

**Staff Welfare**

**Sexual Harassment**

The Board of Education is committed to maintaining a work environment for its employees that is free from sexual harassment. Furthermore, the Board of Education strongly believes that no person in the School District shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity.

**DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

**In Employment**

Sexual harassment in employment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual.
3. Such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
4. Qualified employees are denied employment opportunities or benefits because the opportunities or benefits are given to another employee who submitted to an employer's sexual advances or requests for sexual favors.

**Under Title IX (applies to students and employees)**

Title IX forbids discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity that receives federal funds. This includes a prohibition on sexual harassment. The Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education defines sexual harassment under Title IX as follows: "Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, imposed on the basis of sex, by an employee or agent of a recipient that denies, limits, provides different, or conditions the provisions of aid, benefits, services or treatment protected under Title IX."

Sexual harassment under Title IX includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome<sup>1</sup> sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an individual's academic status or progress, or employment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is the basis for educational or employment decisions affecting that individual.
3. Such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment.
4. Qualified students or employees are denied educational or employment opportunities or benefits because the opportunities or benefits are given to another student or employee who submitted to sexual advances or requests for sexual favors.

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<sup>1</sup> Sexual harassment of students by adults who otherwise come within this Policy is absolutely prohibited regardless of whether the conduct is "welcome."

**EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT****Unwelcome Sexual Advances**

Whether the advance is "unwelcome" is determined on a case-by-case basis. Unwelcome advances may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Any invitation (even subtle) intended to result in a sexual liaison.
2. Invitations to dinner or social events, when refusal results in the loss of a promotion or in other adverse employment action.
3. Propositioning an employee.

**Unwelcome Verbal Conduct of a Sexual Nature**

This may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Sexually provocative or explicit speech.
2. Publicly expressed sexual fantasies.
3. Jokes of a sexual or crude nature.
4. Derogatory comments directed to males or females as a class (language directed toward a specific employee is more likely to be viewed as sexual harassment).
5. Demeaning comments.
6. Threats for not agreeing to submit to sexual advances.
7. Writing sexually explicit memos.

**Unwelcome Physical Conduct of a Sexual Nature**

This may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Grabbing or twisting an individual's arm.
2. Any unwarranted touching.
3. Sexually offensive pranks.
4. Drawing sexually explicit cartoons, other drawings, or graffiti.
5. Gestures indicating sexual behavior.
6. Suggestive winks.
7. Kissing.

**Conduct Toward Students**

In addition to the foregoing examples, students may experience harassment that is unique to their situation, some of which may not be immediately recognized as sexual harassment, but which may support a potential claim against the District and/or its employees if not remedied. Such harassment may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Unwanted sexual behavior, such as touching, oral comments, sexual name calling, spreading sexual rumors, jokes, pictures, leers, overly personal conversation, cornering or blocking a student's movement, pulling at clothes, students "making out" on school premises.
2. A student in a predominantly single-gender class who is subjected to sexual remarks by a teacher or students who regard the comments as joking and part of the usual class environment.
3. Interfering with a student's achievement in a predominantly or historically single-gender class by hiding tools or equipment, questioning the student's ability to handle the work, or suggesting that the student is "abnormal" for enrolling in the class.

4. Purposefully limiting or denying students access to educational resources because of their gender.
5. Teasing a student about the student's enrollment in a predominantly or historically single-gender class.

### **Nature of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is not limited to conduct by males toward females. Sexual harassment may occur between any or all of the following:

1. Student to student.
2. Staff to student.
3. Student to staff.
4. Male to male.
5. Female to female.
6. Male to female.
7. Female to male.

## **INVESTIGATION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS**

### **Complaints Involving Employees**

1. If an employee believes that he/she is being sexually harassed, the employee is encouraged to bring the concern to the attention of the employee's supervisor.
2. If the employee feels that such contact with the supervisor would be inappropriate, if the situation is not satisfactorily resolved by the supervisor, or if the employee simply feels more comfortable speaking with someone other than the supervisor, the employee should contact the Title IX compliance coordinator for the School District.
3. If neither the employee's supervisor nor the Title IX compliance coordinator is of the same sex as the employee, or the employee for any other reason would prefer to report the employee's concern to another supervisor/administrator within the District, the employee may do so. However, it is essential that the report be made to someone with the authority and obligation to act upon the concern.
4. Any supervisor/administrator who receives a report, orally or in writing, from any employee regarding sexual harassment of that employee by another employee, non-employee doing business with the District, or student must notify the Title IX compliance officer within twenty-four (24) hours or within a reasonable time thereafter.
5. Oral complaints of sexual harassment will be put in writing by the complainant or by the person who receives the complaint, and should be signed by the complainant. However, the complainant's refusal to sign a complaint does not relieve the District of the obligation to investigate the complaint.
6. An employee who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment shall not be required to confront the alleged harasser prior to making the report.
7. Following receipt of the report, District personnel will promptly and fully investigate the complaint and will notify the employee and the alleged harasser of the results of the investigation. Investigations will be conducted with full recognition of the rights of all parties involved.

