



GUIDELINE FOR ADDRESSING **SEXUAL**
HARASSMENT
IN SECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

NOVEMBER 2023



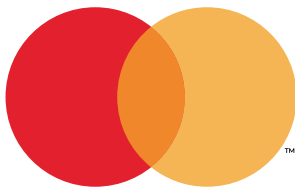
Ministry of Education
REPUBLIC OF GHANA



**Ghana Education
Service (GES)**



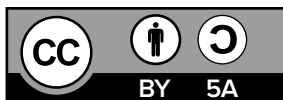
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FOREWORD

As the Minister for Education, it is my distinct honour and responsibility to introduce this crucial guideline on tackling sexual harassment in secondary education institutions in Ghana. This document underscores government's unwavering commitment to fostering an environment that is safe, respectful, and free from all forms of harassment in our schools. Sexual harassment is a serious issue that affects individuals' well-being, dignity, and sense of safety. It is a matter of utmost importance that we stand firmly against any such behaviour.

This guideline outlines our zero-tolerance stance towards sexual harassment whether it occurs on our campuses, during educational activities, or in any affiliated context. This document is informed by our safe school policy and codes of conduct for staff and students. It aims to create awareness, prevent harassment, as well as provide guidance on how cases should be reported and addressed. It also gives directions on appropriate disciplinary actions for sexual harassment.

All members of our schools' community, including staff, students, and affiliates are required to familiarize themselves with this guideline. By doing so, we collectively commit to upholding a culture of respect, and safe schools, where every individual can thrive without fear of harassment.

The development of this document is one of the first steps towards a comprehensive approach to tackling sexual harassment. This effort will be accompanied by continuous awareness, training, establishment of effective response systems, and stiff disciplinary actions. We further demonstrate our commitment to this cause by ensuring that all teachers take a mandatory online training in sexual harassment to deepen their understanding and support in its prevention in our schools.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to the development of this guideline including our dedicated team of experts, directors, staff, and students. I am particularly grateful to all the teacher associations and unions and to our partner, Transforming Teaching, Education and Learning (T-TEL).

I urge you to join these efforts towards fostering respectful relationships and being vigilant against any form of sexual harassment. Together, we can ensure that our schools remain a place where every individual is valued, protected, and empowered. Thank you.

Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum

*Minister for Education
Republic of Ghana*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Ministry of Education is grateful to all those who contributed to the development of this document. We wish to express our gratitude to the Ghana Education Service (GES) for leading this initiative. Our appreciation also goes to the National Teaching Council (NTC), for supporting continued professional development of all teachers nationwide, which includes the development of an online training course on sexual harassment for teachers. We are also indebted to all government institutions and agencies including the Ghana TVET Service and the Ghana Health Service for contributing immensely to the development of this document.

Special recognition goes to our Teachers Unions – the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT), Coalition of Concerned Teachers, Ghana (CCT) and Teachers' and Educational Workers' Union (TEWU), who provided first-hand experience and perspectives on addressing sexual harassment in secondary education institutions.

We acknowledge the tertiary education institutions who brought on board their rich experiences to shape the content of this document – University of Development Studies, University of Ghana, CEGENSA, and Ashesi University. We also appreciate the invaluable contributions of the various non-governmental organizations including CAMFED, the Girls Empowerment Movement, Education Resources and all individual stakeholders who contributed to the drafting of this guideline.

Special gratitude to our eloquent learners who shared their experiences and perspectives to the team, granting us better insight into the challenges they face and the expectations they have of what an effective sexual harassment prevention and response system should look like.

Finally, we express our deepest gratitude to our partner, Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning (T-TEL), whose dedicated team was involved in the research, drafting, editing, and design of this guideline. Your collective effort and dedication were indispensable in transforming ideas into this comprehensive and actionable guideline.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ministry of Education is committed to maintaining a safe and inclusive school environment for all learners, staff, and stakeholders through the development of a guideline on tackling sexual harassment in secondary education institutions. This guideline outlines the Ghana Education Service and the Ghana TVET Service's commitment and approach to preventing and addressing sexual harassment. The document is designed to:

- Provide a definition for sexual harassment and its various forms.
- Establish procedures for informal and formal reporting and redress.
- Provide guidance on disciplinary actions and appeal procedures.
- Promote awareness, education, and training on sexual harassment prevention.

This guideline, which is informed by the safe school policy and codes of conducts for students and staff, applies to all members of the school community, including learners, teaching and non-teaching staff, management and board members, volunteers/ interns, contractors/ consultants, parents/ guardians, and visitors. It covers all school-related activities, both on and off-campus, and includes electronic or online interactions.

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that creates a hostile, intimidating, or unfriendly environment. It includes verbal, physical, written, and visual conduct that interferes with an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from school programmes and activities or the work environment.

This guideline outlines clear and confidential procedures for reporting incidents of sexual harassment, ensuring that complainants can seek resolution without fear of retaliation. Report can be done through either a formal or informal system. Each school is mandated to investigate all complaints and take appropriate action promptly and impartially.

When a behaviour is identified as sexual harassment, it will attract disciplinary sanctions up to and including expulsion for students and termination of employment for staff. Sanctions will be based on the severity and frequency of the offense.

GES is committed to raising awareness and educating all school stakeholders on issues related to sexual harassment and safe school environments. Prevention education activities will be planned for annually and implemented by all secondary education institutions.

This guideline on tackling sexual harassment in secondary education institutions reaffirms governments dedication to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where all individuals can excel academically and professionally. Together, we strive to eliminate sexual harassment, protect the rights of all, and uphold the values of safe school.

ACRONYMS

CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education in Ghana
CCT	Coalition of Concerned Teachers
CEGENSA	Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy, University of Ghana
CHASS	Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
GEM	Girl Empowerment Movement
GEO	Girls Education Officer
GES	Ghana Education Service
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
GTVET	Ghana Technical and Vocational Education Service
HQ	Headquarters
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning
NAGRAT	National Association of Graduate Teachers
NTC	National Teaching Council
PA	Parents Association
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
SEI	Secondary Education Institution
SHEP	School Health Education Unit
SHS	Senior High School
SIA	School Improvement Advisor
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SPED	Special Education Division
SRC	Students Representative Council
SSFP	Safe Space Focal Person
TEWU	Teachers and Education Workers Union
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UDS	University of Development Studies
UG	University of Ghana

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SECTION

ONE

GUIDING
PRINCIPLES
AND LEGAL
FRAMEWORK

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introduction

The practice of sexual harassment contributes to the poor learning experience of learners and staff within the school environment. The widespread nature of sexual harassment has almost normalised the practice, creating a culture of impunity while many students and staff suffer in silence.

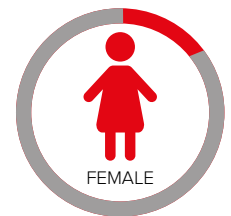
A study conducted by Agyepong (2010)¹ revealed that 92% of female secondary school students interviewed in Kumasi (Ashanti Region) had experienced some form of sexual harassment during the school term.

A recent (2021) study by a team from GES and T-TEL on practices in selected senior high schools in Ghana revealed that sexual harassment was common. Both teachers and students mentioned several instances of sexual harassment, including harassment of students by teachers and teachers by students. In one school, a teacher had been dismissed after being found guilty of raping a student in the staffroom, an incident which led to his arrest by the police.²

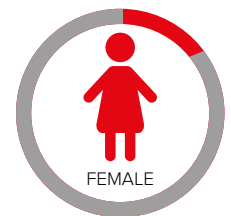
Sexual harassment is experienced by both females and males. A study by Norman, Aikens and Binka (2013)³ found that 61% of women and 39% of men were likely to be sexually harassed in Ghanaian medical schools.

