

EQUITY MATTERS

Your questions answered

Q As an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander teacher, how can I become more involved in Federation’s activities?

A We offer Trade Union Training courses for school Federation Workplace Representatives throughout the year. We also offer a course for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workplace Representatives — this year’s training will be held in October. This course will be presented by Federation’s Aboriginal Education Officer and is designed to support Federation Representatives, Women’s Contacts and Workplace Committee members who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. It covers the same content as the Foundations for Workplace Representatives, though participants cannot attend if they have attended this core course within the past 10 years. Please register on our website.

Training is also available for Association Aboriginal Education Contacts.

Other opportunities to become involved in Federation include Aboriginal Members Conference, Women’s Conference, Anna Stewart Program, the Aboriginal Education Restrictive Committee and the Aboriginal Members Committee.



Q I am a teacher who wants to navigate transitioning at school. Where do I start?

A The Department states it is committed to supporting trans and gender diverse employees and seeks to create environments where Departmental staff can proudly bring their true selves to work. To assist employees affirming their gender, the Department has developed gender affirmation procedures.

Teachers begin their gender affirmation process at school by meeting with their principal to discuss the process. Teachers affirming their gender are not required to disclose information about their gender affirmation outside of what may be required to implement workplace changes. Additional support can be provided by the Department’s Equity and Inclusion representative at youbelong@det.nsw.edu.au.

The needs of the teacher, who is affirming their gender, must be at the core of all planning and decision-making, including the decision regarding who will be involved in their affirmation process.

If issues arise, members should contact Federation’s Professional

Support section on 1300 654 367 or their local Organiser.

Q I have never worked in special education. What do I need to know?

A Look at the Department of Education’s Inclusive Practice in Education Scholarship to increase your skills and confidence in supporting students with additional learning needs. Reach out to your local school for specific purposes to arrange a visit; their experts can assist you with understanding the “ins and outs” of special education. Also, be open, honest and ask questions — if you don’t know something, don’t be afraid to ask. Be open minded and you may find yourself in a lengthy career in special education.

Q I have witnessed sexual harassment at my school. What can I do?

A Sexual harassment is a hazard and risk to workers’ physical and psychological health and wellbeing. The Department’s workplace sexual harassment prevention and response policy states workers must: “report or encourage the reporting of incidents when they have observed or have been made aware of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, occurring, even if they do not know the full circumstances.”

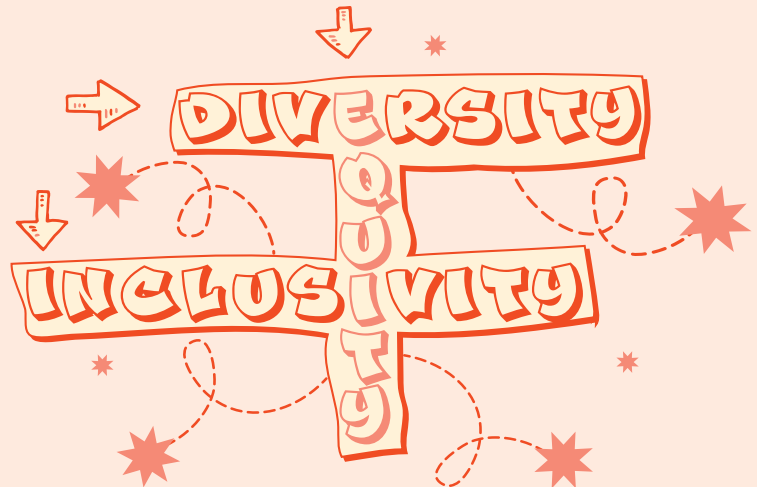
Witnesses to any sexual harassment should be encouraged to call out the behaviour and tell the harasser that their conduct is inappropriate and that they should stop.

If the harasser is another member of staff, the behaviour of the harasser should be reported to their supervisor or the principal.

If the harasser is a student or group of students, the behaviour should be reported to the principal. The Department’s policies and procedures related to student behaviour expectations, as well as the Mandatory Reporter Guide, should then be utilised. If there are concerns about a widespread pattern of behaviour, then a focus on gender inequality, sexual harassment and discrimination should be addressed via the school’s welfare programs and other avenues within the curriculum.



If the harasser is a parent or community member, the behaviour should be reported to a supervisor or the principal. Expectations of behaviour are covered by the School Community Charter. There are also Departmental policies and legislation, such as the Inclosed Lands Act (1901) outlined in *Unauthorised entry onto departmental premises* (Legal Issues Bulletin No. 58, 2019), which can be implemented to place restrictions on access to the school site, staff and students during hours of operation. If the behaviour continues away from school, it should be reported to the police.



Q I have witnessed sexual harassment at my TAFE college. What can I do?

A Disclosures and formal reports can be made by any member of the TAFE NSW community who observes or becomes aware of an incident of sexual assault, sex discrimination or sexual harassment involving TAFE NSW student or staff.

Complaints or formal reports of sexual assault, sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment can be made via the TAFE NSW Incident Hotline **1800 316 600**, completing a WHS Incident Report Form in the TAFE NSW portal, or by speaking with a student counsellor, manager or People and Culture Business Partner. Anyone who has been sexually assaulted or sexually harassed is encouraged to report it to police.

Staff can submit anonymous disclosures of sexual assault, sex discrimination or sexual harassment by using the online complaint form, however, this may limit TAFE NSW’s ability to address the matter. Staff who make a disclosure or report of sexual assault, sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment can withdraw the disclosure or report at any stage, however, TAFE NSW may continue to investigate in relation to the disclosure or report, to ensure the safety of those involved.

REFERENCES

- Change of personal information procedures
- Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy 2023-26
- Inclusive Practice in Education Scholarship
- Workplace Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response policy
- Mandatory Reporter Guide
- School Community Charter
- Unauthorised entry onto departmental premises (Legal Issues Bulletin No. 58, 2019)

Links to the reference documents



Questions answered by Federation’s Equity Team:

- Russell Honnery, Aboriginal Education Officer
- Leeanda Smith, Women’s Officer
- Mel Smith, Officer attached to LGBTIQ+ matters