8. Upon receipt of the report, the Title IX officer will appoint an investigator to investigate the complaint. The investigation shall commence within forty-eight (48) hours after such appointment.
9. The District will maintain the confidentiality of the complaint and the details of the investigation to the fullest extent possible.
10. The investigator will put his/her findings in writing and will forward a copy to the Title IX compliance officer within one (1) week after concluding the investigation, or within a reasonable extension of time thereafter, for good cause shown.
11. If the investigation substantiates the complaint, the District will take appropriate disciplinary action against the offender(s), commensurate to the severity of the harassment (up to and including termination of employment). If the offender is a student, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with Board established Policy 2610. If the offender is not an employee of the District, the District will take appropriate action within the scope of its authority to eliminate and redress the harassment.
12. If the investigation is indeterminate, the matter will be designated as unresolved, and the investigation file will be maintained by the Title IX compliance officer in a file separate and apart from any student or personnel file.
13. There will be no retaliation against or adverse treatment of any employee who uses this procedure to resolve a concern when such complaint has been brought in the good faith belief that the complainant has been subjected to sexual harassment.
14. The responsible administrator shall follow up regularly with the complaining employee to ensure that the harassment has stopped and that no retaliation has occurred.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

### **Employees**

Each supervisor and administrator is responsible for maintaining an educational and work environment free from sexual harassment. In accordance with that responsibility, each site manager, or his/her designee, shall take appropriate actions to enforce the School District's sexual harassment policy, including but not limited to the following:

1. The supervisor/administrator shall provide an in-service regarding sexual harassment to all staff by the end of the first full calendar week of each school year.
2. The supervisor/administrator shall provide a copy of the policy to all new employees of the District prior to the commencement of the employee's duties.
3. The supervisor/administrator shall further instruct employees regarding the procedures for reporting sexual harassment in the educational setting on an as-needed basis.
4. The supervisor/administrator shall take prompt action to investigate all complaints of sexual harassment.
5. The supervisor/administrator shall take appropriate disciplinary action, as necessary.

### **Students**

Each building administrator is responsible for maintaining an educational and work environment free from sexual harassment. In accordance with that responsibility, each building administrator, or his/her designee, shall take appropriate actions to enforce the School District's sexual harassment policy, including but not limited to the following:

1. All vulgar or sexually offensive graffiti shall be removed from the premises.
2. The building administrator shall provide an in-service regarding sexual harassment (including sexual harassment involving students) to all staff by the end of the first full calendar week of school.
3. Student instruction regarding sexual harassment shall be provided annually by the end of September to all students in grades six through twelve. Age appropriate instruction will also be presented to pre-kindergarten through fifth grade students.
4. All homeroom teachers shall discuss this policy with their students within one month after its adoption by the Board and during the first week of the school year thereafter. Written copies of the policy shall be given to each student in grades six through twelve (and in lower grades as may be appropriate) as part of these discussions. Discussion shall be conducted in an age appropriate manner and should assure students they need not tolerate any form of sexual harassment.
5. All teachers, counselors, and administrators shall instruct students on the procedures for reporting sexual harassment within the educational setting on an as needed basis.
6. The building administrator shall take prompt action to investigate all complaints of sexual harassment.
7. The building administrator shall take appropriate disciplinary action, as needed.

## **NOTIFICATIONS**

A copy of the School District's sexual harassment policy shall:

1. Be displayed in a prominent location at each work site.
2. Be provided to each current employee, and to each new employee prior to commencement of their duties.
3. Appear in any School District newsletter or work site publication that sets forth the School District's comprehensive rules, regulations, procedures, and standards of conduct for employees.

The District's Title IX compliance officer will be available to answer all questions regarding this policy or its implementation.