Given its widespread nature, the phenomenon appears to be normalised, with severe effects and implications for students, teachers and potentially and entire school community. Nielsen (2020) observed that sexual harassment can negatively affect the victim's physical and mental health and can result in a variety of performance difficulties for student victims, including absenteeism, decreased quality of schoolwork, skipping, or dropping courses, lower grades, loss of friends, tiredness, and truancy.

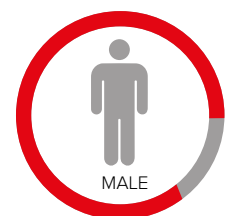
STUDIES
CONDUCTED
ON BOTH MALE
& FEMALE



2010 **92%**



2013 **61%**



2013 **39%**

¹ Agyepong, F. (2010). Sexual harassment against female students in senior high schools in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ashanti Region of Ghana. Unpublished MPhil. Department of Educational Foundations of the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast

² Transforming Senior High School Education, Teaching & Learning. Report on 'Dive Deep' fact-finding visits to Senior High Schools (SHS) and Universities. February 2021

³ Norman, I. D., Aikens, M., & Binka, F. N. (2013). Sexual harassment in public medical schools in Ghana. Ghana Medical Journal, 47(3): 128-136

Against this background, this document is developed to serve as a guide to secondary education institutions in Ghana on how to address sexual harassment. It serves as a supplementary document of the Ministry of Education to the Ghana Education Service and the Ghana TVET Service in tackling sexual harassment in secondary education institutions. This guideline will therefore be an addendum to the GES Code of Professional Conduct for Staff and their Students Codes of Conduct. The content of this document is binding on staff and students of GES.

Additionally, this guideline is binding on all individuals within the school community. This includes the following categories of individuals:

- i. Staff, management, and board members: All employees of the school/GES, including teachers, non-teaching staff, management, board members, support staff, and any other individuals working in the school.
- ii. Learners: All students, regardless of age or class level, including those on exchange programmes and participants in short courses. It also covers learner-to-learner harassment, staff-to-learner harassment, and learner-to-staff harassment.
- iii. Contractors: This guideline extends to consultants, contractors, vendors, or third parties who provide services within the school or have contact with students or school employees. Its reach covers School Improvement Advisors (SIAs) as well.
- iv. Volunteers: Volunteers and interns who work within the school or interact with students and staff within any capacity should adhere to this guideline.
- v. Parents and guardians: Parents or guardians who visit the school or attend school events are required to adhere to the guidelines and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the school's guideline and regulations.

1.2 Goal and Scope of the Guideline

The goal of this guideline is to provide definitions, procedures, appropriate disciplinary actions, and awareness strategies related to tackling sexual harassment in order to reduce and prevent its occurrence. The guideline specifically provides information on the following:

- a. What constitutes sexual harassment, including types and examples
- b. Reporting procedures and response mechanisms
- c. Disciplinary actions, legal actions, and appeal procedures
- d. Awareness creation and information dissemination
- e. Monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning

1.3 Guiding Principles

This guideline is underpinned by the following principles. These principles are in alignment with the Ministry of Education’s Code of Conducts for Staff and Students, the GES Safe School Policy, the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018 - 2030, the Child and Family Welfare Policy, the 1998 Children’s Act of Ghana (Act 560) and the Domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732).

- **Zero Tolerance:** All forms of sexual harassment shall not be tolerated regardless of the parties involved.
- **Non-Discrimination:** All individuals, regardless of their gender or other characteristics, should be protected from sexual harassment and where sexual harassment occurs, they should receive fair treatment through the entire process.
- **Non-Violence:** Sexual harassment, intimidation by inducing fear in another person, retaliation and all forms of violence is prohibited.
- **Fairness and Confidentiality:** All activities and strategies regarding sexual harassment cases should be dealt with fairly, promptly and in a confidential manner.

1.4 Legal Framework

The Government of Ghana has enacted domestic laws and ratified international conventions aimed at advancing gender equality and eliminating sexual and gender-based violence. The following legal framework serves as the basis for this guideline:

1. **The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana** prohibits all forms of discrimination and champions the rights and freedoms of individuals.
2. **The National Labour Act 2003 (Act 651)** prohibits sexual abuse in the workplace, and defines sexual harassment as “any unwelcome, offensive or inopportune sexual advances or request made by an employer or superior officer or a co-worker to a worker, whether the worker is a man or a woman”.
3. **The 2007 Domestic Violence Act (Act 732)** promotes the protection of individuals from all forms of domestic violence including sexual abuse. The law defines sexual harassment as any forceful engagement of another person in a sexual contact which includes sexual conduct that abuses, humiliates or degrades the other person or otherwise violates another person's sexual integrity.
4. **The 2015 National Gender Policy** entreats stakeholders to promote school attendance by enabling relevant sectors and agencies to address specific needs of girls and boys especially relating to school environment and attendance. These include tackling school-related gender-based violence; sexual harassment in school; personal care and development; safety and protection.
5. **Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2030** aims at eliminating all forms of discrimination, to enhance the right to education and to promote gender equality and empowerment within education.

6. **The Safe School Policy Guideline of GES** promotes safe school environment through the prevention of all forms of abuse including sexual harassment.

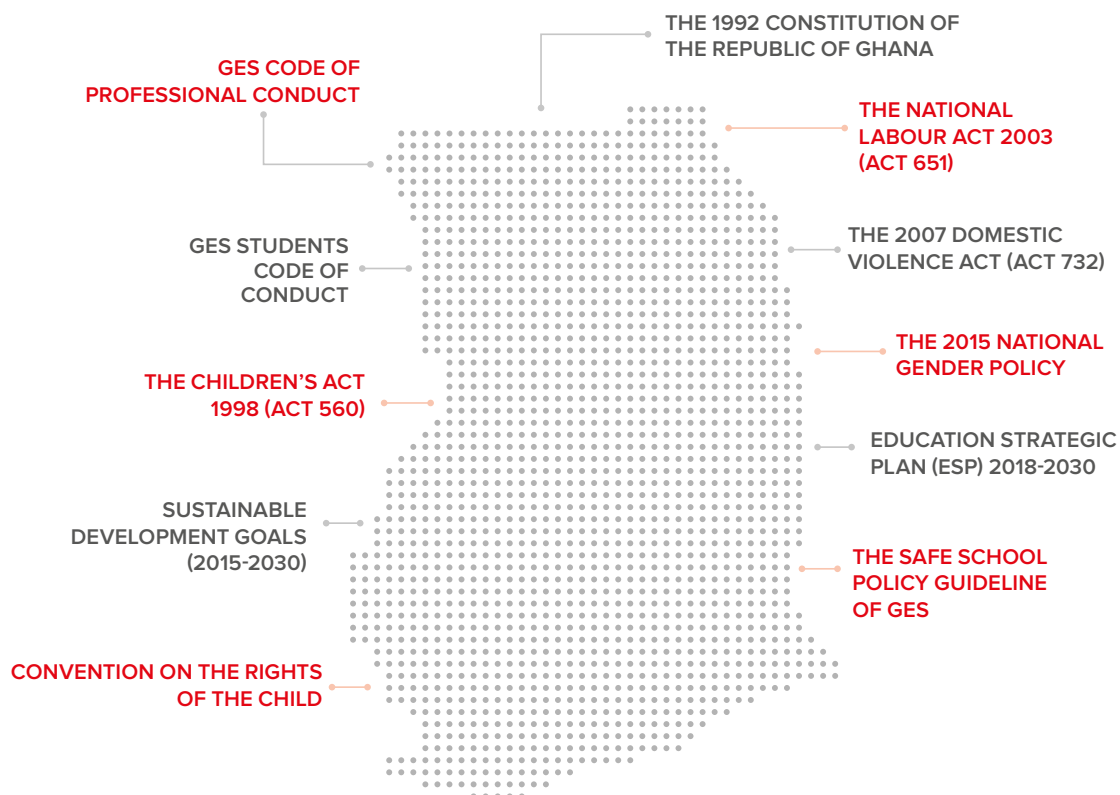
7. **The Children's Act 1998 (Act 560)** demands that the best interest of the child shall be paramount in all cases.

