

Guidance Note for School Staff on Sexual Harassment Response and Follow Up

All school managers, principals, trainers, teachers, industrial liaison specialists, and school support staff are strongly encouraged to complete the STOP Sexual Harassment Moodle course at the start of the school year, accessing it when needed as a refresher.

This Guidance Notes is brief and a complementary resource, but it should be accompanied by an in-depth workshop with trained professionals from outside your school. These could be invited from a government entity, such as the Gender Monitoring Office or Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, or a development partner. Also, if your school does not have a policy or guidelines in place on sexual harassment prevention and response, it is important that you develop these and make them widely available to staff and students.

As a trusted adult, it's your responsibility to take reports of sexual harassment seriously. Failure to act in a timely manner may negatively impact a student and even have legal consequences. Prioritizing the wellbeing of the student should come first.

Some things to consider...

1. When the case is first reported to you as the trainer or other school staff member, you should:

- ❖ Ask sensitively for the details of what happened or is happening to the student (who, what, when, where and how often). Questions may include:
 - Do you want to tell me more about what happened?
 - How are you feeling now?
 - **What are the next steps you'd like to pursue? What do you need to feel safe and supported?**
 - Do you want me to tell anyone else (e.g. family member)?
 - Agree on the next steps with the student, offering them some options based on the details they have shared above (report, etc.)
 - *Note: Depending on the severity and type of case (verbal harassment in the workplace, sexual assault/rape, etc.) and the age of the student, you will need to follow different steps and provide tailored support and follow up.*
 - Advise on prevention, if necessary – Refer to the prevention section in the STOP Sexual Harassment Moodle course.

2. When supporting a student who has reported a case, it is important that you:

- ❖ Listen to them
- ❖ Do not blame or judge them
- ❖ Show empathy
- ❖ Let the student know that you will maintain their **confidentiality**

3. When reporting a case, it is important that you:

- ❖ Do not take any action unless the person reporting agrees to it (for students over age 18); however, for minors, school staff have a legal responsibility to report the case to the appropriate authority. Also, the school has the responsibility to report a case to the police when an incident has been perpetrated by one of its staff, but it must be handled anonymously/confidentially.
- ❖ Follow up on the case to ensure it is resolved to the satisfaction of the student and in accordance with the law.