

## HARASSMENT BY STUDENTS INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES HARASSMENT INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING

Harassment of students by other students will not be tolerated in the school district.

Harassment is a violation of school district policies, rules and regulations and, in some cases, may also be a violation of criminal or other laws. The school district has the authority to report employees/students violating this rule to law enforcement officials.

Employees whose behavior is alleged to be in violation of this policy will be subject to the investigation procedure which may result in discipline, up to and including, discharge or other appropriate action. Other individuals whose behavior is alleged to be in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate sanctions as determined and imposed by the superintendent or board.

Individuals who feel that they have been harassed by employees, board members, administrators, parents, vendors or others doing business with the school district should communicate to the harasser that the individual expects the behavior to stop, if the individual is comfortable doing so. If the individual needs assistance communicating with the harasser, he/she should ask a teacher, counselor or principal to help.

### **Complaint Procedure**

Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence by a pupil, teachers, administrator or other school personnel of the School District, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence toward a pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel should report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate School District official designated by this policy. The School District encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form (FORM R) available from the principal of each building or available from the School District office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting harassment or violence directly to a District Human Rights Officer or to the Superintendent.

The building principal is the person responsible for receiving oral or written reports of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence at the building level. Any adult School District personnel who receives a report of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence shall inform the building principal immediately.

Upon receipt of a report, the principal must notify the School District Human Rights Officer immediately, without screening or investigating the report. The principal may request, but may not insist upon, a written complaint. A written statement of the facts alleged will be forwarded as soon as practicable by the principal to the Human Rights Officer. If the report was given verbally, the principal shall personally reduce it to a written form within 24 hours and forward it to the Human Rights Officer. Failure to forward any harassment or violence report or complaint

as provided herein will result in disciplinary action against the principals. If the complaint involves the building principals, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the Human Rights Officer by the reporting party or complainant.

The School Board hereby designates the Principal as the School District Human Rights Officer(s) to receive reports of complaints of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence. If the complaint involves a Human Rights Officer, the complaint shall be filed directly with the Superintendent.

The School District shall conspicuously post the name of the Human Rights Officer(s), including mailing addresses and telephone numbers. In some school districts the superintendent may be the Human Rights Officer. If so, an alternative individual should be designated by the School Board.

Submission of a good faith complaint or report of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades or work assignments.

The use of formal reporting forms is not mandatory.

The School District will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses, by keeping information regarding the investigation of harassment confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the School District's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations.

### **Investigation Procedure**

By authority of the School District, the Human Rights Officer, upon receipt of a report or complaint alleging religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence, shall immediately undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by School District officials or by a third party designated by the School District.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the School District should consider the surrounding circumstance, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances. In addition, the School district may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to

protect the complainant, pupils, teachers, administrators or other school personnel pending completion of an investigation of alleged religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence.

The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable. The School District Human Rights Officer shall make a written report to the Superintendent upon completion of the investigation. If the complaint involves the Superintendent, the report may be filed directly with the School Board. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this policy.

### **Resolution of the Complaint**

Upon receipt of a report, the School District will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge. School District action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, state and federal law and School District policies.

The result of the School District's investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant by the School District in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

### **Reprisal**

The School District will discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports alleged religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence or any person who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation, or who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment or violence. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

### **Right to Alternative Complaint Procedures**

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse, which may include filing charges with the State Department of Human Rights, initiating civil action or seeking redress under state criminal statutes and/or federal law.

### **Harassment or Violence as Abuse**

Under certain circumstances, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under state law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting under such statutes may be applicable. Nothing in this policy will prohibit the School District from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, violence or abuse.

### **Dissemination of Policy and Training**

This policy shall be conspicuously posted throughout each school building in areas accessible to pupils and staff members. This policy shall appear in the school's handbooks. The school district will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.

This policy shall be reviewed at least annually for compliance with state and federal law.

### **Initiations/Hazing**

The practice of holding initiations into classes, activities, or organizations will not be permitted. Harassment of students, etc., during activities is prohibited as well. Any violation of the policy may be punishable by suspension, expulsion or other appropriate action.

### **Points to Remember in the Investigation**

- Evidence uncovered in the investigation is confidential.
- Complaints must be taken seriously and investigated.
- No retaliation will be taken against individuals involved in the investigation process.
- Retaliators will be disciplined up to and including discharge.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed \_\_\_\_\_ Revised \_\_\_\_\_