8. **GES Code of Professional Conduct** states that it is a major misconduct for an employee to do directly or indirectly anything that may constitute sexual harassment of the learner. It further prohibits inordinate affection.

9. **GES Students Code of Conduct** states that it is a misconduct for any student to do directly or indirectly anything that may constitute sexual harassment of another student or staff.

10. **Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030)** champions inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunity for all.

11. **Convention on the Rights of the Child** advocates for the protection of children's rights by setting standards in education, health care, and legal, civil, and social services.



SECTION

TWO

**WHAT
CONSTITUTES
SEXUAL
HARASSEMENT**

WHAT CONSTITUTES SEXUAL HARASSMENT

2.1 Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any form of treatment that involves unwanted sexual advances, requests and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. For the avoidance of doubt, any conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted by an individual constitutes sexual harassment. A conduct must be sexual in nature and unwanted/ unwelcome to be described as sexual harassment.

It must also be emphasized that the Code of Professional Conduct of the Ghana Education Service (GES) states that:

1. No employee shall directly or indirectly be involved in anything that may constitute sexual harassment of a pupil/student.
2. Any staff who has carnal knowledge of any female or male pupil/student of any age, with or without his/her consent, shall be guilty of professional misconduct.
3. No staff shall under any circumstance show any form of inordinate affection to any pupil/student. Inordinate affection implies the expression of love or likeness with ulterior motive.
4. No staff shall have any carnal knowledge of any pupil/student in his/her own school or in any pre-tertiary educational institution with or without his/her consent.

With these provisions, the GES code of conduct prohibits any form of sexual relationship between a staff and a student be it consensual or not.

2.2 Types of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment manifests in numerous forms in the school environment. It can be verbal, physical, visual, audio-visual, and online/ cyber and can be categorized into three types:

1. **Hostile Environment**
2. **Quid Pro Quo, and**
3. **Retaliation.**

2.2.1 Hostile Environment

This is when an unwanted sexual conduct makes a student's or a staff member's environment unpleasant or uncomfortable. When an individual experiences these unwanted advances which may/can affect them emotionally, physically, psychologically, then their environment becomes unfriendly or hostile.

Hostile environment examples:

1. Unnecessary and unwanted pet names such as, 'sweetie', 'baby', 'girlfriend' 'honey' 'boyfriend', 'my wife', 'my husband' etc
2. Unnecessary and unwanted nicknames such as, 'breastina', 'tundra', 'back axle', 'sexy', 'atom' etc usually based on the physical features of the individual.
3. Intrusive sexually explicit questions, asking personal questions about a person's sex life, such as spreading rumours about a person's sexuality, sexual activity, or speculations about previous sexual experience.
4. Remarks of a sexual nature about a person's clothing or body
5. Unnecessary and unwanted touching, pinching, massaging, dancing, hugging, tickling, fondling, or brushing up against a person's body.
6. Sexually suggestive stares, sounds or gestures such as winking, licking lips, whistling, sucking noises or pelvic thrusts.
7. Sexually explicit jokes, pictures, calendars, cartoons, internet images or pornographic materials.
8. Unwanted recurrence of telephoning, texting, emailing, comments on social media, following, stalking, gift giving, proposing, or asking for a date.
9. Unwanted propositions of a sexual nature (including those occurring in situations that begin as reciprocal attractions, but later cease to be mutual).
10. Spying on someone that is engaged in intimate behaviours, such as undressing, bathing, sexual activity or any other activity that is considered to be private.

2.2.2 Quid Pro Quo Harassment

It occurs when a person in a position of authority or power makes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other sexual demands in exchange for some form of academic or job benefit or threatens negative consequences related to one's academics/ employment.

The term 'quid pro quo' is Latin for 'something for something' or 'this for that' and in this context, it means that the harasser is seeking something sexual in return for a school/ workplace benefit or to prevent harm to the victim's education/ career.

Though in the case of quid pro quo sexual harassment, the harasser often has the power to make critical decisions about the academic or career status of the victim, a learner can also perpetrate same by offering sexual favour to a teacher/mastercraft person in return for a good grade, financial reward, academic favours, or other forms of benefit.

Quid pro quo examples:

1. Direct or indirect promises of academic benefits (such as high grades, letters of recommendation, testimonials, attestation, workplace experience learning (WEL) placement, participation in excursion or other activities), in return for sexual favours
2. Direct or indirect promises of work benefits (such as appointment to positions, promotion, housing, allowances, letters of recommendation, good appraisals), in return for sexual favours
3. Direct or indirect promises of financial or material benefit (such as money, provisions, phones, salary advances, loans) to a student, apprentice, colleague, or employee in exchange for sexual favours etc

2.2.3 Retaliation Harassment

Retaliation harassment happens when an individual encounters unfavourable consequences following their 1) refusal of a sexual proposition or advance 2) reporting harassment or 3) aiding another person in reporting a complaint. These adverse outcomes might involve social isolation, receiving lower grades, job termination, and are typically initiated by offenders to persecute the victims.

Retaliation examples:

1. Adverse academic actions or decisions (such as poor continuous assessment, low grades, social exclusion, badmouthing, poor treatment in class), because a sexual advance has been rejected or reported
2. Adverse employment actions or decisions (such as poor appraisal, failure to hire or promote, transfer, sidelining, social exclusion, poor treatment in the workplace), because a sexual advance has been rejected or reported etc

2.3 Impact of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can have profound and damaging impact on individuals, organisations, and society. It negatively impacts the physical, psychological, and emotional wellbeing of individuals, reduces productivity, and undermines safe environments etc. Below are examples of these impact:

Examples of Physical Impact

1. **Sleep Disorders:** The stress and anxiety resulting from the harassment may lead to sleep disturbances such as insomnia, causing fatigue, irritability, and reduced cognitive functioning.
2. **Chronic Pain:** Some victims may develop physical symptoms such as tension headaches, muscle aches, and back pain due to the prolonged stress response triggered by the harassment.
3. **Substance Abuse:** Some victims may turn to drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism.
4. **Weight fluctuations:** This happens when harassment leads to comfort eating, stress eating, among others. Some individuals may lose their appetite and eat very little, while others may turn to overeating or binge eating.

Examples of Psychological and Emotional Impact

1. **Depression:** Victims might experience persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a lack of interest in activities they once enjoyed. It can also result in anxiety disorders.
2. **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** Individuals who have experienced severe sexual harassment may develop PTSD, characterized by flashbacks, nightmares, and hyperarousal symptoms triggered by reminders of the incident.
3. **Withdrawal behaviour:** Victims of sexual harassment may resort to disengaging with peers and withdrawal from social settings. This can lead to a limiting effect on their socialization within the school environment.
4. **Low Self-Esteem:** Individuals who have experienced sexual harassment may struggle with feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy, often internalizing the negative messages conveyed through the harassment.

