

Section 3

Sexual Harassment Prevention Models



This section provides sample guidelines for creating a sexual harassment policy, model policies and forms, and best practices that can be adapted to your school or district. For more resources, see Section 4.

Every school and school district should have a policy prohibiting all forms of sexual harassment. Policies should be clearly written and distributed to all members of the school community including students, parents, faculty, staff, and other people spending time in the school or on school grounds. The policy should clarify expectations and spell out ramifications. Ideally, schools should revisit their policies annually and revise them as needed. While many schools have one policy that encompasses many kinds of harassment (e.g., sexual, racial, gender-based, and ethnicity-based), the guidelines that follow speak specifically to sexual harassment.

Consult a school board attorney to determine the best way to draft a sexual harassment policy in your community.

Guidelines for Developing a Sexual Harassment Policy

These guidelines for developing a sexual harassment policy were adapted from *Protecting Students From Harassment and Hate Crime*, by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (1999), and “Preventing Student Sexual Harassment,” by Wendy Schwartz, *ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education Digest*, No. 160, December 2000.

A school or district’s sexual harassment policy should do the following:

- State the school’s commitment to prevent sexual harassment.
- Offer examples of behaviors covered by the policy.
- Identify the kinds of activities and sites where prohibited conduct could occur.
- Explain the methods the school will use to investigate incidents of sexual harassment.
- Make clear that the school will take action to stop sexual harassment from recurring.
- Outline specific procedures to address formal complaints of sexual harassment.
- Provide the names, positions, and contact information for people responsible for accepting and managing complaints (complaint managers).
- Require staff and other individuals working on school grounds to report sexual harassment that they witness or learn about.
- Prohibit retaliation against those who report harassment or participate in related proceedings.
- Explain that confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible (for victims, bystanders, etc.) and that victims or witnesses will not be required to face harassers.
- State that the goal of any investigation or proceedings will be a fair resolution that includes appropriate and corrective action.

In developing a policy on sexual harassment, schools should do the following:

- Include all categories of people affected by the policy in the development process (students, parents, faculty, staff).
- Seek participation by all members of the school community (e.g., the school attorney, state agencies, and other individuals or agencies who know about harassment and civil rights issues).
- Make sure that individuals involved in the development of the policy receive training and have access to experts who can advise them on designing a fair and comprehensive policy.
- Thoroughly publicize the policy throughout the school and community through public posting, in discussions with students and adults, at parent-teacher organization meetings, and in languages spoken by the school population.
- Designate time and resources to implement the policy, including training for staff members.
- Align the policy with other district policies, such as written codes of conduct and personnel and student handbooks.
- Make sure your policy conforms at a minimum to state and federal nondiscrimination laws.

Sample #1: Unofficial, Easy-to-Understand Policy

Adapted from a policy developed by the ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, this easy-to-understand version can be distributed to several audiences within your school community. It is not meant to serve as the school or district's official policy on sexual harassment.

The _____ School District is committed to providing all students with a safe and supportive school environment. Members of the school community are expected to treat each other with respect. Teachers and staff are expected to teach and demonstrate by example that all members of the community are entitled to respect as human beings.

Harassment of a member of the school community by another member of the community is a violation of school policy. This includes but is not limited to harassment based on race, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Harassment means conduct (including verbal conduct) that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance or creating an intimidating or hostile environment.

Sexual harassment violates school policy. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances or sexual behavior (including verbal behavior) that is tied to a student's education or that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or hostile environment.

The first response of any staff member to an act of harassment should be to teach why harassment is wrong and how tolerance and respect are essential to a free society. Serious or repeated violations of school policy may require more intense counseling or appropriate discipline or both.

Note: Federal law requires all schools to have a process for handling sexual harassment complaints.

Task force note: Always follow school policy regarding reporting sexual harassment. Failure to appropriately report instances of sexual harassment could create a legal liability for the school district.

