

Poster competition: End sexual harassment in schools

Summary:

This activity enables students to explore the issue of sexual harassment in schools and raise awareness about it among their peers. Students participate in group discussions and then design a poster about the school's zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. The poster judged to be the most effective is displayed on noticeboards around the school.

Learning objectives:

- Students can articulate what sexual harassment is and have an understanding of its impact.
- Students are aware of the school's policy on sexual harassment, including how to report incidents.

Materials required:

- Paper/art materials or computer for poster design
- Printer/photocopier
- Copy of the school's policy or statement on sexual harassment
- Printed copies of appendix 2 and 3

Duration:

- 20 minutes: introduction and discussion (teacher & students)
- 40 minutes: poster design - could be done as homework or during form time (students)
- 15 minutes: judging (teacher)
- 30 minutes: printing and distributing winning poster (teacher)

Age group:

Secondary

Instructions

Step 1: Task introduction (10 minutes)

- Divide students into small groups.
- Introduce the activity:
 - Introduce the concept of sexual harassment, including its definition and prevalence (see appendix 1).
 - Set out the school's policy on sexual harassment - including the process for reporting incidents.
 - Outline what the task involves.

Step 2: Group discussions (10 minutes)

- Provide each group with a copy of appendix 3.
- Ask groups to discuss the following questions in relation to each quote:
 - What makes this sexual harassment?
 - How do you think the girl experiencing this harassment might feel?
 - How do you think the school should respond?

Step 3: Poster design (40 minutes)

- Give each group of students a copy of the task overview (appendix 2) and any necessary design materials.
- Students design a poster that raises awareness of the school's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. You may choose to set this aspect of the task as homework.

Step 4: Judging (15 minutes)

- Choose the poster that you think most effectively meets the task criteria and announce the winner to students. You may wish to announce the winner in an assembly.
- Copies of the winning poster could be displayed on noticeboards and in classrooms around the school. You may also wish to display all of the posters in your classroom.

Appendix 1:

Supporting information

About sexual harassment

Definition:

Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which:

- violates a person's dignity;
- intimidates, degrades or humiliates someone; or
- creates a hostile or offensive environment¹.

Sexual harassment can include verbal, non-verbal and physical acts – including sexual comments, taking 'up-skirt' photographs, or unwanted sexual touching². Sexual harassment is a form of violence against women and girls. It is underpinned by unequal power relations between women and men.

Unwanted sexual touching, where the target does not consent to the touching and the perpetrator does not reasonably believe they consent, constitutes sexual assault³.

Sexual harassment in schools:

Sexual harassment is a common experience for girls in UK schools.

- Over a third (36.7%) of girls in mixed-sex schools have been sexual harassed at school⁴.
- Almost one in three (32%) teachers in mixed-sex secondary schools witness sexual harassment in their school on at least a weekly basis⁵.
- 25% of 11 to 16 year old girls say that concerns over potential sexual harassment make them consider whether or not to speak out in class⁶.
- Nearly three-quarters of 16 - 18 year olds say they hear sexual name-calling, with terms like "slut" or "slag" used towards girls at schools, on a daily basis or a few times a week⁷.

Support services

The following organisations offer information and/or advice relating to sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women and girls:

- End Violence Against Women coalition www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
- AVA www.avaproject.org.uk
- Tender www.tender.org.uk
- Women's Aid www.womensaid.org.uk
- Rape Crisis England and Wales www.rapecrisis.org.uk/
- Equality and Human Rights Commission www.equalityhumanrights.com/en

¹ <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/what-are-the-different-types-of-discrimination/sexual-harassment/>

² For further information about sexual harassment visit: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/what-harassment>

³ The Crown Prosecution Service: http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/p_to_r/rape_and_sexual_offences/soa_2003_and_soa_1956/#a11 [accessed 11/17]

⁴ "It's just everywhere: A study on sexism in schools – and how to tackle it", National Education Union and UK Feminista, 2017.

⁵ "It's just everywhere: A study on sexism in schools – and how to tackle it", National Education Union and UK Feminista, 2017.

⁶ Girls' Attitudes Survey, Girlguiding UK, 2015.

⁷ '2010 poll on sexual harassment in schools', End Violence Against Women Coalition, 15 October 2010. Accessed at: <http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/2010-poll-on-sexual-harassment-in-schools>

Appendix 2:

Task overview

The task

Design a poster that raises awareness of what sexual harassment is and sends the message that it is not acceptable.

Background information

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which:

- violates a person's dignity;
- intimidates, degrades or humiliates someone; or
- creates a hostile or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment can include verbal, non-verbal and physical acts – such as sexual comments, taking 'up-skirt' photographs, or unwanted sexual touching⁸.

How prevalent is sexual harassment?

- Over a third (36.7%) of girls in mixed-sex secondary schools have been sexually harassed at school⁹.
- Nearly a quarter (24.3%) of girls at mixed-sex secondary schools have been subjected to unwanted touching of a sexual nature while at school.
- Nearly three-quarters of 16 - 18 year olds say they hear sexual name-calling, with terms like "slut" or "slag" used towards girls at schools, on a daily basis or a few times a week¹⁰.

⁸ For further information about sexual harassment visit: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/what-harassment>

⁹ 'It's just everywhere': A study on sexism in schools – and how to tackle it', National Education Union and UK Feminista, 2017.

¹⁰ '2010 poll on sexual harassment in schools', End Violence Against Women Coalition, 15 October 2010.

Appendix 3:

Girls speak out

Below are three quotes from girls who have been sexually harassed at school.

Questions:

- A. What makes this sexual harassment?
- B. How do you think the girl experiencing this harassment might feel?
- C. How do you think the school should respond?

"The boys began to think it was hilarious to lift up the girls' skirts. Us girls felt we had to laugh along as well, despite feeling humiliated."

A)

B)

C)

"Some of the boys make comments on a lot of the girls in our years' bodies and the girls just have to ignore it because no one thinks it's a big deal. The boys also slap the girls' butts and touch their breasts without any consent."

A)

B)

C)

"A boy touched my bum and tried to touch my boob. I felt uncomfortable and I didn't tell him because I was scared but I tried to ignore him."

A)

B)

C)