5. Emotional Detachment: Victims might find it challenging to form and maintain healthy emotional connections with others, as the experience of harassment can lead to emotional detachment as a coping mechanism.

6. Acceptance: This happens when sexual harassment is repetitive to an extent the victim comes to accept it and, in some instances expect it to happen as a form of coping. Acceptance can also lead to sexual addiction.

7. Eating Disorders: Sexual harassment can trigger various eating behaviours. Some individuals may lose their appetite and eat very little, while others may turn to overeating or binge eating as a way to cope with their emotions.

Example of Impact on Productivity

1. Absenteeism: The hostility created by sexual harassment may cause victims to skip work to avoid continuous contacts with perpetrators and this may lead to low productivity at work.

2. Decreased job satisfaction: Victims of sexual harassment may suffer from decreased job satisfaction resulting from edginess and this will eventually affect the employee's effectiveness at work.

3. Lack of concentration: Depending on the form and/or severity of the sexual harassment, victims may find it difficult to concentrate in the classroom and this may affect their eventual learning outcomes. This may also affect employees in the workplace.

4. Dropout: victims of constant sexual harassment may drop out of school or from a class to avoid constant contacts with harassers.

Examples of Impact on Safe Learning/ Working Environment

1. Disengagement: Victims of sexual harassment may not feel safe in such an environment to the extent that they disengage from their colleagues, do not attend group meetings and other learning/social gatherings

2. Indiscipline - victims who go through constant harassment may develop unruly behaviour towards the harassers and by extension to other individuals. Other students and staff who perceive that school officials ignore complaints of harassment may tend to exhibit high levels of disrespect and misconduct themselves towards people in authority.
3. Decreased job satisfaction: victims of sexual harassment may not feel content in their job due to continuous sexual harassment at their work or learning environment. This can also lead to decline in job satisfaction, academic demotivation, and less engagement in schoolwork, thus affecting their morale and enthusiasm negatively.
4. Decreased motivation: As an effect of continuous sexual harassment, learners or employees may not have the urge to learn or work effectively and efficiently. The learner might have a difficult time focusing and concentrating on assignments, thereby leading to poor academic performance.
5. Increased absenteeism and decreased learner performance: Victims may skip or dropout from school or classes to avoid continuous contacts with perpetrators leading to poor learning outcomes or other adverse consequences. Sexual harassment may also cause the feeling of isolation, alienation, and loss of trust in their peers or the school. Sexual harassment can hamper a victim's learning ability and concentration therefore leading to poor academic performance.
6. Poor Learning Outcome: victims of sexual harassment may be unable to proceed to the next level of the academic ladder, the world of work or adult life due to poor learning outcomes.

SECTION

THREE

REPORTING
PROCEDURES
AND RESPONSE
SYSTEMS

REPORTING PROCEDURES AND RESPONSE SYSTEMS

Effective reporting systems for sexual harassment play a critical role in fostering safe and inclusive environments while holding staff, learners, and the school accountable for addressing and preventing harassment. Formal and informal reporting procedures for sexual harassment provide options for individuals to report incidents of harassment based on their preference and the severity of the situation. Both methods should be available in the school to ensure that victims have choices and can seek help in a manner that suits their needs.

3.1 Informal Reporting Procedure

The informal reporting is aimed at resolving a complaint of harassment through the confidential guidance, support, and intervention of an objective third party. Though this procedure is recommended for first time incidents of sexual harassment, not all first instance cases of sexual harassment must be addressed through the informal system. Some first-time cases may be addressed directly through the formal reporting system depending on the nature of the case.

The informal reporting and response procedures should follow the process below:

Appoint Safe Space Focal Persons:

Every secondary education institution should appoint two Safe Space Focal Persons (SSFPs); one female and one male who will act as the first point of contact for reporting sexual harassment. The SSFPs shall be the first point of call in an informal reporting process to whom the victim lodges a complaint. The SSFPs should:

-
- ensure a safe and empathetic environment. They should listen actively, validate the concerns, and offer emotional support.
-
- ensure confidentiality and listen to the victim's complain without bias and in a non-judgmental manner. The SSFP should take notes to document relevant facts.
-
- ensure objectivity. The SSFP should recuse her/himself if they do not feel that they would be sufficiently objective to deal with the case in the instance where a close friend, colleague or relative is involved. In that case, the other SSFP should be selected to mediate.
-

Identify the type and degree of harassment:

After hearing the complaint, the safe space focal person should refer to this guideline to help the victim identify the type of harassment they have experienced (hostile environment, quid pro quo, retaliation, or cyber sexual harassment). It would be important for the victim to indicate whether they asked the harasser to cease the behaviour. If the victim has been too uncomfortable to ask, or has asked but the unwanted behaviour has continued, the SSFP should mediate with the harasser on the victim's behalf.

Mediation:

The SSFP will set a meeting with the alleged harasser to inform them of the complaint and mediate a resolution. Mediation with the alleged harasser must be done in a professional and confidential manner. It is often best to give the benefit of the doubt, or at least speak to the harasser as if he/she is being given the benefit of the doubt, rather than being accused of harassment. What needs to be conveyed to the alleged harasser is that the victim has been made to feel uncomfortable because of his/her behaviour. It may be helpful to use the examples of sexual harassment in Section 2 of this Guideline to demonstrate how/why the unwelcomed action can be considered sexual harassment.

Listen to both parties:

The SSFP should ask the alleged harasser for their side of the incident and take notes to document relevant evidence such as dates, times, witnesses, and any information that seems relevant. The focal person should remain neutral throughout the process and aim to ensure confidentiality.

Facilitate a resolution:

The SSFP should state clearly to the harasser that as long as the victim isn't made to feel uncomfortable again, or the behaviour is not repeated, no further discussions would be held on the matter. If the alleged harasser agrees with this, the focal person should communicate this verbally to the victim and document the mediation so that there is a record of it. These records should remain confidential and in a secure place. The focal person should also tell the victim to immediately report if the unwanted behaviour continues or if the harasser retaliates in any way.

When to make a formal report:

If the victim is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal mediation, if the unacceptable behaviour continues, or if retaliation occurs, then the victim may request that the matter be dealt with under the formal reporting system.

3.2 Formal Reporting Procedure

This process is triggered if a victim is not satisfied with the outcome of an informal mediation or if the unacceptable behaviour continues or if retaliation occurs. First-time complaint of sexual harassment can also be made through the formal system depending on the nature or severity of the case. Below are the guidelines for formal reporting:

Initial consultation: To deal with a grievance formally, the victim (learner, staff, or third party) can have a preliminary meeting with a Safe Space Focal Person (SSFP) to discuss the formal complaint process and what evidence is needed. The focal person should ensure confidentiality, be empathetic, understanding and refer the victim for counselling, if required.

Submission of written report by complainant: The victim should submit a formal written report of the grievance to the SSFPs. The grievance should include supporting evidence, which includes:

- i. Dates/times/locations of harassment
- ii. Type(s) of harassment with examples where possible (E.g., kissing, touching, fondling/ groping, seductive gestures and any sexualized language and behaviours).
- iii. Witnesses (if there was no witness who observed the harassment, a witness can be used to at least verify the victim's dates/times/locations).
- iv. Material evidence, if available (like emails, text messages, letters, recordings, etc.).
- v. Documents from any informal reporting/mediation that may have been attempted – this may have to be provided by the SSFPs or from their records.