Sample #2: User-Friendly Policy

Adapted from a policy developed by the National Women’s Law Center, this policy is designed in a user-friendly, question-and-answer format and is intended to be used in addition to a more formal school policy on sexual harassment. This policy is addressed to students and covers only sexual harassment of students.

The _____ School is committed to making sure that all students can learn in an environment that is free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against the law. It hurts people and has no place in our school.

Therefore, _____ School rules prohibit all forms of sexual harassment. The following questions and answers help explain the school’s policy concerning sexual harassment of students.

Q: What is sexual harassment?

A: Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with a student’s ability to learn, study, work, achieve, or participate in school activities. It includes a wide range of behavior, such as

- Insults and name-calling
- Off-color jokes or displays of sexually suggestive objects or pictures
- Intimidation by words or actions
- Unwanted touching, such as pinching, patting, grabbing, poking, or rubbing against a student’s body
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Sexual assault and rape
- Making a student’s participation in sexual conduct a condition of taking part in school activities or getting an education

This list illustrates only some misconduct that could be considered sexual harassment; other similar behaviors also may be prohibited under this school’s policy and by federal and state law, including criminal laws.

The school’s policy also prohibits retaliating against a student who complains about harassment or against students or others who cooperate in a school investigation of sexual harassment.

Q: Are these rules just for students?

A: No. The school policy applies to everyone: teachers, administrators, coaches, volunteers, cafeteria staff, and students, among others. All are prohibited from sexually harassing students. The school policy protects male and female students equally from harassment—even when boys sexually harass boys and when girls sexually harass girls.

Q: Where do the school’s rules apply? Just in classes? What happens if I’m harassed off school grounds, like on the bus?

A: If sexual harassment occurs either on or off school premises, the school will take action to stop it. That means the school policy applies to the many locations sexual harassment can occur, such as classrooms, hallways, athletic fields, school offices, school buses, co-op sites, and school-sponsored trips and activities.

Q: What should I do if I’ve been sexually harassed?

A: You have several options. You can complain—either in writing or orally—to any teacher or administrator and the Title IX coordinator. Forms are available throughout the school in the principal’s office, the guidance office, the Title IX coordinator’s office, the library, and classrooms. If you don’t want to file a formal complaint, consider these ways of dealing with sexual harassment:

- Tell the harasser, “Your behavior is bothering me. Stop it!” Do this only if you feel comfortable talking directly to the harasser.
- Write the harasser a letter saying how you feel. Keep a copy of the letter.
- Tell your parents. They can work with you and school officials to stop the harassment.
- Get outside assistance from someone such as an attorney or an advocate to complain to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, which is located at [each district should insert appropriate contact information here]. You can do this at any time.

Q: What if I’m too embarrassed to tell anyone? Do I have to reveal my name?

A: No. You can complain anonymously. School officials may be able to conduct a limited investigation or provide some assistance even if you complain anonymously. To fully investigate your complaint or take disciplinary action against the harasser, however, you will probably need to give school officials permission to disclose your name, at least to the harasser. If you choose to disclose your name, the school will protect your confidentiality to the fullest extent possible.

Q: I’m afraid to complain. What if everyone finds out what happened to me?

A: The school handles complaints confidentially as much as possible. That means only school officials with a need to know about your complaint can get that material. But the school can’t guarantee complete confidentiality. It may be necessary to tell the people accused of sexual harassment that a complaint has been filed against them.

Q: What happens during the complaint process?

A: The school investigates complaints, which includes meeting with the complaining student, the accused harasser, and any witnesses to the incident. Depending on the seriousness of the charges, there

may be a hearing in which the people involved, including witnesses, can tell their side of the story. Within 30 days after the sexual harassment has occurred, impartial investigators selected by the principal to handle complaints will make a finding about whether the school’s policy was violated and, if so, what disciplinary action the harasser will receive. Any party dissatisfied with the outcome of the school’s investigation can appeal to the principal within 10 days of being informed of the investigators’ conclusions.

Q: What kind of discipline will persons who sexually harass students get?

