



SOUTH EAST REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The Southeast Regional Health Authority seeks to handle all sexual harassment cases with the utmost confidentiality to ensure that both the accused and the complainant's safety and privacy are protected. It is our intention to build a culture that is respectful, fair, and free from any sexual harassment.

Definition: Sexual Harassment shall be defined as any conduct, act or behaviour that constitutes unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature by one person toward another.

The climate will militate against any possible occurrence of incidents of sexual harassment and reprisal by:

- Providing a workplace free from hazards, discrimination and/or harassment and complaint with local laws and best practice.
- Adopting a zero-tolerance approach to offenses of sexual harassment towards Client, Patients, Employees, Interns, Visitor, Suppliers.
- Collective cooperation through the Board of Directors and Management prohibiting any form of harassment against Employees, Clients, Patients, Visitors, Suppliers
- Management taking decisive steps to ensure the safety of all employees, to prevent any and all forms of sexual harassment from occurring and to take corrective action where such acts have occurred.
- Management will apply the rules of natural justice to investigate and appropriately address the matters if an offence is committed.
- Promoting a safe haven for whistle blowers and building a culture of collective rapport.
- Providing staff members with clear outlets for reporting these matters confidentially without the threat of reprisals or victimization as a result of their reports.



- Facilitating periodic sessions that will serve to help employees understand their options and explain clear and accessible procedures for complainants if they should become a victim of sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Establishing a channel that will ensure that accusations that are deemed to be false are treated with and the appropriate sanctions applied.

The various forms of sexual harassment include but not limited to:

- ***Physical harassment*** - unwanted pinching, patting, touching, kissing, groping, and hugging which has clear sexual undertones for Nursing, Medical, Supports, Administrative, Para-Medical and Technical Support.
- ***Verbal harassment*** - unwelcomed sexual comments on appearance/physical attributes private/personal life, sexually suggestive or explicit jokes, insult and put-downs based on a person's sex. It is important to note that often harassers hide behind the argument that comments are "compliments"; this does not mean that the behaviour is acceptable.
- ***Non-verbal/Gestural harassment*** - sexually suggestive gestures e.g. winks, licking of lips, gestures with hands, fingers, legs.
- ***Emotional Harassment***- behaviour which isolates is discriminatory towards or excludes a person on the basis of their gender.
- ***Written/graphic/visual/audio harassment*** - via internet communication (including electronic messages and attachments), letters, land line telephone, cellular telephones, distribution and display of pornographic materials (visual and audio), obscene and sexually explicit language.
- ***Quid Pro Quo***: This form of sexual harassment is recognized where harassers used a position of power and authority to negotiate job benefits (employment, re-employment, appointments, expeditious payment, continued employment, individual favourable compensation, terms, conditions, promotions, privileges), public goods (social services, security, social benefits, natural resources, medical supplies) medical supplies, socially and economically valued goods (housing, school admission, scholarships, security) are conditional on an exchange of sex or physical contact, and refusal leads to failure to access any of the above.
- ***Stalking/ Cyber Stalking*** - Obsessively following, besetting, contacting and watching a person, either in person or using the internet, telephone, mail, and other media, which is motivated by what the perpetrator believes are feelings of desire and love constitute sexual harassment.



- ***Voyeurism (“Peeping Tom”)*** - The act of watching, taping, recording, photographing a person without their knowledge, in a clandestine manner or otherwise, while the person uses or inhabits a space where they have an expectation of privacy such as their domicile, a public bathroom, changing room etc., is a sexually harassing act.
- ***Intimidation/Bully/Retaliation*** - Persons often use non-sexual behaviour to accommodate sexual harassment. Therefore, any act of intimidation meant to prevent someone from reporting sexually harassing behaviour or to punish someone for reporting sexually harassing behaviour must be considered as a type of sexual harassment.
- ***Unintentional Sexual Harassment*** - Acts or comments of a sexual nature, not intended to harass, can constitute sexual harassment if another person feels uncomfortable with such subjects. Claiming to not understand or failing to know that an act is harassing does not mean that it is not in fact harassment.
- ***Toxic Environment*** - A combination of the above can create a toxic and oppressive environment for the direct target but also for other persons who are not targeted. Even if a person is not the direct target of sexual harassment but is made uncomfortable and is offended by the creation of a toxic environment, they should be able to make a report of sexual harassment.

Should you have any concerns about the above Policy Statement or Organisation, please address them directly to the following persons:

- Regional Director
- Director: Human Resource and Industrial Relations.