

INTRODUCTION

The School District of Cambridge strives to provide a safe, orderly and respectful learning environment for all students and staff while in school buildings, on school grounds, while riding school buses or district owned or leased vehicles, and while attending school-sponsored activities. Harassment in any form, including sexual harassment or bullying, can create a harmful physical, social, psychological and academic impact upon on the perpetrator, victims, and other bystanders. The school district therefore will consistently and vigorously address harassment, including sexual harassment and bullying, in order to maintain a safe and orderly learning and working environment for all students and staff. All school district employees are charged with the responsibility of maintaining an environment free from all forms of harassment. District employees are responsible to help students understand what constitutes harassment, including bullying and sexual harassment, and how to file a complaint if it should occur. District employees are also responsible to act as a trusted resource from whom students or other district employees may seek advice and assistance in dealing with what they perceive to be harassment or bullying.

DEFINITIONS

Harassment:

Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning or working environment, or interferes with the individual's work or learning performance. It may consist of a single act or as a course of conduct. Harassment may include but not be limited to conduct relating to an individual's membership in a protected class, sex, race, religion, national origin, color, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability or handicap.

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is defined as any deliberate or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This can entail sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminating remarks that are offensive or objectionable to the individual or which cause the individual discomfort or interfere with the individual's academic or work performance. This may include but is not limited to any blatant overtures such as leering, pinching, patting, displays of graphic or written sexual material, or pressure for sexual activity. It may also include but is not limited to subtle repeated verbal or physical action of a sexual nature such as comments, innuendoes, gestures, or "elevator eyes" (scanning someone's person in a provocative way). In addition to the resultant levels of anxiety created by the comments or sexual demands, sexual harassment may include the implicit message that noncompliance will lead to some form of reprisal. Reprisals may include but not be limited to the possibility of escalation in the level of harassment, unsatisfactory evaluations, difference in academic or professional treatment, sarcasm, or unwelcome comments by peers.

It is further the position and policy of the School District of Cambridge that sexual relationships between staff and students interferes with the educational process, and involves elements of coercion by reason of the relative status of a staff member to a student. Therefore a sexual relationship between staff and students is not permissible in any form, or under any circumstances, either in or out of the school setting. A suspected relationship between a student and a staff member must be reported by any mandated reporter to the proper authorities (Human Services or Law Enforcement) as suspected sexual abuse.

Bullying:

Bullying is repeated deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation or harm, and to impose the perception of an imbalance of power. The behavior may include but not be limited to social alienation such as shunning, or spreading of rumors; written notes, phone calls, or electronic messages (cyber bullying) that are offensive, hurtful, annoying or worrisome; or acts of physical aggression such as attacks or assaults on a student or his/her property. Bullying may also include but not be limited to name calling or hurtful statements, based upon but not limited to age, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, and social, economic, or family status.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

The ability to deal effectively with harassment or bullying is limited by the degree of effective reporting that takes place. Individuals who believe they are victims of harassment or bullying are encouraged to report said conduct to appropriate school personnel. Any person, including school employees and students who become aware of harassment or bullying are required to report such acts to the building administrator or designee.

Reports may be made verbally or in writing. All such reports will be taken seriously. Written documentation of the account is to be made by the recipient of the report. The report will then be forwarded to the building administrator or designee assigned to investigate the report.

There is to be no retaliation against the individual(s) making such reports. Individuals engaging in retaliatory behavior will be subject to disciplinary action.

INVESTIGATING PROCEDURES

The building administrator or designee will conduct a timely investigation. Within three school days the investigator will interview the person(s) who is/are the reported victim(s), and collect whatever other information is necessary to determine the facts and seriousness of the report. A written summary of the report, investigative findings, and actions taken will be kept. The parent(s) /guardian(s) of each involved pupil will be notified at the conclusion of the investigation. The district shall maintain the confidentiality of the report and any related pupil records to the extent required by law.

SANCTIONS AND SUPPORTS

If it is determined that a person has indeed participated in harassment or bullying behavior, or retaliated against anyone as a result of the reporting of such incident, disciplinary action will be taken to include but not be limited to a referral to law enforcement, suspension, and/or expulsion. The guidance staff will offer appropriate and on-going support for the identified victim(s).

DISCLOSURE AND PUBLIC REPORTING

This policy will be printed in the student and staff handbooks, and distributed annually to students and parents/guardians and district employees. It will also be distributed to organizations in the community having appropriate cooperative agreements with the schools. A copy will also be made available to any person who requests it. Records will be maintained on the number and types of reports made, the investigative findings, and actions taken.

If requested, an annual summary of the number and types of harassment/bullying will be shared with the school board for review, and appropriate recommendations made for further reducing such behavior. This report must also be made available to the public upon request.

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LEGAL REFERENCE:

CROSS REFERENCE:

APPROVED: 11/29/1993

**REVISED: 3/22/10
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