A: Possible disciplinary actions the principal can take will depend on the seriousness of the harassment. For example, if a student uses sexually harassing language once, the principal may warn the student that this behavior violates the school’s rules. Students who continue to harass others may receive even stiffer punishment, such as detention or suspension. For serious sexual harassment, such as sexual touching or sexual assault, the principal may expel a student or fire an employee.

Q: How can I prevent sexual harassment?

A: Take a stand against sexual harassment and for improving the school environment for everyone. Don’t stand by when you see someone sexually harassing another student. Speak up! Work with teachers and other students to develop strategies to stop harassment. Write articles about it for the school paper to increase student awareness. These are just some ideas—share others with students, teachers, and administrators. Stopping sexual harassment means a better school for everyone.

Sample #3: Formal Policy

This sample policy is adapted from one developed by the National Women's Law Center. The policy can be used as a template by school boards or districts seeking to create an official, legal document on sexual harassment. It can be easily adapted to individual schools. Note that a school or district should always consult an attorney when creating a legal document.

I. Statement of Philosophy

School District X is committed to creating and maintaining a learning environment where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each student has the right to learn in an environment free of sexual harassment. In this school district, sexual harassment—whether verbal, physical, or environmental—is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is unlawful and hurts all people. Each incident of harassment contributes to a general atmosphere where members of the victim's sex suffer the consequences and in which all students may feel that their safety is compromised. Sexual harassment has no legitimate educational purpose. Any employee or student, male or female, who engages in such conduct shall be disciplined as provided by law, district policies, and applicable labor agreements.

II. Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome behavior by peers, teachers, administrators, or anyone you must interact with to pursue school activities. For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome advances, requests for special favors, and any other verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when

A. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a factor in decisions affecting a student's ability to learn or participate in school activities, or in hiring, evaluation, retention, promotion, or any other aspect of employment; or

B. Such conduct substantially interferes with an individual's ability to learn or work or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school or work environment.

III. Statement of Prohibited Conduct

Conduct prohibited under this policy includes, but is not limited to, the following:

A. Physical assaults of a sexual nature, such as rape, sexual battery, molestation, or attempts to commit these assaults, and intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, poking, or brushing against another employee's or student's body

B. Sexual advances, propositions, or other sexual comments, such as sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks, jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience directed at or made in the presence of any employee, student, or member of the public who has indicated in any way that such conduct is UNWELCOME

C. Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures

D. Preferential treatment or promises thereof to any employee or student for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit any employee or student to engage in sexual activity for compensation or reward, subjecting or threatening to subject an employee or student to unwelcome sexual conduct, or intentionally making performance of the employee's job or the student's assignment more difficult because of the employee's or student's sex

E. Retaliation for sexual harassment complaints, such as disciplining, changing classrooms or work assignments for, providing inaccurate working information to, or refusing to cooperate or discuss school or work-related matters with any student or employee because that student or employee has complained about or resisted sexual harassment

RETALIATION FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS WILL BE CONSIDERED A POLICY VIOLATION AS SERIOUS AS THE HARASSMENT ITSELF

IV. Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances to protect the privacy of persons involved. This means that the people investigating the complaint will discuss it or the underlying behavior only with persons involved in the case who have a need to know the information.

V. Individuals Covered by the Policy

All students and staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, coaches, administrators, contract employees, guest speakers, volunteers, janitors, and cafeteria staff, are bound by this policy. The policy protects male and female students equally from sexual harassment, and it protects both from same-sex harassment.

VI. Informal Complaint Procedures

Depending on the circumstances and the severity of the behavior, a student who believes she or he is being harassed by a fellow student may elect to pursue an informal resolution of the matter. The district encourages such individuals to notify the student offender firmly and promptly that his or her behavior is unwelcome. In the case of employee-student harassment, however, power and status disparities between the alleged harasser and the target make such a confrontation unwise. All cases of employee-student harassment, therefore, should be resolved according to the formal complaint procedures described in Section VII.

