

# Co-op Procedures for Dealing with Incidents of Harassment on the Worksite

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to outline for co-op students and co-op teachers what harassment is and how to deal with incidents that may arise at the co-op work placement.

## **What Is Harassment?**

Harassment can take a variety of subtle and overt forms that involve comments or conducts that are known to be unwelcome (Ref. Ontario Human Rights Code Section 9(1) (f).)

## **Harassment Can Take Many Forms: For example...**

- Racial, religious or ethno cultural jokes are generally based on negative stereotyping.
- Name calling is the use of names or titles which are meant to demean or degrade.
- Graffiti and other forms of written communication which implies inferiority of a particular group of people.
- Threats, bullying and physical intimidation or harassment.

## **What Is Sexual Harassment?**

Sexual harassment is any unwanted attention of a sexual or gender related nature, or sexual advantage that negatively affects a person's work, study or well-being. It is not limited to demands for sexual favours, does not require a specific target, and is not necessarily intentional, whether subtle or overt.

## **Sexual Harassment Can Take Many Forms:**

### **Ex.**

- Leering and sexually suggestive remarks.
- Demeaning jokes and comments of a sexual or gender- related nature.
- Sexually explicit pin-ups and graffiti.
- Unwanted physical attention: touching, patting, pinching, and grabbing.
- Demands for sexual advances.
- Reprisal or threat of reprisal for rejection of sexual advances.

## When harassment occurs...immediately...

### STEP ONE:

- Acknowledge the problem- ignoring the situation will not make it go away.
- If you are feeling uncomfortable, discuss your feelings with your co-op teacher and your parent/ guardian.
- The co-op teacher informal observation within 3 co-op days and complete a monitoring visit report.

### STEP TWO:

- Document the incidents. Include dates, times, locations, witnesses and details of the harassment.
- Don't blame yourself – you cannot control the actions of others.
- The co-op teacher informs the co-op contact.

### STEP THREE:

- If you are comfortable in doing so, speak directly to the harasser. Make it clear that his/ her actions are unwelcome, that the actions must stop and that if the actions don't stop the supervisor will be informed. You may want to have someone else present when this occurs. Document the date and time of this notification.

And/or:

- Write a letter to the harasser expressing your disapproval of the behaviour and it must stop and that if it does not stop the supervisor will be informed. Keep a copy of this letter
- If the harassing behaviour does not stop, tell your co-op work supervisor and ask for a copy of the employer's policy and procedures on harassment.

### STEP FOUR:

- The co-op teacher arranges an alternate co-op placement for the student if:
  - the student wishes
  - the harassment does not stop
  - the harassment is not dealt with appropriately by the work supervisor
- If the harassment is not dealt with appropriately by the work supervisor, the co-op teacher and the co-op contact should terminate the placement for all future assignments, the employer should be notified in writing and the co-op office at the education centre is to be notified.

### STEP FIVE:

- If direct contact is not an option or if attempts at stopping the unwelcome behaviour are unsuccessful, you may wish to discuss options for filing a formal complaint.
- Co-op students may file complaints with:
  - a co-op teacher
  - a vice-principal
  - a guidance counsellor
  - the employer/ human resources manager with a copy to the co-op teacher.
- The co-op teacher notifies, with a copy of the written complaint: the principal, the co-op contact, and the co-op office at the education centre.
  - Include in the written complaint:
    - date(s)
    - times including duration
    - location(s)
    - name of alleged harasser(s)
    - frequency of occurrence
    - details of all incidents
    - any witness
    - how the specific behaviour affected you.

**NOTES :** Co-op teachers should document dates, topics of discussion, decisions and actions taken.