



# Friends Society Sexual Harassment Policy

**Friends Society will ensure work environment that is free from sexual harassment for its volunteers, staff and beneficiaries. This applies to activities at the Petit Library or elsewhere.**

“Sexual Harassment” includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behavior (whether directly or by implication):

Physical contact or advances

Making sexually coloured remarks

Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature

Showing pornography

A demand or request for sexual favours

## KEY POINTS

It is **sexual** and **unwelcome**  
The experience is **subjective**

**It is the impact that matters, not the intent**

It may **start off innocently**, but could escalate to harassment  
It may be experienced as a **single incident** or a **series of incidents** over a period of time

**If you are wondering if it's sexual harassment, it probably is**

Friends Society has set up an **Internal Complaints Committee (FS-ICC)** to address complaints of sexual harassment. It will address all complaints following the procedures outlined by the Government of India (Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act of 2013) – this include maintaining confidentiality. FS has also published a **“Sexual Harassment Prevention, Prohibition and Redress Policy & Procedures” manual** which is available at the FS office (ask any staff). It provides detailed information about the process.

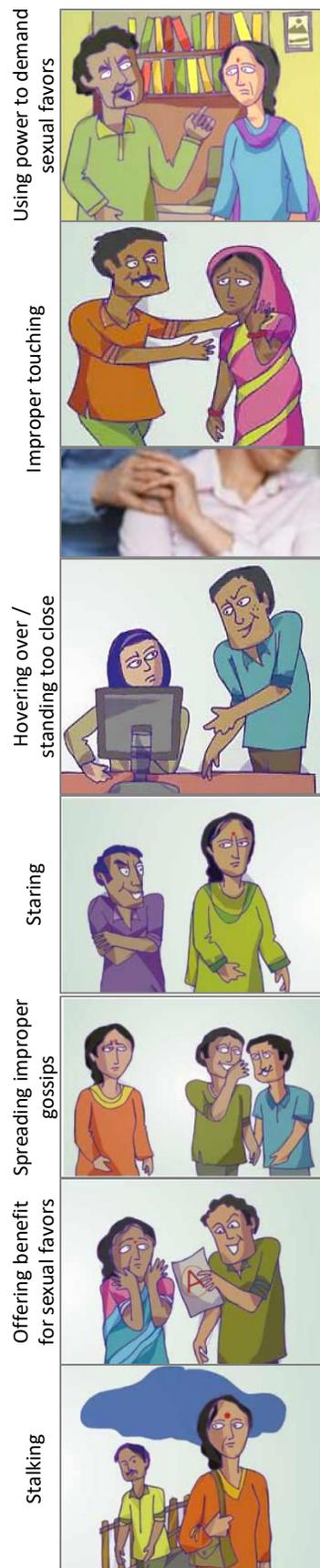
## To file a complaint:

- Talk to any FS trustee or staff you are comfortable with. You can also directly contact a member of “Internal Complaint Committee” (FS-ICC). List of ICC members is posted on bulletin boards at FS. You will to make a complaint within three months of the incident (or the last incident if there were more than one).
- You will be asked to prepare a written complaint and give that to the ICC.



## EXAMPLES:

## Sexual Harassment – MYTHS & FACTS



**If you ignore harassment, it will go away.** [FACT: It will not. Harassers generally will not stop on their own. Ignoring such behavior may even be seen as agreement or encouragement. The problem may get worse.]

**Harassment requires touching.** [FACT: Sexual harassment does not need to have a physical component.]

**Harassment is always verbal.** [FACT: Verbal comments may or may not be a part of sexual harassment.]

**It can't be harassment--he was only joking.** [FACT: Even though a person intends their conduct to be funny, it may still be offensive to others.]

**The behavior must be repeated to be sexual harassment.** [FACT: Sexual harassment could consist of repeated actions, or may arise from a single incident, if it is serious.]

**Sexual harassment requires that the harasser act with cruel intentions** [FACT: In some cases, sexual harassment is the result of a person's ignorance of their own offensive behavior. However, it is not the harasser's intent that is important, but the effect on the victim.]

**Conduct must be sexual in nature to constitute sexual harassment** [FACT: While sexual harassment certainly does include unwelcome advances of a sexual nature, it could also be in a different form. For example, if a male coworker constantly uses demeaning or inappropriate (unwelcome) language when addressing a female coworker (e.g. "Babe," "Honey," "Sweetheart").]

**Sexual harassment is rare** [FACT: Sexual harassment is widespread. It touches the lives of 40 to 60 percent of working women, and similar proportions of female students in colleges and universities.]

**Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers** [FACT: It is estimated that in most (80% to 90%) cases, the victim knew the attacker – a boyfriend, ex-boyfriend, classmate, co-worker, acquaintance, even a family member.]

**Sexual harassment only happens to women and is perpetrated only by men.** [FACT: Both men and women can be victims or perpetrators of sexual harassment. A survey has shown that 10 percent of men reported experiencing sexual harassment at work.]

**Women provoke sexual assault when they dress provocatively or act in a promiscuous manner** [FACT: Studies have found that victims of sexual harassment vary in physical appearance, type of dress, age, and behavior. Women dress to feel comfortable and attractive. Perpetrators are responsible for their actions.]

**The most so-called harassment is trivial and harmless flirtation.** [FACT: Sexual harassment can be devastating for the victims. Harassment is offensive, often frightening and insulting; victims often experience serious psychological and health-related problems.]

**Only young, pretty women are assaulted.** [FACT: Sexual assault is a crime of power and control. Offenders often choose people whom they see as most vulnerable. Men and boys are also sexually assaulted, as well as persons with disabilities. Sexual harassment is more about dominance and power than how attractive the victim is.]

**If a person did not scream or fight or has no injury, it could not have been a sexual assault** [FACT: Most people do not scream or fight because they freeze or become paralyzed with fear; they respond in many different ways: calm, hysteria, withdrawal, anxiety, anger, apathy, denial and shock. Reaction to the assault and the length of time needed to process through the experience vary with each person. ]