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# **Eliminating Harassment Policy**

# **NORTON RADSTOCK COLLEGE**

## **Code of Practice for Eliminating Harassment**

The policy of the College is that it will not tolerate any form of harassment by anyone of students/staff, users of the educational services.

This paper explains what harassment is, and what actions can be taken by victims to stop it.

### **What is Sexual Harassment?**

It is behaviour that makes a person feel embarrassed, demeaned, ridiculed or intimidated because of their gender or sexual orientation.

In the past many people have accepted some forms of sexual harassment because they did not know how to stop it.

Have you ever felt upset because of:-

- suggestive remarks/letters/comments?
- comments about your appearance?
- embarrassing jokes about sex or sexual orientation?
- offensive/pornographic pictures displayed in your workplace?
- unwanted touching or other physical contact?
- demands or requests for sexual favours?
- unwanted attention, presents?

### **Why Do Some People Sexually Harass Others?**

Sexual harassment is often an attempt by one person/group of people to display their power over another. It may be people who are unwilling to accept women as equals in the classroom/workshop and so seek ways of treating women as inferior. It may be used to try and intimidate lesbians or gay men into hiding their sexual orientation, or leaving their course. It may be used as a way of discouraging people from entering courses that have been held by the other sex in the past. It may be a way of using power at the college to get sexual contacts that would not otherwise be available etc.

Whatever the reasons for sexual harassment, many people will try to trivialise it as a way of justifying their own attitudes or actions, or as a way of discouraging victims from taking action.

The rest of this paper explains the ways in which you can take action to stop sexual harassment. It also explains what advice is available to you. Do not be afraid to seek advice if you are in any way concerned that the way in which you are being treated is sexual harassment.

## **What is Racial Harassment?**

It is any words or actions that make a person feel frightened, humiliated, ridiculed and/or undermined in confidence because of their colour, nationality or ethnic group.

Racial harassment can be:-

physical abuse;  
spoken abuse;  
insulting comments or jokes;  
written abuse, such as graffiti, offensive pictures, cartoons or other material;  
treating a person less well than other people of a different ethnic group for no good reason.

Victims of racial harassment are often isolated. They are often the only member of their ethnic group in a class or School etc. There would rarely be more than a few people of the same ethnic group. Some people may be able to deal with harassment and stop it. This is more likely if they have the support of other people around them.

Other people are not able to deal with harassment alone. Some people have been forced to stop using college services because of racial harassment. Other people have had to put up with it for a long time because they thought nothing could be done.

Any person (or their parents) who feels that they are being racially harassed should take action in the ways described below. Witnesses of racial harassment should also take action.

Norton Radstock College is committed to stopping racial harassment.

## **Why Do Some People Racially Harass Others?**

Racial harassment is an attempt by a person or group of people to exert power over others. It may come from people who will not accept people of different colour, nationality or ethnic group as equals. They find ways of treating them as inferior. They may succeed in frightening members of minority groups into stopping using services which they have a full right to use.

Some people will try to trivialise racial harassment as a way of justifying their own attitudes, or as a way of discouraging victims from taking action.

The rest of this leaflet explains ways in which you can take action to stop racial harassment. It also explains what advice and help is available to you. Do not be afraid to seek advice if you need it.

## **Other Forms of Harassment**

Harassment may be defined as behaviour of a deliberate nature toward people that can have the effect of diminishing their position, status or esteem. It may involve behaviour intended to undermine the persons well being, making the workplace and/or learning environment unpleasant and often intolerable.

The following examples of harassment all constitute breach of college regulations and should be acted upon. There are other examples that may also occur and require the same urgent investigation and action as the following:-

- i. Physical attack against a person or group.
- ii. Derogatory name-calling, verbal or non-verbal insults.
- iii. Graffiti or any other written insult.
- iv. Displaying unpleasant materials such as leaflets, comics, newspapers or magazines on the college premises.
- v. Making threats or bullying against a person.

## **Sources of Advice**

There are various sources of advice available to you, including the following:-

- a) you can approach your line manager, a Director or the Principal.
- b) each Head of School may wish to nominate a person who will be a source of help and advice to those people who feel that they have suffered harassment.

## **Taking Action**

Under the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures sexual harassment will be regarded as misconduct or gross misconduct. If there is a case to answer the college will take action under the Disciplinary Procedure. You can make a formal complaint under the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure. Before you reach this stage you may find that it is helpful to seek advice from one or more of the people listed in the section above, you may also follow the course of action suggested below.

- a) If you feel able to, approach the person yourself and ask them to stop the offending behaviour. If the harassment continues, put this request in writing and keep a copy.
- b) Keep a written note of incidents over a period of days or weeks including dates and times, and whether other staff witnessed them. (In

a case of severe harassment amounting to criminal assault, the police may, of course, be notified immediately).

- c) If you do not feel able to approach the person yourself seek advice from one of the people listed in the section above. They may be able to speak informally on your behalf.
- d) Always give the 'harasser' the opportunity directly, or through a third party, to explain or amend their behaviour, and keep a written note of what you have done.
- e) If the harassment continues, you should approach a senior member of staff and see if the college is prepared to undertake a formal investigation. If not you will have to decide whether you wish to make a complaint under the Grievance Procedure.

### **Recording**

Recording of all incidents of harassment can assist the college in reviewing its Equal Opportunities Policy and Aims. Such records should be organised as follows:-

- i. All alleged incidents of harassment should be reported to the Principal when they have been dealt with at a lower level.
- ii. Reports should include details of the incident sufficient to indicate its character but to preserve the anonymity of those involved.
- iii. The Principal should, where appropriate report these incidents to the Corporation in the context of a review of the college's policy statement on Equal Opportunities.
- iv. Such records of incidents of harassment should form part of a monitoring and evaluation of the college's Equal Opportunities policy that will inform new policies and procedures.