A. Limits on Informal Procedures

1. Sexual Assaults. The informal procedures described herein are designed to supplement or provide an alternative to formal procedures. Informal resolution is never appropriate in cases of

assault. A student-victim of sexual assault, including any kind of sexual touching, should report the alleged incident immediately to a school official or teacher of the student's choosing. Students should not resort to self-help for protection from future assaults.

2. Limited Remedies. While dealing informally with a problem of sexual harassment may resolve the matter more expeditiously and without as much publicity, a formal grievance procedure must be followed before a school can discipline the offender.

B. Suggested Informal Procedures

1. Tell the harasser, "Your behavior is bothering me. STOP IT!" This may be difficult. If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable confronting the harasser, use formal reporting procedures.

2. Write the harasser a letter describing the behavior you find offensive and how it makes you feel. [The task force recommends keeping a copy of the letter.]

3. Other Measures

(a) Keep a detailed record of the harassing behavior to share with school officials who investigate your complaint.

(b) Tell your parents immediately. They may have suggestions for ways to stop the behavior and may be able to help you take advantage of the school's complaint process.

VII. Formal Complaint Procedures

A. Form of Complaint. Complaints will be accepted in writing or orally. Anonymous complaints will be accepted and investigated to the extent possible. Complaint forms are available in several locations, including the principal's, guidance counselor's, Title IX coordinator's, and student activities offices. A complaint need not be made on an official form. [Note: All schools are required to appoint a Title IX coordinator responsible for ensuring that the school complies with the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education.]

B. Reporting the Complaint. A student who believes she or he has been or is being sexually harassed may report the alleged harassing behavior to any teacher, administrator, or counselor. A teacher, administrator, or counselor who receives such a complaint must report the incident in writing to the principal or Title IX coordinator within 24 hours.

C. Content of Complaints. Individuals who believe they are being or have been harassed in violation of this policy should file a complaint including the following information, if known: the name of the complainant; a brief description of the offending behavior, including times, places, and names; the name of or identifying information about the alleged harasser; and the names or descriptions of any witnesses.

D. Processing of Complaints. The principal oversees the processing of sexual harassment complaints. She or he shall schedule and complete a discussion of the allegations with the complainant within five school days after receiving the complaint or third-party report of alleged sexual harassment. The principal shall conduct an investigation of the charges and attempt to resolve the matter in a timely fashion.

1. Investigator. After receiving a sexual harassment complaint form, the principal shall conduct or appoint someone to conduct an investigation.

2. Timing. Within 30 days of receiving the complaint, the principal shall determine whether sexual harassment occurred. If the complaint cannot be resolved within that time, the principal must notify the area superintendent, who shall take over the investigation.

3. Objectivity. The complainant is entitled to an investigation conducted by an impartial investigator. Thus, if the persons charged with overseeing or investigating sexual harassment complaints are implicated in the complaint or have a personal or

professional stake in the process that would cause a conflict of interest, the Title IX coordinator shall conduct the investigation and make findings or designate someone impartial to do so.

4. Hearing Procedures. The following hearing procedures must be followed:

(a) The victim and defendant are entitled to be present at the hearing and to bring one representative, such as a lawyer, parent, teacher, or friend;

(b) The victim and defendant are expected to speak for themselves; and

(c) The victim and defendant are entitled to testify or present evidence relevant to the allegations.

5. Standard of Proof. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, and the context in which the conduct occurred will be investigated. Allegations will be evaluated using a preponderance of the evidence standard (i.e., before imposing sanctions, the principal or his or her designee must conclude that it is likely that sexual harassment occurred).

6. Notice of Outcome. Within five days of reaching a decision, the principal or his or her designee shall report the findings to the parents of any students involved, the parties to the proceeding, and, in the case of teacher-student harassment, the employee-defendant.

7. Appeals. A student or defendant who is not satisfied with the investigation or resolution may appeal in writing to the principal within 10 days of receiving written notice of the outcome.