## **DISCIPLINE/CONSEQUENCES**

### **Complaints Involving Employees**

1. Any employee who engages in the sexual harassment of anyone while on school property, or while in the employ of the District off school property will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
2. Any employee who permits or engages in the sexual harassment of a student will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
3. Any employee who receives a complaint of sexual harassment from a student and who does not act promptly to forward that complaint to the principal and the District's Title IX coordinator shall be disciplined appropriately.
4. Any employee who retaliates, or engages in conduct that could be interpreted as retaliation, against any person who has made a complaint of sexual harassment or who has participated in the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

5. Any non-employee doing business with the District who engages in sexual harassment, or who retaliates against any person who has made a complaint of sexual harassment or who has participated in the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment, will be subject to discipline to the extent that the District has control over the non-employee and his/her employer.
6. Any employee who brings a false charge of sexual harassment shall receive appropriate discipline. The term "false charge" means a charge brought in bad faith, that is, without the good faith belief that one has been subjected to sexual harassment. The term "false charge" does not include a charge that was brought in good faith, but which the District was unable to substantiate.

### **Complaints Involving Students**

1. Any student who engages in the sexual harassment while on school property or while participating in school activities, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.
2. Any employee who permits or engages in the sexual harassment of a student will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
3. Any employee who receives a complaint of sexual harassment from a student and who does not act promptly to forward that complaint to the principal and the District's Title IX coordinator, shall be disciplined appropriately.
4. Any student who brings a false charge of sexual harassment shall receive appropriate discipline. The term "false charge" means charges brought in bad faith, that is, without the good faith belief that one has been subjected to sexual harassment. The term "false charge" does not include a charge that was brought in good faith, but which the District was unable to substantiate.

## **TITLE IX GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE (Sexual Harassment)**

**Level 1: Principal or Immediate Supervisor** (Informal and optional-may be bypassed by grievant)

Many problems can be solved by an informal meeting with the parties and the principal or coordinator. A student who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment is encouraged to first discuss it with the teacher, counselor, or building administrator involved with the objective of resolving the matter promptly and informally. Employees with a sexual harassment complaint are encouraged to first discuss it with their principal or immediate supervisor with the same objective. If the individual's teacher/supervisor is the person alleged to have engaged in sexual harassment, the grievant should skip Level 1 and go directly to Level 2.

**Level 2: Title IX Coordinator**

If the complaint or issue is not resolved at Level 1 or if the grievant chooses to skip Level 1, the grievant may file a signed, written grievance stating: 1) the nature of the grievance; 2) the remedy requested; and 3) the date the grievance was submitted. The Level 2 written grievance should be filed with the Title IX Coordinator within fifteen (15) days of the event or incident, or from the date the grievant could reasonably become aware of such occurrence.

The Coordinator has authority to investigate all written grievances. If possible, the Coordinator will resolve the grievance. If the parties cannot agree on a resolution, the Coordinator will prepare a written report of the investigation which shall include the following:

1. A clear statement of the allegations of the grievance and remedy sought by the grievant.
2. A statement of the facts as contended by each of the parties.
3. A statement of the facts as found by the Coordinator and identification of evidence to support each fact.
4. A list of all witnesses interviewed and documents reviewed during the investigation.
5. A narrative describing attempts to resolve the grievance.
6. The Coordinator's conclusion as to whether the allegations in the grievance are meritorious.

If the Coordinator believes the grievance is valid, the Coordinator will recommend appropriate action to the Superintendent.

The Coordinator will complete the investigation and file the report with the Superintendent within fifteen (15) days after receipt of the written grievance. The Coordinator will send a copy of the report to the grievant.

If the Superintendent agrees with the recommendation of the Coordinator, the recommendations will be implemented.

The Coordinator and Superintendent may appoint an outside investigator once a written grievance is filed.

### **Level 3: The Board of Education**

If the Superintendent rejects the recommendations of the Coordinator, and/or either party is not satisfied with the recommendations from Level 2, either party may make a written appeal within ten (10) days of receiving the report of the Coordinator to the Board of Education. On receipt of the written appeal, the matter shall be placed on the agenda of the Board of Education for consideration not later than their next regularly scheduled meeting. A decision shall be made and reported in writing to all parties within thirty (30) days of that meeting. The decision of the Board of Education will be final.

### **Other Options for Grievant**

At any time during this process, a grievant may file a complaint with the Missouri Human Rights Commission or with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.