Convene a Grievance Committee: Formal hearings should be dealt with by a Grievance Committee, which includes the two Safe Space Focal Persons (one female, one male) and the Head of the School (who should be the chairperson). If any of these individuals feel they would not be sufficiently objective to deal with the case (particularly if it involves a close friend), they can be replaced by a neutral member of staff or a neutral representative from GES. If the Head of School is involved in the complaint, a member of the School Board should take his/her place. In a case where the SSFP is involved in the allegation s/he should recuse themselves.

Acknowledge receipt of complaint:

The Grievance Committee should acknowledge the victim's complaint within one week of receipt of the complaint and copies forwarded to the alleged harasser. The harasser should be given one week to submit a written response. A formal hearing arranged therein within one week from receipt of the response along with any supporting evidence and/or witnesses. All parties (including named witnesses) will be required to attend the hearing. Victims have the right to be accompanied by a trusted person throughout the formal grievance meeting.

Formal hearing:

A confidential hearing is held by the Grievance Committee during which the victim is asked to give an account of events in their own words. Interviews should be conducted separately for both the victim and the alleged harasser. The committee should use the same approach when individually interviewing witnesses for the victim, the alleged harasser, and all witnesses. The committee members should each take individual notes.

Reaching a decision:

After the hearing, the Grievance Committee should review all the testimony and evidence in order to reach a verdict and decide on the best course of action. Once a decision has been made, the process and outcome should be clearly documented, and copies should be sent to the alleged harasser, the victim, and the school management. Management is therefore required to take the necessary actions informed by the findings and recommendation of the committee. Where need be, the regional director or headquarters would be informed of the findings and recommendations for the necessary action.

Appeal procedure:

The victim or alleged harasser have the right to appeal if there are any perceived procedural errors or unfairness. They can also appeal where they are dissatisfied with any decision. The emergence of a new evidence or a new witness that can challenge the committee's original decision can also be grounds for an appeal. An appeal should be done within one week of the original decision. Where new evidence is introduced, the other party has one week to respond to this new evidence/witness and the appeal hearing should be arranged within one week of receipt of this response. The appeal will be heard by a Grievance Appeal Committee that will be constituted to preside. The Appeal Committee should comprise three members – two senior management members and where possible a representative of the school board.

Appeal Procedure:

The appeal hearing should be conducted in a similar manner to that of the original hearing where all issues will be considered again. All other parties will be given the opportunity to respond to issues raised, new evidence and witnesses will be admitted and listened to.

Decision of the appeal hearing:

At the end of the appeal hearing, the Appeal Committee should provide an immediate decision and any appropriate action required. The decision reached at the appeal hearing is final. Once a decision has been reached, the school should provide the victim, and the harasser with copies of the appeal's proceedings and outcome for their records. The school should keep a copy in its records as well. The conclusion of the appeal hearing is final and will thus lead to disciplinary action or otherwise.



3.3 How to Support a Victim of Sexual Harassment

Providing support to victims of sexual harassment is crucial to helping them cope with the impact of the abuse. Here are some key considerations and strategies for offering effective first-hand support to victims prior to contacting the SSFPs.

- Listen actively:** Begin by actively listening to the victim without judgment. Let them express their feelings and experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Assure them of your support.
- Believe and show empathy:** Show empathy and validate the victim's emotions. Let them know that their feelings are valid and that you believe them. Assure the victim that what happened was due to no fault of theirs. S/he did not cause the assault, and no matter what happened, they did not deserve it.
- Preserve evidence:** Encourage victim not to temper with any evidence especially where there is an assault e.g., showering, cleaning the face, changing, or altering their clothes could destroy physical evidence that may be helpful if they later decide to pursue legal action.
- Respect for autonomy:** Though it is very important that cases of sexual harassment are reported, respect the victim's autonomy and choices. Avoid pushing them into actions they are not comfortable with, such as reporting the harassment and their recovery from the experience.
- Inform and educate:** Provide information about the available support services, and reporting options. Remind the victim of such services and their options so they feel empowered to make informed decisions. Explain to the victim that experiencing somatic symptoms of panic or anxiety (e.g., dizziness, shortness of breath, palpitations etc) is common amongst people who are afraid after having experienced a traumatic event. Refer them for counselling where necessary.
- Safety planning:** Collaborate with the victim to develop a safety plan if needed, especially if they are still in contact with the harasser or feel unsafe.
- Follow-up:** Check in with the victim regularly to see how they are doing and whether they need additional support. The healing process can be long-term, and ongoing support is essential.

SECTION

FOUR

**DISCIPLINARY
ACTIONS**

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

The table below outlines disciplinary measures for sexual harassment based on the type and frequency of the harassment that may occur. In addition to this, the Grievance Committee can use their best judgement, in line with the GES disciplinary policies to reach a decision on appropriate disciplinary actions.

TABLE 1 – SEXUAL HARASSMENT EXAMPLES AND SUGGESTED DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT EXAMPLES:	SUGGESTED DISCIPLINARY ACTION
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unnecessary and unwanted nicknames such as, ‘sweetie’, ‘baby’, ‘girlfriend’ 2. Intrusive sexually explicit questions, asking personal questions about a person’s sex life. 3. Spreading rumors about a person’s sexuality, sexual activity, or speculations about previous sexual experience 4. Remarks of a sexual nature about a person’s clothing or body 5. Unnecessary and unwanted touching, pinching, massaging, dancing, hugging, or brushing up against a person’s body. 6. Sexually suggestive stares, sounds or gestures such as winking, licking lips, whistling, sucking noises or pelvic thrusts. 7. Sexually explicit jokes, pictures, calendars, cartoons, internet images or pornographic materials 8. Unwanted recurrence of telephoning, texting, emailing, comments on social media, following, stalking, gift giving, proposing, or asking for a date 9. Unwanted propositions of a sexual nature (including those occurring in situations that begin as reciprocal attractions, but later cease to be mutual) 10. Spying on someone that is engaged in intimate behaviours, such as undressing, bathing, sexual activity or any other activity that is considered to be private 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Verbal reprimand, warning not to repeat behaviour (with victim or anyone else) and a written query documenting that a warning has been given. b. Ensure harasser understands why the behaviour deserves disciplinary action (it was unwanted, inappropriate, and made the victim uncomfortable) and writes a letter of apology to the victim. c. If complaint happens again, harasser should be put on probation (see below). d. Signing a bond of good behaviour. a. Verbal reprimand, warning to not repeat behaviour (with victim or anyone else) and a written query documenting that a warning has been given. b. Ensure harasser understands why the behaviour deserves disciplinary action (it was unwanted, inappropriate, and made the victim uncomfortable) and writes a letter of apology to the victim. c. Harasser should be put on probation for one year. If another case occurs during probation, termination or expulsion should be considered and the license of the accuser withdrawn. d. If there are no complaints after one year of probation, the harasser should no longer be susceptible to termination/expulsion. e. If complaints do occur again after the probation has been completed, a second hearing should be conducted. The past offense should be noted, and termination/expulsion should be considered. f. Training/counseling, reassessment of the understanding and learning of the harasser before reintegration

