

# Survey shows extent of school sexual harassment

WASHINGTON (AP) — Four out of five teen-agers say they have been sexually harassed at school — targets of conduct ranging from rumor-mongering to physical assault, according to a survey of eighth- through 11th-graders.

The national study of 1,600 students found that harassment frequently starts in elementary school, that few of the victims ever report it, and that the emotional impact, particularly on girls, is serious and widespread.

More than one in 10 of those surveyed reported being forced by either fellow students or adults to engage in sexual conduct beyond kissing. Thirteen percent of girls and 9 percent of boys said they had experienced this unwelcome sexual behavior.

"Ignoring sexual harassment in schools in effect condones it," Sharon Schuster, president of the American Association of University Women, said in a statement accompanying the study results being released Wednesday.

"We need to send a message ... classrooms and hallways in our schools must be a safe place to learn," Schuster said.

Questionnaires were administered in 79 classrooms across the country by Louis Harris and Associates. The

educational foundation of the university women's group commissioned the study.

Fifty-three percent of the students in the study said they'd been touched, grabbed or pinched in a sexual way, but two-thirds of the girls said they had been victimized in this way. Forty-two percent of the boys said they had been.

Thirty-nine percent of the victimized girls said they were afraid in school; 8 percent of the boys said they were.

"Sexual harassment takes a toll on all students, but the impact on girls is devastating," said Anne Bryant, executive director of the educational foundation.

At least one 16-year-old girl discovered it didn't do any good to inform school officials.

"I was upset the administration didn't respond immediately after I complained" about sexual harassment, she wrote on her questionnaire. "I was told to ignore the harassers."

The survey covered 14 categories of conduct — including intentionally brushing up against someone in a sexual way, being victimized by sexual rumors, or being spied on while dressing or showering.

Two-thirds of the students surveyed said they had

been subjects of comments, jokes, gestures or looks of a sexual nature.

The findings:

- Just 7 percent of the victims told a teacher about it. And while one in five victims told a family member, 23 percent kept quiet. More than half didn't even know if their school had a policy on sexual harassment.

- Nearly four out of 10 students who did the harassing said it's "just part of school life," that "a lot of people do it" and that "it's no big deal." Two-thirds of the boys and more than half of the girls surveyed admitted they have sexually harassed someone in school.

- One in four girls who said they've been harassed were victimized by a teacher, coach, bus driver, teacher's aide, security guard, principal or counselor.

The survey also concluded that harassment usually occurs out in the open in the hallway or classroom.

Harassment often occurs in the early grades, and usually more than once. One-third of the victimized students said they'd first been harassed in elementary school. Fifty-eight percent reported they'd been targeted often or occasionally.

The study has a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

## Raped nurse can sue supervisors

WASHINGTON (AP) — A nurse at an Oregon school for juvenile offenders can sue her supervisors for assigning her to work alone with a youth who raped and beat her, the Supreme Court decided Tuesday.

The court declined to review a lower court ruling rejecting the supervisors' argument that the federal Constitution does not require state employees to protect subordinates from injury by another person.

The supervisors' lawyers contended the nurse should have sued under state personal-injury law instead of alleging a violation of her constitutional right to due process.

When the nurse was hired to work at the MacLaren School in Woodburn, officials told her she

would not have to work alone with students who were violent offenders.

On Aug. 15, 1989, supervisors at the school assigned an inmate to work with the nurse in the school's medical clinic. According to court papers, the youth was a violent sex offender who had failed all treatment programs at MacLaren.

Once alone with the nurse, the youth raped, beat and robbed her, her lawsuit said.

The nurse sued five supervisors, saying they failed to train her on how to respond in an emergency and that they knowingly assigned her to work alone with someone considered likely to commit a violent offense.

A federal judge dismissed the

lawsuit, saying state officials did not have a duty under federal law to protect the nurse from an attack by a third party.

But the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reinstated the lawsuit last year. State officials can be held responsible for creating a dangerous situation that leads to an attack, the appeals court said.

In the appeal acted Tuesday, the supervisors' lawyers said the nurse's "remedy is to be found in state law, not the federal Constitution."

Four other federal appeals courts have said state officials may be held responsible for failing to protect someone only if the person was in custody or officials somehow barred the person from protecting herself.

### CORRECTION

PHOENIX (AP) — The Associated Press reported erroneously May 31 that an FBI spokesman said the agency knew Islamic extremists planned to meet here in 1991.

The meeting among members of Islamic Jihad and the Muslim Brotherhood was in

December 1991 under cover of a larger gathering of 4,000 Muslim youths, according to *The Arizona Republic* and the book *Target America: Terrorism in the U.S. Today*. The newspaper and the book said the meeting of extremists was to discuss terrorist acts in the United States.

### ET ALS

#### MEETINGS

Republicans for All Americans will meet tonight from 8 to 9 in the EMU Oak Room. For more information, call 345-0931.

Unwanted Sexual Behavior Task Force will meet today from 12:30 to 2 p.m. in EMU Cedar rooms A and B. For more information, call 346-3210.

#### RELIGION

People of Faith will have a brown bag

lunch today from noon to 1 p.m. at the Koinonia Center, 1414 Kincaid St. For more information, call 484-1707.

Wesley Night Fellowship will feature "The Creation" tonight at 7 at the Wesley Foundation, 1236 Kincaid St. For more information, call 346-4694.

Catholic Newman Center will have the last student mass for the year tonight at 9 at 18th Avenue and Emerald Street. For more information, call 343-7021.

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