



NO

to all violence!

Take action against bullying, harassment, discrimination and other kinds of violence.

Instructions for students in vocational education and training and general upper secondary education

**Preventing and intervening
in sexual harassment and violence**

Stop sexual harassment and violence!

Sexual harassment and violence may occur in any environment, for example in the social media. Harassment in public places and online has certainly become more common.

What is it all about, what can we do about harassment and violence, and how can safety and security be improved?



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
FINLAND

Sexual harassment and violence - what are they?

Sexual harassment means verbal, non-verbal or physical unwanted conduct of a sexual nature by which a person's psychological or physical integrity is violated, in particular by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere. Sexual violence always violates a person's integrity or right to self-determination.

Sexual harassment and violence cause human suffering. Harassment and violence affect the person's ideas of their body and their sexuality, intimacy and interpersonal relationships. The consequences of violence include health problems, fear, bullying and blackmail.

Sexual violence is an offence. This is why it is always important to talk about it and report it to your educational institution's staff, your guardians and the police.





Examples of sexual harassment and violence are:

- sending messages and images of a sexual nature
- commenting on images or a person
- unwanted physical conduct and touching: stroking, squeezing, patting, groping or otherwise touching a person's genitals, buttocks, breasts, thighs or other similar areas
- demands or proposals concerning sexual intercourse or other sexual activity
- forcing someone to participate in a sexual act that violates their right to self-determination
- forcing someone to watch sexual images or have sex
- sexual abuse of a person aged under 18 and persuading a person aged under 16 to participate in sexual acts
- buying sexual services from a person aged under 18
- rape, also in an intimate relationship or by a live-in partner or spouse
- honour violence and genital mutilation

The law gives young people aged under 16 and 18 special protection

Two protective age limits are in force in Finland: 16 and 18 years.

Performing sexual acts on or having sexual intercourse with children aged under 16 is prohibited. Sexual harassment is interpreted as sexual violence if it targets a person aged under 16. A person aged under 16 cannot give their valid consent to a sexual act or intercourse with a young person or an adult who is clearly older than them.

The protective age limit of 18 years protects a young person from sexual abuse within the family, in a relationship of trust or by someone in a position of authority.

Possessing and distributing material of a sexual nature showing a person aged under 18 is always prohibited.

Further information: <https://poliisi.fi/seksuaalirikokset>

What should I do if I come across sexual harassment or violence?

- say no and ask the person to stop harassing you
- if the situation is unclear, talk about it and tell the person which acts upset you
- remember that, even if you are unable to say or do anything in a difficult situation, it is the person harassing you or behaving violently who is always responsible for what they do
- if necessary, move away and join people who feel safe to you
- take screenshots of online messages that upset you
- practise looking for help, taking screenshots and talking about harassment
- tell your parents what happened
- tell a public health nurse, psychologist, school social worker or a teacher about the incident. If they hear about an act that puts a young person's life or health at risk, the staff of an educational institution have a duty to report it to the child welfare services and the police
- get help if necessary:
Seri-tukikeskus: thl.fi/seri
Rikosuhripäivystys: <https://www.riku.fi>
Nuorten Exit: <https://nuortenexit.fi>
- if you see sexual harassment or violence, ask for help. Do not put your or other people's safety at risk, and make sure that the person who is targeted receives support and help
- report any sexual harassment or violence you experience at an educational institution. Ask what the institution is going to do about it
- if you experience violence, always report it to the police

The person I should contact,

to be completed by the educational institution



If I harass others or act violently myself, what should I do?

- talk about it and look for help: naisenvakivalta.fi,
Lyömätön linja: miessakit.fi
- you can also ask your educational institution's nurse, psychologist and social worker for help

How can I make things safer?

- preventing harassment and violence is part of the educational institution's work on promoting equality, a safe learning environment and good operating culture
- consider how you behave online and talk about other people yourself
- think about how you can create a safe space for yourself and others
- play an active role in improving safety and promoting an operating culture in which everyone is taken into consideration appropriately

How can I protect myself against sexual harassment and violence?

- remember that in normal sexual activity, both parties must always consent and be willing to participate
- remember that you have the right to your personal boundaries and that in every situation, you can refuse to do anything you do not want to do
- also remember that sexual harassment and violence are never the victim's fault, and you cannot always protect yourself from such acts
- practise what you might do if you receive unpleasant attention online, in public places or at an educational institution
- think about which social media channels it is worth using. Report upsetting or inappropriate content to the administrator
- think carefully about what you share about yourself and others online
- ✓ go out with family and friends or other people you find safe, and avoid unsafe places and times of the day



Take action against bullying, harassment, discrimination and other kinds of violence.

This brochure is part of the material found on the Finnish National Agency for Education's website on the prevention of bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. The website was set up as part of the Ministry of Education and Culture's action plan to prevent bullying, teasing, violence and harassment in schools and educational institutions <https://okm.fi/kiusaamisen-ehkaisemisohjelma> as well as the implementation of the National Child Strategy <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/163541>.

The brochure is also relevant to the Ministry of Justice's Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women <https://oikeusministerio.fi/naisiin-kohdistuvan-vakivallan-torjuntaohjelma>



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