<p>7. Actual or attempted rape or sexual assault</p>	<p>a. The police should be called immediately as this is a criminal offense.</p> <p>b. The person should be interdicted during the period of investigation.</p> <p>c. The harasser’s employment should be immediately terminated/expelled if found guilty.</p>
<p>QUID PRO QUO EXAMPLES: SUGGESTED DISCIPLINARY ACTION</p>	
<p>1. Direct or indirect promises of academic benefits (such as high grades, letters of recommendation, participation in an activity, marks/lenient grading during internal & external examinations), in return for sexual favors</p> <p>2. Direct or indirect promises of work benefits (such as promotions, housing, allowances, letters of recommendation, good appraisals, in return for sexual favours.</p>	<p>a. Verbal reprimand, warning to not repeat behaviour (with victim or anyone else) and a written query documenting that a warning has been given.</p> <p>b. Ensure harasser understands why the behaviour deserves disciplinary action (it was unwanted, inappropriate, and made the victim uncomfortable). Harasser should write a letter of apology to the victim.</p> <p>c. Harasser should be put on probation for one year. If another case occurs during probation, termination or expulsion should be considered.</p>
<p>RETALIATION EXAMPLES:</p>	
<p>1. Adverse academic decisions, evaluations, low grades, social exclusion, poor treatment in class, because a sexual advance has been rejected or reported.</p> <p>2. Adverse employment decisions, evaluations, failure to hire or promote, transfer, social exclusion, poor treatment in the workplace, because a sexual advance has been rejected or reported</p>	<p>c. If there are no complaints after one year of probation, the harasser should no longer be susceptible to termination/ expulsion.</p> <p>d. Training/counseling, reassessment of the understanding and learning of the harasser should be conducted.</p> <p>e. If complaints do occur again after the probation has been completed, a second hearing should be conducted. The past offense should be noted, and termination/expulsion should be considered.</p>
<p>FALSE ACCUSATION:</p>	
<p>Though false accusations are relatively rare compared to the actual occurrence of sexual harassment, there are situations where an individual makes an untrue claim or allegation of sexual harassment against another person. This could take the form of:</p> <p>1. Fabricated Allegations: The case of sexual harassment is entirely fabricated.</p> <p>2. Exaggerated Claims: A person may exaggerate or embellish details of an incident.</p> <p>3. False Witness: Serve as a witness to a case of sexual harassment that did not occur.</p>	<p>a. Verbal reprimand, warning to not repeat behaviour and a written query documenting that a warning has been given.</p> <p>b. Ensure victim understands why the behaviour deserves disciplinary action (it constitutes lying and deceit) and writes a letter of apology to the accused.</p> <p>c. If after a formal hearing, it is determined that the victim and accomplice(s) knowingly lodged a false accusation to harm, punish or defame the alleged harasser, the accuser should also be subject to disciplinary action after investigations prove otherwise.</p>

4.1 Procedures to Effect Disciplinary Actions

- On completion of the inquiry, the grievance committee shall submit to the Disciplinary Authority a report of their findings and recommended disciplinary action which shall include the record of proceedings and any document or material tendered in as evidence.
- If the Disciplinary Authority is satisfied that the charges are established, the Disciplinary Authority shall consider the recommendations of the grievance committee and agree on sanctions to be applied.
- The accused person shall be informed in writing as to whether the charge(s) are established and the accompanied sanctions.
- If criminal proceedings are instituted against a staff or student in any court of competent jurisdiction, ongoing disciplinary actions on the same allegations shall be suspended until the conclusion of the criminal proceedings in court.
- Disciplinary proceedings may, however, be instituted before, during or after trial, if the criminal offence also amounts to an infringement of the GES codes of conduct.

GES	POLICE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Per levels of authorities in the service, the underlisted procedures must be followed. b. School Level: The disciplinary authority will implement sanctions if the sanction is above them it is then moved to the district level. c. District level: The disciplinary authority will implement sanctions if the sanction is above them it is then moved to the regional level. d. Regional Level: The disciplinary authority will implement sanctions if the sanction is above them it is then moved to the national level. e. National Level: The disciplinary authority will implement sanctions if the sanction if it is above them it is then moved to the GES council. f. GES Council: They will be the final disciplinary authority. The Council also serves as the appellate body. g. Any aggrieved officer can appeal to the GES Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If it is established that the offence committed is a criminal offence the matter will be reported to the police for investigations ■ After the investigations when the police have prima facie evidence against the offender, he/she will be placed before court (will be charged with the appropriate offence and placed before court) and the appropriate sanction will be applied.
Third party offenders	All third-party offences should be reported by the school to the police for investigations.
(Anyone who is not a learner, employee or members of the school community)	In addition, all engagement agreements with third parties should have anti-harassment clauses

4.2 Appeal Procedures

An officer who is aggrieved by any of the decisions has the right to appeal the decision in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Staff of Ghana Education Service (Part 8) which states that:

1. An Employee of the GES, who is dissatisfied with any sanction or penalty may submit a written petition to the Disciplinary Authority which imposed the sanction or penalty, for the review of the decision.
2. A staff who wishes to appeal shall be given a copy of the Report of the Disciplinary proceedings including, copies of documents tendered in evidence or the relevant parts.
3. A petition or appeal shall not be entertained unless it is submitted within four (4) weeks of the date on which the decision complained of, was communicated to the GES staff. However, the authority deciding the petition or appeal may, at their discretion, extend the limit, if it considers that the circumstances warrant it.
4. An appeal submitted within six (6) months of the date of the decision after an earlier appeal - may be admitted, if the authority considering that second appeal is satisfied that there appears in the second appeal, new and material facts which have affected the former decision and adequate reasons for the non-disclosure of those facts at an earlier date have been given.
5. An appeal from an aggrieved staff shall be addressed to the next level of Disciplinary Authority, who shall appoint a panel to consider the appeal and submit a report for consideration.
6. If the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal to the next higher level specified above, that employee may appeal to the GES Council, through the Director General.
7. A decision taken on a petition shall be communicated to the petitioner, not later than one (1) week from the date of the decision.
8. The GES Council shall be the final appellate body within the Service.
9. An Employee shall have recourse to external bodies such as the National Labour Commission, or the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice among others after exhausting all processes within the GES.
10. An appeal shall not lie against a decision taken or confirmed by the President of the Republic of Ghana unless the complainant considers it necessary to seek redress in a court of competent jurisdiction.

SECTION

FIVE

**PREVENTION
AND AWARENESS
CREATION**

PREVENTION AND AWARENESS CREATION

Prevention and awareness creation on sexual harassment in schools are crucial steps in creating a safe and respectful learning and working environment. Below are some strategies and activities that schools can implement to effectively prevent and raise awareness about sexual harassment:

- A. All secondary education institutions **should strongly adhere to this sexual harassment guideline** to ensure the well-being and success of their students and staff. Adhering to this guideline ensures that those who engage in sexual harassment are held accountable for their actions. It sends a clear message that such behaviour will not be tolerated and will have consequence. Schools will be successful in adhering to this guideline by implementing the following:
 - Appointing the two safe space focal persons.
 - Form a team to lead in awareness creation.

- B. All schools are to **develop and implement a complaint and grievance system** that is based on this guideline. This document provides clear guidance on how to institute a response and grievance mechanism. This should include appointing and training safe space focal persons on how to manage the formal and informal response system.

- C. All schools must **educate their members and raise awareness on sexual harassment** – This can range from the effective dissemination of this guideline using varied platforms and packaging the information in formats that makes it easy to understand for all stakeholders. Additionally, all schools should adopt the following strategies:
 - Ensure that teachers take the mandatory online training on sexual harassment.
 - Schedule consistent orientation on sexual harassment for students at all levels.
 - Make available information, education, and communication materials on applying a gender-responsive lens to sexual maturation and sexual harassment in all schools.
 - Employ edutainment approaches to promote changes in attitudes and behaviour in the school including the commemoration of international days set aside to address gender-based violence and child abuse, like the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence.

