

Harassment /Bullying

The district will take all complaints of harassment and bullying seriously and will act to investigate all complaints. Any student, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment or bullying in the educational environment or in connection with his or her district employment is strongly encouraged to bring his/her complaint to the immediate attention of his/her principal, supervisor, manager, Affirmative Action Officer and/or a district administrator. All such complaints will be promptly and fairly investigated and, where appropriate, immediate corrective action will be taken.

A. Informal Complaint Process

Anyone may use informal procedures to report and resolve complaints of harassment/bullying. Informal reports (form P6580-F1) may be made to any staff member. Staff shall always inform complainants of their right to and the process for filing a formal complaint. Staff shall also direct potential complainants to an appropriate staff member who can explain the informal and formal complaint processes and what a complainant can expect. Staff shall also inform an appropriate supervisor or professional staff member when they receive complaints of harassment or bullying, especially when the complaint is beyond their training to resolve or alleges serious misconduct.

Informal remedies may include but are not limited to:

1. an opportunity for the complainant to explain to the alleged harasser that his/her conduct is unwelcome, offensive or inappropriate, either in writing or face-to-face;
2. a statement from a staff member to the alleged harasser that the alleged conduct is not appropriate and could lead to discipline or other appropriate sanctions if proven or repeated; or
3. a general public statement from an administrator in a building reviewing the district harassment/bullying policy without identifying the complainant.

Informal complaints may become formal complaints at the request of the complainant, parent, guardian, or because the district believes the complaint needs to be more thoroughly investigated.

B. Formal Complaint Process:

Anyone may initiate a formal complaint (form P6580-F1) of harassment or bullying. Potential complainants who wish to have the district hold their identity confidential shall be informed that the district will almost assuredly face due process requirements that will make available to the accused all of the information the district has. The district will, however, fully implement the anti-retaliation provisions of this policy to protect complainants and witnesses. Student complainants and witnesses may have a trusted adult with them during any district-initiated investigation activities. The district compliance officer (hereinafter referred to as the compliance officer) may conclude that the district needs to conduct an investigation based on information in his or her possession regardless of the complainant's interest in filing a formal complaint. The following process shall be followed:

1. The compliance officer shall receive and investigate all formal, written complaints of harassment or bullying, or information in the compliance officer's possession that the officer believes requires further investigation.
2. All formal complaints shall be in writing; shall be signed by the complainant; and shall set forth the specific acts, conditions or circumstances alleged to have occurred and to constitute harassment or bullying. The compliance officer may draft the complaint based on the report of the complainant, for the complainant to review and sign.
3. When the investigation is completed, the compliance officer shall compile a full written report of the complaint and the results of the investigation. If the matter has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the superintendent shall take further action on the report.
4. The superintendent shall respond in writing to the complainant and the accused within thirty (30) calendar days stating:
 - a. That the district does not have adequate evidence to conclude that harassment or bullying occurred;
 - b. Corrective actions that the district intends to take; and/or
 - c. That the investigation is incomplete to date and will be continuing.

5. Corrective measures deemed necessary will be instituted as quickly as possible, but in no event more than thirty (30) calendar days after the superintendent's written response, unless the accused is appealing the imposition of discipline and the district is barred by due process considerations or a lawful order from imposing the discipline until the appeal process is concluded.
 6. In the event a complainant remains aggrieved as a result of the action or inaction of the superintendent, said complainant may appeal to the School Board of Directors by filing a written notice of appeal with the secretary of the Board of Directors on or before the tenth (10th) day following:
 - a. The date upon which the complainant received the superintendent's response, or
 - b. The expiration of the thirty (30) calendar-day response period in Section 4 above, whichever occurs first.
 7. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Board of Directors shall schedule a hearing to commence on or before the twentieth (20th) day following the filing of the written notice of appeal.
 - a. Both parties shall be allowed to present such witnesses and testimony as the Board of Directors deems relevant and material.
 - b. The Board of Directors shall render a written decision on or before the tenth (10th) day following the termination of the hearing and shall provide a copy to all parties involved.
- C. Disciplinary Action
- a. Employees: The district will take such disciplinary action as it deems necessary and appropriate designed to end harassment or bullying, and to prevent its reoccurrence, up to and including discharge and/or suspension. Such disciplinary action will be consistent with any applicable collective bargaining agreement, district policy, and state and federal law.
 - b. Students: Any student of the district who harasses or bullies another student, employee, volunteer, through verbal or physical conduct, shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to this policy and the district's student discipline policy.

- c. It is also a violation of this policy to knowingly report false allegations. Persons found to knowingly report false allegations will also be subject to disciplinary action.
- d. No person shall be retaliated against for making a report of harassment or for providing testimony or assisting in the investigation of such a report.

D. Dissemination and Discussion of Policy

- a. A fixed component of all district orientations sessions for staff, students and regular volunteers shall introduce the elements of this policy.
- b. Staff will be provided information on recognizing and preventing harassment and bullying.
- c. Staff shall be fully informed of the formal and informal complaint processes and their roles and responsibilities under the policy and procedure.
- d. Regular volunteers shall get the portions of this component of orientation relevant to their rights and responsibilities.
- e. Students will be provided with age-appropriate information on the recognition and prevention of harassment and bullying, and their rights and responsibilities under this and other district policies and rules at student orientation session and on other appropriate occasions, which may include parents.
- f. Parents shall be provided with copies of this policy and procedure and appropriate materials on the recognition and prevention of harassment and bullying.

E. Internal Review

The district compliance officer shall conduct an annual review of the utilization and efficacy of the district's harassment/bullying policy and procedures governing formal complaints. Any changes in district policy and/or procedures shall be recommended to the superintendent.