

SEXUAL HARASSMENT VS. BULLYING

Objective:

To outline the differences between sexual harassment and bullying and provide methods for handling sexual harassment in the workplace.

Some behaviors that are considered bullying actually fall into the category of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is unwanted behavior, in word or deed, that is sexual in nature and makes you uncomfortable. This includes lewd comments, explicit photos, and inappropriate touching. These acts go beyond bullying and are illegal under federal law.

Types of sexual harassment include:

- Physical: touching, caressing, pinching, tickling, kissing without consent
- Verbal: crass name-calling, sexual references, rumors that are sexual in nature
- Printed or online: unwelcome notes, phone calls, emails or texts with sexually explicit content

Ways to handle the situation:

- Don't ignore the harassment. This may cause the harasser to escalate his or her behavior.
- Tell your abuser to stop. Make it clear that you will file a report if the behavior continues.
- Keep a journal. Write down the incidents of harassment, being as detailed as possible and including when and where they took place. (See page 2)
- Tell someone. Present your journal and your concerns to human resources or your supervisor or, if that is not an option, make a formal complaint to the labor board in your city or town or contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
- Get legal advice. Talk with a lawyer who has experience with sexual harassment cases. He or she can counsel you in what constitutes unlawful sexual harassment and how best to handle the situation.

Print out the journal entry on the following page and document any harassment you experience.

continued

| Date | Time | Incident | Your reaction | Witnesses | Notes |
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