D. Promote **strong and diverse leadership**. Strong leadership is essential to creating and maintaining a culture and environment that prevents harassment. To achieve this:

- School management should ensure that all their staff are trained and educated on what sexual harassment is.
- School leaders by way of strategy should make it publicly known to the school community that the goal of reducing and preventing sexual harassment is their topmost priorities.
- Ensure that the Schools' Improvement Plans (SIPs) have clear targets for tackling sexual harassment.

E. Work with **communities to effectively address sexual harassment**. Community engagement is key in tackling sexual harassment both for their support and vigilance, and for homegrown ideas on effective strategies to address sexual harassment. To achieve this all SEIs should:

- Identify change agents in the local community who will lead in communicating with parents on the harmful effects of sexual harassment – these change agents could be girls/ women who went through the education system in the community; parents who supported their wards through school; traditional leaders who commit to eliminating sexual abuse and child marriage.
- Engage community members, especially parents, on the harmful effect of sexual harassment and identify ways to address it – this will include seeking the community's commitment to addressing sexual harassment.

F. Motivate and incentivise schools' leadership, staff, and students to work to actively change the culture of harassment and promote safe school environments. The following strategies are recommended:

- School management gives special recognition to teachers and staff who distinguish themselves in tackling sexual harassment – these nominations should preferably be done by students.

SECTION

SIX

MONITORING
EVALUATION,
RESEARCH,
& LEARNING (MERL)

MONITORING EVALUATION, RESEARCH & LEARNING (MERL)

Introduction:

This monitoring and evaluation system is developed for tracking and measuring the effective implementation of this guideline. It is imperative that all SEIs put in place a monitoring and evaluation system for tracking the effectiveness of sexual harassment prevention intervention and provide feedback for best practice.

This section will further provide a pathway for investigating the effectiveness of the interventions, and drive concrete actions for sustainability of the interventions.



MONITORING EVALUATION, RESEARCH, & LEARNING (MERL)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN					MONITORING AND EVALUATION	
Objectives	Activity	Stakeholder(s) Consulted	Timelines	In-charge/ Responsibility	Expected Outcome	Means of Verification
Staff and students demonstrate understanding of sexual harassment and how to address it as captured in this guideline.	Conduct baseline to ascertain the knowledge level of staffs and students on issues concerning sexual harassment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Management • Parent Assoc (PA) • School Board • SRC 	Baseline survey will be undertaken before the dissemination of guideline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts Directors • Heads of SEIs. • School based Counsellor. 	Baseline conducted in all SEIs.	In-charge will submit results of the baseline survey to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Directors • Chief Inspector of Schools.
	Train staff and orient students on the content in the guideline addressing sexual harassment in SEIs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Management • School Board • PA • SRC 	Training will be provided after the baseline survey and the dissemination of the Guideline to all SEIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts Directors • Heads of SEIs. • School based Counsellor. 	Training and orientation provided.	In-charge will submit training report to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National • Regional Directors • Chief Inspector of Schools.
Staff and students exhibit responsive and appropriate behaviours that support zero tolerance for sexual harassment	Organise monthly, termly, and annual programmes that will continuously create the awareness of the zero tolerance for sexual harassment agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Management • School Board • PA • SRC 	Daily, termly and periodic observation of behaviours exhibited by students and staffs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Management • School Board • Relevant Committees • SRC 	Evidence of behaviours among staffs and students in support of zero tolerance for sexual harassment in SEIs.	Report on the survey of the 'tone' of the school
	Establish systems such as clubs, award ceremonies, games, debates etc that will motivate staff and students to demonstrate zero tolerance for sexual harassment.		Termly inspection and feedback.			A school environment where zero tolerance of sexual harassment becomes a culture.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN					MONITORING AND EVALUATION		
Objectives	Activity	Stakeholder(s) Consulted	Timelines	In-charge/Responsibility	Expected Outcome	Means of Verification	
	Regional and Districts Directors and others to visit schools to assess prevalence of sexual harassment and effectiveness of response system.						
Students and staff understand the reporting procedures and are actively reporting cases of sexual harassment.	Establish appropriate formal and informal reporting procedures for staff and students' cases of sexual harassment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Management • School Board • PA • SRC 	As and when the violation occurs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Management • School Board • Relevant Committees • SRC 	Evidence of behaviours among staffs and students showing appropriate means of reporting sexual harassment issues.	<p>Report on the survey of the 'tone' of the school</p> <p>A school environment where zero tolerance of sexual harassment becomes a culture.</p>	
	Display announcements, procedures and directions that will constantly remind staff and students on the appropriate reporting measures.						

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN				MONITORING AND EVALUATION		
Objectives	Activity	Stakeholder(s) Consulted	Timelines	In-charge/Responsibility	Expected Outcome	Means of Verification
Managements of SEIs will establish grievance committee to address sexual harassment issues.	<p>Train the grievance committee on best practices.</p> <p>Administer appropriate disciplinary, remedial and restoration measures when a violation is found to have occurred as provided in the guideline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Management • School Board • PA • SRC 	<p>Training will be done as soon as the committee is constituted.</p> <p>The committee will sit as and when a violation occurs.</p>	<p>Grievance Committees</p>	<p>Grievance committee established and trained.</p> <p>Committee members address sexual harassment issues as directed in the guidelines</p>	<p>Committees will submit training report to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National • Regional Directors • Chief Inspector of Schools.
Managements to ascertain effectiveness of interventions being implemented to tackle sexual harassment in the school.	<p>Conduct research on the prevalence rate of sexual harassments in the SEI.</p> <p>Disseminate research findings and recommendations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National • Regional Directors • Chief Inspector of Schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMIS • G & C Officers • GEO/SHEP/SPED 	<p>Annual (End of Academic Year)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMIS • School heads 	<p>Research conducted in all SEIs and findings disseminated</p>	<p>In-charge will submit research results and recommendation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National • Regional Directors • Chief Inspector of Schools

6.1 Sustainability Plan

Sustainability plan is an integral aspect of the lifespan of this guideline addressing sexual harassment in SEIs. The component of our sustainability plan includes but not limited to:

1. Capacity building for staff on regular basis
2. Annual orientation for students
3. Annual stakeholder engagement (Board, PA, Staff, Students, Alumni, etc.)
4. Ownership of this guideline and its practices by the school and stakeholders
5. Adopting the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign period as the sexual harassment prevention awareness period
6. Establishment of online system that will ensure the understanding of Sexual Harassment issues
7. Compulsory online training and certification on sexual harassment for teachers
8. Establishment of online course on sexual harassment for national service personnel
9. Commemorative Days (e.g., International Day of the Girl Child, Day of the African Child)

6.2 Learning and Experience Sharing

Based on your report, observation, self-assessments and evaluations during the implementation of interventions to tackle sexual harassment use the following questions to guide the reflection and learning process.

1. Were your objectives achieved?
2. If not, what steps are required to get the objectives achieved?
3. What roadblocks or challenges emerged during the implementation?
4. How can these challenges be avoided in the future?
5. Provide your suggestions and recommendation.