VIII. Third-Party Reporting

Any employee who receives any information concerning employee-student sexual harassment must immediately report such information to the principal or designated investigator.

IX. Sanctions

Individuals found to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be disciplined appropriately, which may include employee discharge or student suspension. Appropriate sanctions will be determined by the superintendent or the special state administrator in accordance with the provisions of applicable statutes, collective bargaining agreements, employment contracts, district policies, and student discipline codes.

X. Nonexclusivity

The internal procedures and remedies outlined in this policy are not the only options available to a complainant. Participation in the school's procedure is not a prerequisite to pursuing other legal or governmental remedies. A complainant may use the school's grievance procedure and then, whether or not she or he obtains a satisfactory finding, may file a suit in court under any applicable federal, state, or local law. She or he also may forego the internal procedure and directly pursue legal or administrative remedies or may pursue both internal and external remedies simultaneously.

XI. Other Legal Remedies

The procedures above apply to internal complaints of harassment. In addition to this internal complaint procedure, victims of sexual harassment may file a complaint with an appropriate government agency, file a grievance under the relevant collective bargaining agreement or, where allowed, file a civil lawsuit.

A. U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. OCR is charged with investigating complaints of sexual harassment under Title IX. Contact the regional office at [insert address] or the U.S. Department of Justice at Coordination and Review Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, PO Box 66560, Washington, DC 20035-6560.

B. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. EEOC is charged with investigating complaints of sexual harassment under Title VII, which governs harassment of school employees by co-workers and supervisors. Prior to filing a complaint in a court of law, complainants must file a Title VII claim with the EEOC or, in some cases, a state agency that has entered into a work-sharing agreement with the EEOC. Contact the regional office at [insert address].

XII. Intent

The fact that someone did not intend to sexually harass an individual is generally not considered a defense to a complaint of sexual harassment. In most cases, the effects and characteristics of the behavior determine whether that behavior constitutes sexual harassment.

XIII. Retaliation

Retaliatory or intimidating conduct against an individual who has made a sexual harassment complaint or who has testified or assisted in an investigation is prohibited and shall provide grounds for a separate harassment complaint.

XIV. Dissemination of Policy

When ratified, this policy will be distributed to all employees, students, administrators, independent contractors, volunteers, parents, and anyone else connected with School District X. Distribution of the policy will be accompanied by information and training concerning the implementation of the policy. All district employees and students who subsequently become part of the educational community shall be informed of this policy during their orientation. All nonstudent recipients of this policy, now or in the future, shall be required to sign a form indicating that they have read this policy and understand and agree to abide by it.

Model Complaint Form

This model form is adapted from one developed by the National Women's Law Center and published in *Do the Right Thing: Understanding, Addressing, and Preventing Sexual Harassment in Schools*, by Verna L. Williams and Deborah L. Brake (1998).

CONFIDENTIAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM

It is the policy of School District [X] that all of its students and employees be free from sexual harassment. The district takes charges of sexual harassment seriously because of both the harm caused to the person harassed and the potential sanctions that may be imposed against the harasser. The district will make every effort to protect the due process rights of the victim and the alleged harasser. Complaint investigation procedures will be uniform for all levels of staff.

Instructions: Use this form to report sexual harassment. Provide as much information as possible so that the complaint may be properly investigated. Report the facts as accurately and completely as possible and cooperate with the person(s) designated to investigate the complaint.

Where to File: Return the form to [x] or [y]. If the complaint concerns someone in either of these offices, file it with [z].

When to File: The complaint should be filed within 60 days of the date of the sexual harassment incident.

Witnesses: To conduct this investigation in a confidential manner, the district will disclose the contents of your complaint only to those persons having a need to know about it. By signing the complaint form, you authorize the district to disclose, as needed, the information you have provided and may in the future provide regarding your complaint.

