



RECOGNIZING AND DEALING WITH WORKPLACE BULLYING

What is workplace bullying?

- Bullying is a form of harassment and a form of violence in the workplace. Bullying or harassment can be based on the grounds set out in the Human Rights Code, or it can be a form of psychological or personal harassment apart from the Human Rights Code. Often, bullying and harassment are manifestations of abuse of power.
- It is objectionable conduct or comment directed towards a specific person, which serves no legitimate work purpose, and has the effect of creating an intimidating, humiliating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Definitions of harassment:

- Schools are workplaces, governed by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Under that legislation, school board supervisors and administrators must take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances to protect all workers, including educators, in the school setting.
- Recent studies have shown that educators are subjected to a vast range of abusive treatment from students, including verbal assaults, physical assaults and threats and damage to their property. Educators may also be harassed by parents, colleagues or by managers. This type of harassment may consist of:
 - verbal abuse, threats, belittling or humiliating;
 - physical gestures that intimidate or threaten;
 - ostracism, isolation;
 - inequitable and harsh treatment;
 - excessive monitoring;
 - denial of opportunities;
 - yelling, swearing, public reprimands; and
 - other objectionable behaviour designed to torment, pester or abuse someone.
- Educators have a right to protection from violence in their workplace. They are not required to tolerate behaviour, which threatens their safety and well-being. Reasonable measures must be established to achieve this goal.
- Harassment is not the normal, reasonable exercise of managerial authority.

RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATIONS ARE KEY TO ALL WORKPLACE INTERACTIONS

What to do if You are Being Harassed

- If you are able to do so, ask the harasser to stop.
- Document the incidences.
- Seek assistance early.
- Speak to your local ETFO president.

PRSMATTERS



- Contact staff in Professional Relations (PRS) at the provincial office.
- Seek some assistance to invoke an informal mechanism for addressing the situation; ask about a grievance under your collective agreement or a complaint under a board policy.

For more information, contact Professional Relations Staff at 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836 at the provincial office.

ST:RW:PD:SM

Revised January 2019

Vol # 36



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