ANNEX

ANNEX

I. Functions of a Sexual Harassment Grievance Committee

The role of the Sexual Harassment Grievance Committee is critical in tackling sexual harassment in schools. The Grievance Committee helps to resolve formal complaints related to sexual harassment. The Committee should follow specific procedures to ensure fairness, thoroughness, and adherence to this guideline. Below are prompts that should guide the work of the Committee:

- a. Review and properly comprehend the GES Guideline on Addressing Sexual Harassment in Secondary Education Institutions.
- b. Familiarise yourselves with the GES Code of Conduct for Students and the Code of Professional Conduct for Staff.
- c. The Committee should clearly communicate the process for submitting complaints, including contact details of Safe Space Focal Persons, and available channels of reporting (e.g., email address and/ or phone number) throughout to all members of the school community (students and staff).
- d. Maintain confidentiality throughout the process to retain trust and protect the privacy of the complainant/ victim, the alleged harasser, and any witnesses. Cases must not be discussed with colleagues and friends of Committee members or any other individuals unrelated to the case.
- e. Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Committee must notify the alleged harasser of the receipt of the complaint, the initiation of an investigation, and the expected timelines.
- f. Conduct a thorough and impartial investigation, which may involve interviews with the complainant, the alleged harasser, and any relevant witnesses.
- g. Collect and review any pertinent documents or evidence.
- h. Committee members must take their own notes during interview sessions and must refer to their records in making final decisions about the case and in compiling the final report.
- i. Prepare a comprehensive report detailing the findings of the investigation, including a determination of whether harassment occurred.
- j. If harassment is substantiated, the Committee must recommend appropriate disciplinary actions in line with this guideline and other code of conducts. This may include warnings/ reprimand, suspension, or termination of contract.
- k. Share the report with the victim, the alleged harasser, and with school management.

- l. The Sexual Harassment Policy makes provision for an appeals process for both the victim and alleged harasser to address any perceived procedural errors or unfairness, or discovery of new evidence.
- m. Keep detailed records of all proceedings, including complaints, evidence, investigation reports, and outcomes. All records must be kept confidentially.
- n. Refer victim for other services where necessary. These may include counseling and psychosocial support.

II. Interview Tips for Grievance Committee

- Begin with a clear and empathetic introduction. Introduce all members of the Committee/ panel there present to the interviewee.
- Clearly state the purpose of the interview and what the process involves.
- Reassure the interviewee (victim, alleged harasser, or witness) that they can stop or take breaks at any time.
- Allow the victim to share their experience in their own words.
- Use open-ended questions to encourage narrative responses (see below examples of open ended questions).
- Avoid leading or suggestive questions that may unintentionally influence the interviewee's account.
- Empower the victim by giving them control over the pace and flow of the interview.
- Allow them to share information in their own time and in their own way.
- Use respectful and non-judgmental language.
- Avoid making assumptions or expressing disbelief.
- Demonstrate active listening by maintaining eye contact, nodding, and using verbal affirmations when appropriate.
- Allow for periods of silence if the victim or interviewee needs time to gather their thoughts.
- If necessary, ask clarifying questions for a more detailed understanding, but do so in a gentle and non-intrusive manner.
- Be aware of and sensitive to potential emotional reactions.
- Document the interview accurately and comprehensively, including the interviewees statements and any relevant details.

III. Examples of Open-Ended Questions in Interviews

- "Can you tell us, in your own words, what happened?"
- "Please walk us through the events leading up to and during the incident as you experienced them."
- "Where and when did this incident take place?"
- "Were there any specific circumstances or events that you think may have contributed to the situation?"
- "Did anyone else witness the incident or contribute to the situation in any way?"
- "Are there any specific details or actions that stood out to you during the incident?"
- "How did the incident make you feel at the time?"
- "Can you describe any emotional or physical reactions you had during or after the incident?"
- "Did you communicate your discomfort or objections during the incident?"
- "How did the person involved respond to your feelings or objections?"
- "What actions, if any, did you take following the incident?"
- "Have you discussed this with anyone else, such as you colleague, management member, staff, counsellor etc?"
- "Did you have any records, messages, or evidence related to the incident?"
- "Is there anything else you would like to share with us that might be relevant to our understanding of the situation?"

III. Role of a Safe Space Focal Person

- Understand thoroughly what constitutes sexual harassment.
- Be thoroughly familiar with the GES Guideline on Addressing Sexual Harassment in Secondary Education Institutions.
- Strengthen your capacity in addressing cases of sexual harassment.
- Receive reports of sexual harassment.
- Assure victim of confidentiality and support; and ensure that confidentiality is maintained.
- Investigate the report (review evidence or speak with witnesses).
- Mediate between the victim and perpetrator in an informal procedure.
- Document and keep records safe.
- Support victims in making formal reports where required.
- Be an objective member of the Grievance Committee.
- Refer victims for appropriate support (e.g., counseling, police report).

IV. Attributes of a Safe Space Focal Person

- Good listener (sharpen your interviewing skills). For example:
- Trusted person who maintains confidentiality
- Be non-judgmental
- Believe the victim
- Be objective
- Be empathetic
- Do not minimize the incident or impact
- Be professional (physical contact should be avoided)
- Know when to refer and know your support systems
- Protect the victim and ensure abuse does not recur
- Keep confidential records
- Upgrade your knowledge – read widely

V. Tips for Interviewing Victims of Sexual Harassment by Safe Space Focal Person

- Begin with a warm and empathetic introduction to establish trust.
- Allow the victim to share their experience at their own pace.
- Encourage the victim to share their experience in their own words.
- Avoid leading or suggestive questions that may influence the victim's account.
- Empower the victim by giving them control over the conversation.
- Allow breaks and check in on their comfort level throughout the interview.
- Use neutral and non-judgmental language.
- Avoid making assumptions or expressing disbelief.
- Demonstrate active listening through body language and verbal affirmations.
- Allow for silences to give the victim time to share their thoughts.
- If needed, ask clarifying questions to ensure a clear understanding, but do so with sensitivity.
- Document the interview accurately – the victim's statements and any relevant details.
- Include information on the impact of the harassment on the victim.
- Debrief the victim on what will happen next and the potential outcomes.
- Refer the victim for additional support like counseling where needed.
- Always be transparent about the process and timelines.

VI. Who Does Not Qualify to be a Safe Space Focal Person

- Individuals who strongly believe in practices and notions that condone the violations of others, for example, men cannot control their sexual desires, or women are provocative, so they call abuse upon themselves.
- If the individual behaves in a questionable way or is a harasser themselves.
- If the individual has a sexual harassment/ abuse case pending against them.
- If the individual is a convicted or known sex offender.
- If by virtue of the individuals your past experience they have a strong bias against victims or perpetrators of sexual harassment/ abuse.

VII. When to Recuse (Excuse) Oneself as a Safe Space Focal Person

- When you have an interest in the case (affiliated to the victim or perpetrator).
- When you are the accused.
- When you are the victim.
- If you are a witness.
- When the case evokes personal sentiments.
- When you think your biases are too strong.

VIII. Effective Listening Skills When Interviewing a Victim of Sexual Harassment

- Ensure privacy and confidentiality. Choose a quiet and comfortable space where the person feels safe to speak openly.
- Express understanding and empathy for the person's experience. Use statements like, "I can imagine this is very difficult for you."
- Maintain eye contact to show attentiveness. Use nodding and other nonverbal cues to indicate that you are actively listening.
- Keep an open and non-threatening posture to convey a welcoming attitude.
- Repeat back or paraphrase what the person has shared to confirm understanding. For example, say, "It sounds like you're saying..."
- Encourage the person to share more details and feelings. Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no."
- Let the person share their experience without interruptions. If they pause, allow for silence before responding to give them space.
- Acknowledge the emotional impact of their experience. Say things like, "It is completely normal to feel that way given what you've been through."
- Suspend personal judgments or biases. Create an atmosphere where the person feels accepted and not blamed.

- Periodically summarize what the person has shared to ensure accuracy. This shows that you are actively processing the information.
- Recognize that the person may need time to express themselves fully. Do not rush the conversation; allow for pauses.
- Let the person know about available support services, counseling, or legal resources. Ensure they are aware of options and can make informed decisions.

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