



Questions and Answers for High School Students about Sexual Harassment

What is sexual harassment anyway?

Any unwelcome sexual advance or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature is sexual harassment.

Like what?

Some examples are sexual comments or gestures, sexual grabbing or touching, spreading sexual rumors, forced kissing, pulling someone's clothes down or off, showing or giving sexual pictures or messages to someone, and similar behaviors.

But most of these behaviors don't sound like a big deal.

Sexual harassment can make it hard for another student to learn. It can make people feel unsafe, confused, and embarrassed. Victims often feel bad about themselves and can become depressed or suicidal. Being targeted with harassment can make the whole school experience miserable. In fact, many will choose to skip school or drop out rather than deal with this situation.

Sometimes girls also do these things to boys.

Absolutely, sometimes girls target other girls and boys will harass other boys as well. Sexual harassment doesn't mean that the boy is the harasser and the girl is the victim, although we do see this type of harassment most frequently.

Some people are too sensitive and can't take a joke or a compliment.

Jokes and compliments feel good to everyone, but if the joke is about you or the compliment is actually crude or offensive, no one is flattered. If someone is hurt, embarrassed, or offended, things have gone too far. It's best to back off, apologize, and not repeat the same behavior. If you aren't sure if your comment is appropriate you might want to ask yourself if you would want someone saying the same thing to your sister or mother.

If I was being harassed who would I go to, would they even do anything about it?

Legally, schools should have someone in charge of these kinds of complaints, but a good starting point is usually with any trusted adult at your school. Ask for their help in resolving this problem. If they aren't helpful, go to someone else. Perhaps ask your parents to intervene. Maybe your friends or their parents could be helpful. You could call your local rape crisis center for assistance. Don't give up; you have a legal right to an education free from harassment.

For FREE local help & information call: _____

Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
1-888-91-TAASA www.taasa.org