

INTERVIEWING THE VICTIM

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| Should anyone else be present when the victim is interviewed? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the complainant to bring a support person to the interview if she wishes • If the complainant is a student, he or she should not be allowed to bring another student to the interview, but consider contacting the parents and inviting them to be present |
| Begin with an explanation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district is committed to creating a nondiscriminatory, harassment-free environment in which to learn • Describe the step-by-step procedures that the investigation will follow • The role of the investigator is neutral, rather than an advocate for either side • Indicate that the responding party will be asked for a response and so the respondent will have to know the facts of the complaint • Take care to avoid making any promises about confidentiality |
| Respond in a fair, nonbiased and objective manner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to build rapport with the complainant • Avoid interruptions and allow pauses that encourage communication • Avoid conclusive questions and editorial comments that convey judgment and disapproval • Avoid inflammatory words and phrases such as “victim,” “perpetrator,” “dirtbag,” etc. • Demonstrate concern for the complainant without committing to her/his version of the story • Let the lid off of emotions. Complainants may need to express feelings that include fear, anger, humiliation, apprehension, mistrust, etc. Don’t assume that expressing these feelings is negative or to be avoided |
| What should the complaint include | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who, what, when, where, why • Gather enough information to thoroughly complete the Complaint Form |
| What is the harm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotionally upset • Prompted to talk to a counselor • Physical illness • Medical care received • Missed school or work • Effects on studies • Effects on other aspects of complainant’s life |
| What remedy is sought | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cease and desist • Special assistance • Credit or grade change • Temporary or permanent transfer to another class or school |
| Discuss interim measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal of interim measures is to stabilize the situation • Separating complainant and respondent |
| Asses the complainant’s credibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answered all questions • Motive to lie • Believability • Note non-verbal signals such as body language and demeanor, but recognize cultural differences |
| Discuss retaliation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and give examples. Examples of retaliation include threats, assault, ostracism, and rumor spreading. • Have the complainant promise to immediately report • Caution the complainant not to attempt to influence potential witnesses |

