.

## What are some examples of sexual harassment?

- 1) Something someone says to you that you do not like. For example:
  - A teacher or other adult makes comments about your body, says they are attracted to you, tells you dirty jokes, or talks about their sexual habits.
  - A coach tells you that you can't play if you don't let them touch your body.
  - Other students call you anti-gay slurs at school, on the internet, or by text because they think you do not act like a man or a woman is supposed to act.
- 2) Someone touches you without you agreeing to it, in a way you don't like. For example:
  - A classmate on the bus grabs your butt when you walk by.
  - A classmate tries to pull off gender-related clothing that you are wearing. For example, someone pulls off a girl's headscarf or hijab, pulls off a transgender girls' necklace or grabs at a girl's bra through her shirt.
  - A teammate sexually grabs an out gay member of the team in order to make them feel uncomfortable.
- 3) Someone shows you something that makes you uncomfortable. For example:
  - A classmate texts you a naked picture of themselves, which you do not want.
  - Someone at the bus stop flashes you.
  - A teacher or adult shares pornography with you.
- 4) Someone talks about you in a sexual way to other people. For example:
  - A co-worker spreads rumors at the restaurant where you work about your sexual activity.
  - Someone posts naked pictures of you on social media without your consent.
- 5) A hostile classroom or other space that makes it hard for you to participate. For example:
  - A teacher says that girls are bad at science.

## Sexual Harassment is Illegal at School

Sexual harassment is illegal at school **AND** at school activities like sports, theater, or school-sponsored internships.

Sexual harassment at school is illegal in 2 types of situations:

- 1) Someone offers to treat you better or not get you in trouble if you do something sexual with them, or if you don't tell anyone about the harassment. For example, a teacher tells you they will give you an A if you take off your clothes for them.
- 2) The harassment is so bad or happens so often that you feel uncomfortable or unsafe at school or school activities, or it is affecting your school work.

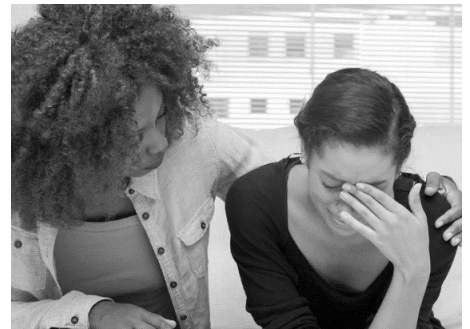
Remember, this type of harassment can be motivated by your sex or gender. This means harassment of LGBTQ students is often included in legal protections.

By law, ALL public schools have to:

- Have a sexual harassment policy
- Have a way to report sexual harassment
- Investigate all reports of sexual harassment
- Take steps right away to try to stop the harassment and make sure it doesn't happen again.

## What do I do if it happens?

- Write down details of what happened to you, and when.
- Tell someone you trust (a parent, counselor, teacher, etc.)
- If you want the school to investigate, you **MUST** tell a school official, like the principal. You can ask another adult you trust to help you make a report. The school only has to try to stop the harassment if a school official knows about it.
- If the principal doesn't listen, you can tell the superintendent or a member of the school board. You can also make a report to the school's Title IX ("Title Nine") Coordinator, who is in charge of dealing with sex discrimination. Ask your school for their contact information.
- You can also make reports to authorities outside your school, particularly if your school is not addressing your concerns. Contact:



**Minnesota Department of Human Rights**  
Phone: (651) 539-1100 or 1-(800) 657-3704  
TTY: (651) 296-1283  
<http://mn.gov/mdhr>

**US Dept of Education, Office for Civil Rights**  
Phone: 1-(800) 421-3481  
[www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html)

## Sexual Harassment is Illegal at Work

Sexual harassment by a supervisor, co-worker, or customer at work is illegal when:

- It happens really often or is so bad that you feel unsafe or uncomfortable at work, OR
- The person harassing you threatens to fire you, give you worse hours or worse pay, or some other bad result.

Remember, this type of harassment can be directed at your sex or gender. This means harassment of LGBTQ workers is often included in legal protections.



### What do I do if it happens?

- Write down details of what happened to you, and when.
- Report it to a supervisor – not just a co-worker. It is best to report it in writing. You can send an email or write a letter and save a copy.
- If your supervisor is the one harassing you, you can tell a higher-up manager instead.

You can also report the sexual harassment to state and federal authorities, particularly if your employer fails to respond to your complaints:

#### **Minnesota Department of Human Rights**

Phone: (651) 539-1100 or 1-(800) 657-3704

TTY: (651) 296-1283

<http://mn.gov/mdhr>

#### **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

Phone: (612) 335-4040

TTY: (612) 335-4045

[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)

**It is illegal to fire someone for reporting sexual harassment.**

## Sexual Harassment or Stalking in Other Places

Sexual harassment also happens outside of work or school. Some examples include:

- Someone you used to date keeps following you, showing up at your house, or spying on you.
- Someone you used to date threatens to out you as LGBTQ and uses those threats to control, hurt, or exploit you.
- Someone vandalizes your car or home with slurs relating to your sexuality.
- A landlord threatens to evict you because of your gender identity.

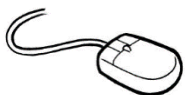
Tenants have other protections against harassment from their landlord or other people living in their apartment building.

See our fact sheets [Sexual Harassment in Housing](#) and [Orders for Protection and Harassment Restraining Orders](#) for more information.



## What do I do if it happens?

- Write down details of what happened to you, and when.
- Request support from someone you trust like a therapist or a close friend.
- Report the harassment to the police. Give them as much information as possible, such as:
  - The name of the harasser if you know it
  - What happened and how many times
  - Any text messages or notes from the harasser
- Apply for a Harassment Restraining Order (HRO) at your local court. They have the forms there or you can create a [ready-to -file HRO form](#) online at [www.LawHelpMN.org/forms](http://www.LawHelpMN.org/forms)



- Under *Abuse and Harassment*
- Click on *Harassment Restraining Order*

See our fact sheet [Orders for Protection and Harassment Restraining Orders](#) for more information.

## Support and Help

For any of these situations you can also get support and help from:

- The Sexual Violence (SVC) Center  
24-hour help line: (612) 871-5111 or (952) 448-5425  
[www.sexualviolencecenter.org](http://www.sexualviolencecenter.org)
- Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA)  
Phone: (651) 209-9993  
[www.mncasa.org](http://www.mncasa.org)
- Minnesota Indian Women’s Sexual Violence Coalition  
Find statewide resources on their website  
[www.miwsac.org](http://www.miwsac.org)
- OutFront Minnesota  
24-hour help line: 1-(800) 800-0350  
[www.outfront.org](http://www.outfront.org)
- CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio)  
Phone: (651) 379-4200 or (612) 746-3500  
[www.clues.org](http://www.clues.org)



***Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.***

*Don't use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.*

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