RETALIATION AGAINST A PERSON WHO FILES A FORMAL CHARGE OR COMPLAINT FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS PROHIBITED AND IS GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE UP TO AND INCLUDING TERMINATION AND EXPULSION.

School/site _____

Date _____

Name of complainant _____

Name of individual/situation _____

The following information relates to the incident being reported:

Date of incident _____ Time of incident _____

Location of incident _____

Describe the events or conduct that are the basis of this complaint (use additional sheets if necessary):

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above statements. I certify that all statements made in the complaint are true and complete. Any misstatement of material facts will subject me to appropriate discipline. I authorize the district to disclose the information I provide as necessary in pursuing the investigation.

Signature of student

Date

Model Teen Safety Plan

This model teen safety plan for the Massachusetts Department of Education was developed by the office of Essex County District Attorney Kevin Burke. It can be used to outline a specific plan for protecting a student from another who has been accused of abuse. This plan, which can be used alone or in conjunction with a court-ordered restraining order, makes it clear that the school is aware of violence or harassment that has been reported and is taking steps to ensure that a victim remains safe.

TEEN SAFETY PLAN

This safety plan should be considered whether or not a restraining order has been issued by the court.

Student name _____

Grade _____ H.R. _____

Administrative staff _____ (Designated administrative staff member responsible for schedule changes and assessing whether or not this plan is working or other changes need to be made)

The safety plan includes the following:

1. Schedule changes (attach revised schedule)

2. School arrival (change in time, entrance, transportation, with whom, etc.)

3. Locker

4. Lunch

5. Route changes (include places to avoid/watch for)

Best Practices

Students Rewrite Their District's Sexual Harassment Policy

In 1998 several students at Avondale Middle School in Rochester Hills, Michigan, were suspended for sexual harassment. Students in an eighth-grade criminal law class were troubled that, even after being suspended, the students did not understand that their actions could be considered sexual harassment. The criminal law students took it upon themselves, under the guidance of their teacher and as part of a unit on civic education, to rewrite the school's sexual harassment policy.

The students' charge from their teacher was to "change the world" by identifying an existing problem in their community, finding out whether an existing policy addressed that problem, and determining whether the policy was effective. The students concluded that there was a policy, but it was not effective, did not educate students about what constitutes sexual harassment, and did not go far enough to prevent harassment from occurring in their school. The students revised the policy to address these deficiencies. The revision defines mild, moderate, and severe harassment and calls for stricter punishments for those who sexually harass students.

Complaints of sexual harassment have declined significantly since this policy was adapted, from 40 cases reported in 1998 to just a handful in the 2001–02 school year. Maria Kopicki, the teacher responsible for creating this project, took this work a step further by collaborating with the Oakland School District to create *Straight Talk About Sexual Harassment*, a video series that helps schools take a closer look at the issue of sexual harassment and develop policies for its prevention. The students' policy has now been adopted by the Michigan State Board of Education and become a national model.

Adapting this program to your school

Projects like Avondale's policy revision can be integrated into classes or curricular units such as civics, humanities, law, or health. Students can use the surveys provided in this guide or develop their own to determine whether their school's policy is effective and then work with the school on the revision.

For help modeling a project after the Avondale Middle School project, contact Maria Kopicki at Kopicki Consulting Services at maria@kopickiconsulting.com or www.kopickiconsulting.com.

A Student Leadership Program— Contemporary Issues Organization

High school students in Wisconsin founded Contemporary Issues Organization to take action against discrimination and harassment. Since its inception, the group—focusing on students in grades six through 12—develops projects on sexual harassment and other topics, such as smoking, body image, and multicultural issues.

The group's first project in 1990 was a play. Storybook characters depicted scenes of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and date rape and relayed information about ways to prevent these incidents. Audience discussion groups followed the presentation.

Each year at least 14 students perform two to three times a month before audiences ranging from 100 to 600 people. In the 2000–01 school year, the performances reached some 3,650 students and 750 adults. CIO staff adviser Laurel Hoeth reports that schools often contact her to say that after the presentation, incidences of harassment decline. CIO cast members also appear on public television, reaching several thousand more people in the area, to discuss the program.

