



Harassment

Student Rights & Responsibilities

Board Policy 4620 prohibits harassment against students based on their sex, race, color, age, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, homelessness, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or disability including their physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability and/or retaliation. Any employee or student who abuses another student through any harassing conduct or communication related to these categories shall have violated the policy whether such conduct occurs on school grounds, at school events or on the school bus. The conduct may include in-person contact, written communication, or via any form of electronic transmission or communication. Depending on the incident, violators of the policy may be suspended from school or face expulsion.

What is a “Protected Class”?

A protected class refers to a group of people defined by the law who share common characteristics and are protected from discrimination and harassment by federal, state and/or local laws. Examples include: race, sex, disability and gender identity.

What is Harassment?

Harassment is unwanted, deliberate or repeated unsolicited comments (oral or written), gestures, graphic material, physical contacts, verbal/nonverbal or physical conduct directed to an individual because of the student’s membership in a protected class. Harassment occurs when a hostile environment is created by the offending behavior.

When is a person’s conduct Harassment?

A person’s conduct is harassment when it creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment or unreasonably or substantially interferes with a student’s performance in school and/or school-related activities. This includes situations where submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of a student’s opportunity to obtain an education.

Examples of harassment include:

- Unwanted or inappropriate physical contact;
- Making inappropriate statements or jokes about students or staff related to their protected class, such as making fun of a person’s accent;
- Displaying graphic posters or pictures showing a person’s protected class in a degrading or humiliating manner;
- Obscene gestures, nonverbal suggestive behavior (leering) or insulting sounds (whistling);
- Defacing school/student property or materials with demeaning or derogatory words, letters or names related to a person’s protected class;

- Excluding a student from activities because of their protected class, such as not including a person because they look or act different from what you expect.

What steps can I take if I am being harassed?

- If you are comfortable, tell the person to stop. For example, you might say: “Stop it. I don’t like what you’re doing.” “Please stop making those jokes or remarks around me.”
- Report any incidents to a member of the school’s staff, including the Principal, or the District’s Title IX Investigator (contact information below).

What if I see someone else being harassed?

- Encourage the person to report the incident.
- Offer to be a witness.
- Listen to the person. Sometimes victims of harassment deny their feelings or believe they are somehow responsible for the harasser’s behavior. Victims also may feel that others will blame them for causing the situation or will not believe them.

Harassment will not be dealt with if the harasser(s) are protected by silence.

Steps for filing a Formal Complaint with the School District

- Before filing a formal complaint, the Title IX Investigator / Affirmative Action Officer may meet with you to explain the policy and procedures related to this type of complaint and offer an opportunity to informally resolve the situation.
- Any student or parent may file a complaint if they believe the student has been sexually harassed. You must sign the written complaint and file it with the Title IX Investigator / Affirmative Action Officer within 300 days after the alleged act(s) occurred OR within 300 days of the last occurrence of an ongoing situation.
- You will receive a written acknowledgement of the complaint being received within fifteen calendar days.
- Following an impartial, independent investigation, the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee will communicate the findings in writing to the person who filed the complaint.

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