

Parental Harassment

Although parents are not employees and are not subject to 'discipline' as other staff would be, they are expected to treat staff with respect. If a parent's behaviour has become harassing, the employer must address it.

Remedies

As with any interpersonal conflict, efforts are usually made to see if the issue can be resolved at an informal level before an official complaint is filed.

If these efforts are not successful, the Division may take a number of actions.

Division can direct parent that they:

- Must cease negative behaviour
- Must cease all communication
- Are barred from school property
- Are subject to police and legal intervention

If you are experiencing harassment, contact a Teacher Welfare Staff Officer for assistance:

PHONE: (204) 888-7961
TOLL FREE: 1-800-262-8803

The Investigation Process

Under the WSH Act, it is the Employer's Responsibility to ensure an employee's workplace is free of harassment.

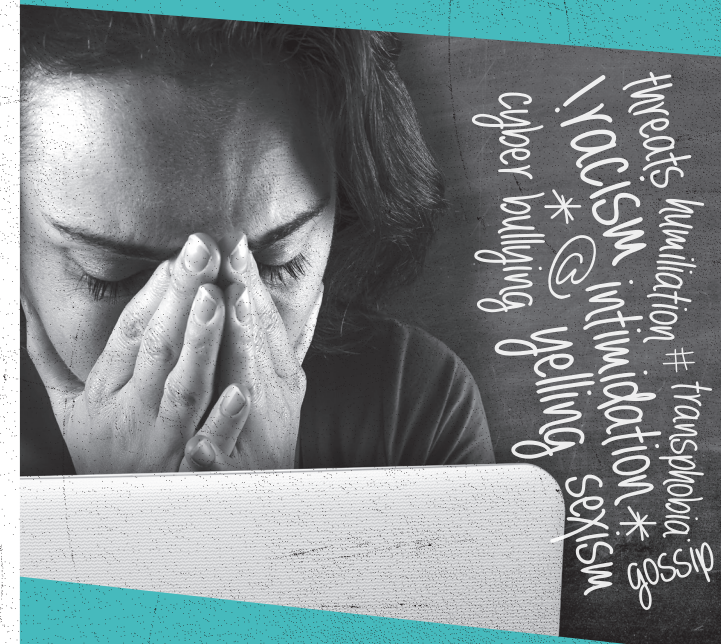
Check your Division's policy (Harassment or Respectful Workplace) for specific processes regarding how to report and what to expect.

Most Division's policies follow a similar process:

1. Report the matter in writing to the appropriate supervisor.
2. Respondent will be notified of the complaint.
3. Complainant and respondent are both advised of confidentiality.
4. Investigator will be appointed (may be internal or external).
5. Investigator interviews complainant to clarify details.
6. Investigator interviews respondent to clarify details.
7. Investigator interviews witnesses (if any).
8. Investigator determines whether harassment policy was breached.
9. Employer determines next steps/ consequences, if any.

HARASSMENT

What it is and what you can do about it.



**THE MANITOBA
TEACHERS'
SOCIETY**

From the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act Regulation 217/2006

1.1 "harassment" is defined as:

- (a) objectionable conduct that creates a risk to the health of a worker; or
- (b) severe conduct that adversely affects a worker's psychological or physical well-being.

10.2 (1) The harassment prevention policy must include the following statements:

- (a) every worker is entitled to work free of harassment;
- (b) the employer must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that no worker is subjected to harassment in the workplace;
- (c) the employer will take corrective action respecting any person under the employer's direction who subjects a worker to harassment;

Conduct is objectionable if based on any one of the 'protected grounds':

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| • Race | • Income |
| • Creed | • Political belief |
| • Religion | • Disability |
| • Colour | • Weight |
| • Gender | • Age |
| • Sexual Orientation | • Marital/family status |

The most common form of harassment is psychological harassment, commonly called 'bullying'.

Harassment Can Take Many Forms

- Verbal or written abuse or threats
- Insulting, derogatory comments or gestures
- Personal ridicule or malicious gossip
- Malicious or uncalled-for interference with another's work
- Refusal to work or co-operate with others
- Interfering with or vandalising personal property
- Sexual harassment, including offensive or humiliating behaviour
- Psychological harassment includes bullying or abuse of authority

What Harassment Is Not

- Reasonable management (appropriate performance reviews, advice, coaching or discipline by a supervisor or manager)
- Consensual interactions (consensual teasing and joking, friendly gestures, such as pats on the back)
- A single incident, unless it is shown to have a lasting, harmful effect on a worker.
- Unpleasant behaviour (talking loudly in the workplace, always being in a bad mood, constant complaining, ...)
- Respectful discussions about workplace conflict/change (conflict or disagreements in the that would reasonably be considered acceptable within a work-place setting)

Address Harassment Quickly

- A brief difficult conversation about how you feel may save a person from long-term harassment.
- Many people tend to avoid conflict; this leads to them putting off dealing with an individual's inappropriate behaviour.
- The effects of harassment accumulate over time; it is not healthy to let things drag out over months or years.
- It is easier for an investigator to establish facts when incidents are more recent.

How to Tell a Harasser to Stop

- In person is better; provides opportunity for dialogue and clarification
- Can be done in writing—get advice from a Staff Officer on wording
- Be specific in identifying the unwelcome behaviours and effects on you
- Can ask for a meeting with MTS reps present
- Notify the other person that if they do not stop the behaviour, you are considering a formal harassment complaint

The Manitoba Teachers' Society offers Professional Development that helps build skills for having difficult conversations. This may help members deal with issues before they get to the point of harassment. For more information, visit the PD section at: <http://www.mbteach.org>