In addition to the presentations, CIO received a grant to launch a media campaign and teen leadership training on sexual harassment. Trained students went back to their schools and developed programs to prevent such harassment.

Adapting this program to your school

While Contemporary Issues Organization does not give out its script, interested students can take the idea of a similar group to a faculty member and follow guidelines for starting a club or student group. Recruit other students, begin meeting regularly, and then develop an agenda and a script. Once you have a script, pilot it with audiences in your school or community. Remember that CIO evolved over many years. As the issues in their school changed, the students adapted the play.

For help getting started, contact Contemporary Issues Organization staff adviser Laurel Hoeth at 715/345-5651 or lhoeth@wsp.k12.wi.us.

Expect Respect Bullying Prevention Program

Designed by SafePlace and funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from 1997 to 2000, the Expect Respect Elementary School Project addressed bullying and sexual harassment in elementary schools. This program has since evolved into the Expect Respect Bullying Prevention Program and now includes middle schools. The program is based on the belief that without intervention, unchecked bullying and harassing behaviors in young children lay the groundwork for more serious and ongoing forms of abuse as children grow older. It is active in 23 schools.

The project's whole-school approach includes staff training, classroom education, parent education, and assistance with policy development and support services. The classroom education piece of the program was based on *Bullyproof: A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use With Fourth and Fifth Grade Students* (1996), a curriculum written and developed by Nan Stein, senior researcher at the

It's terrible that many girls experience harassment, assault, or date rape, but we can help each other deal with these things. A friend of Emma's was being verbally harassed at school. The things that were said to her made her feel so awful, and it made her suffer a great deal. She became self-conscious and withdrawn. Her friends helped her, and with their extra encouragement she felt courageous enough to take the situation to the principal.

—Essay written by two girls on the New Moon editorial board in *Sisterhood Is Forever: The Women's Anthology for the New Millennium*, edited by Robin Morgan (Washington Square Press, 2003)

Wellesley Center for Research on Women and a member of the AAUW Educational Foundation's Sexual Harassment Task Force.

Expect Respect strategies

- Increase awareness of bullying, sexual harassment, and gender violence at school through school-sponsored activities for all members of the school community.
- Increase the ability of school staff to ensure a safe and gender-equitable learning environment for all students through policy development and training.
- Develop students' skills for preventing and responding to bullying, sexual harassment, and gender violence by integrating prevention curricula into classrooms.
- Increase the ability of parents to respond effectively to children who are bullying and harassing others, children targeted by these behaviors, and children who witness these behaviors at school.

Adapting this program to your school

To get a solid understanding of this type of program, review *Expect Respect: A School-Based Program Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships for Youth*, by SafePlace Director of School-Based Services Barri Rosenbluth (National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, 2002). Developed for schools and community-based agencies that are beginning or expanding school-based sexual and domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, these resources are posted at www.austin-safeplace.org. For additional information, contact Barri Rosenbluth at 512/356-1628.

For a more detailed description of the Expect Respect Elementary School Project, see the following articles:

- Sanchez, Ellen; Robertson, Trina Reed; Lewis, Carol Marie; Rosenbluth, Barri; Bohman, Tom; & Casey, David M. (2001). "Preventing bullying and sexual harassment in elementary schools:

The Expect Respect model." *Journal of Emotional Abuse* 2(2/3), 157–180.

- Meraviglia, Martha G.; Becker, Heather; Rosenbluth, Barri; Sanchez, Ellen; & Robertson, Trina. (2003, November). "The Expect Respect project." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18(11), 1347–1360.

Contact SafePlace and violence prevention programs in your community to identify resources and local services. Take a whole-school approach by committing to train teachers, parents, and students on sexual harassment and its prevention. SafePlace materials can walk you through this process. Local programs may offer trained volunteers to conduct workshops for teachers, parents, or students. SafePlace also provides training.