

Policy 0502.70 Student Harassment/Relationship Abuse

It is the policy of this district to maintain a learning environment that is free from harassment. Each student has the right to attend school in an atmosphere that promotes equal opportunities and that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive or disruptive.

Students attending district schools are:

1. Prohibited from engaging in any conduct which could reasonably be construed as constituting harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background or disability.
2. Prohibited from sexually harassing other students; and
3. Required to report, to the school principal or designee, harassment of which the student becomes aware.

This policy applies to all conduct on the district's premises and at school-sponsored events, conduct during transportation to and from school and school-sponsored events, and to conduct off the district's premises that has an adverse affect upon a student's educational environment.

DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

Harassment is defined to include verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background or disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the district's programs that:

- Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or hostile environment.
- Unreasonably interferes with an individual's educational performance.
- Otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Physical acts of aggression or assault, damage to property, or intimidation and implied or overt threats of violence motivated by the victim's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious

beliefs, ethnic background or disability.

2. Demeaning racial jokes, taunting, slurs and derogatory "nicknames," innuendos, or other negative remarks relating to the victim's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background or disability;
3. Graffiti and/or slogans or visual displays such as cartoons or posters depicting slurs or derogatory sentiments related to the victim's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background or disability; and
4. Criminal offenses directed at persons because of their sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background or disability.

Harassment also includes an act of retaliation taken against (1) any person bringing a complaint of harassment, (2) any person assisting another person in bringing a complaint of harassment, or (3) any person participating in an investigation of an act of harassment.

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment, which includes acts of sexual violence, is a form of misconduct that undermines the student's relationship with educators and with other students. The sexual harassment of students, including sexual violence, interferes with students' right to receive an education free from discrimination and, in the case of sexual violence, is a crime. No student, male or female, should be subject to unasked for and unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical. Sexual harassment refers to sexual overtures or conduct that is unwelcome, personally offensive, and affecting morale, thereby interfering with a student's ability to study or participate in school activities.

Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct that includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term of condition of an individual's participation in the educational process;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a factor for educational decisions affecting the individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's education, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Verbal statements of a sexual or abusive nature, including requests or demands for sexual activity, sexual jokes, and obscene comments, etc.;
2. Sexually motivated or inappropriate touching, unwelcome physical contact, or pinching;
3. Sexual behavior or communications, accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's education;
4. Unwelcome behavior or communications directed at an individual because of his/her gender; and
5. Stalking or unwelcome, sexually motivated attention.

DEFINITION OF STUDENT RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

Student relationship abuse is a form of prohibited harassment. Student relationship abuse is defined as the use of physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or technological abuse by a person to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person in a relationship of a romantic or intimate nature, regardless of whether that relationship is continuing or has concluded or the number of interactions between the individuals involved. Abusive behavior is the intentional use of physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse against a peer or dating partner, including harassment, sexual harassment, adolescent relationship abuse, sexual assault, or using technology.

DEFINITION OF SEXTING

Sexting is the distribution of sexually-explicit or sexually-suggestive images using an electronic device.

1. Students engaged in sexting are subject to:
 - a. Notification of parents
 - b. Notification of police
 - c. Other appropriate disciplinary action
2. Any form of harassment related to sexting is strictly forbidden.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. Any student, and/or parents of a student who believe the student is being harassed or is the victim of relationship abuse, should immediately report the situation to school personnel.

2. Any district employee who receives a report of harassment from a student, becomes aware that a student is being subjected to harassment, or relationship abuse, or in good faith believes that a student is being subjected to harassment, or relationship abuse, is required to report the matter to the building principal immediately. In the event the complaint involves the principal, the matter must be immediately reported to the superintendent.
3. Any district employee who witnesses harassment or relationship abuse of a student should take immediate, appropriate action to intervene to stop the harassment or abuse.
4. Any student who becomes aware that a fellow student is being subjected to harassment or relationship abuse should immediately report the incident to a counselor, teacher, or the principal.

INVESTIGATION

When a report of harassment or relationship abuse is received by the principal or the superintendent, immediate steps will be taken to do the following:

1. Obtain a written statement from the complainant regarding the allegations;
2. Obtain a written statement from the accused;
3. Obtain written statements from witnesses, if any; and
4. Prepare a written report detailing the investigation.

An investigator may be appointed to conduct the investigation or the principal or superintendent may conduct the investigation. The investigation should be completed within ten (10) workdays. In the event the complaint involves a principal, superintendent or board members an independent investigation will be completed by an individual or individuals not employed by the school district and appointed by the board of trustees.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If the allegation of harassment involves a teacher or other school employee, the principal will submit the report of the investigation to the superintendent. If there is sufficient evidence to support the allegations, disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, may be taken against the offender.

If the allegation of harassment or relationship abuse is against a student and there is sufficient evidence to support the allegations, disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, may be taken against the offender.

If there is insufficient evidence to support the allegations, no record will be made of the allegations in the complaining student's permanent record. No record of the allegations will be placed in the accused employee's personnel record or in an accused student's permanent record if insufficient evidence supports the allegations.

In the event the investigation discloses that the complaining student has falsely accused another individual of harassment knowingly or in a malicious manner, the complaining student may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

In the event the harassment or relationship abuse involves violence or other conduct which could be reasonably considered to be criminal in nature, the principal/superintendent will refer the matter to the local law enforcement agency.

PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

No retaliation will be taken by this district or by any of its employees or students against a student who reports harassment or relationship abuse in good faith. Any person found to have retaliated against another individual for reporting an incident of harassment or relationship abuse may be subject to the same disciplinary action provided for harassment offenders. Those persons who assist or participate in an investigation of harassment or relationship abuse are also protected from retaliation under this policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any investigation will be conducted, to the maximum extent possible, in a manner that protects the privacy of both the complainant and the accused. However, if it is suspected that child abuse or a crime has occurred, this information will be reported to the proper authorities as required by state law.

RECORD OF ALLEGATIONS

This district will keep and maintain a written record, including, but not limited to, witness statements, investigative reports and correspondence, from the date any allegation of harassment or relationship abuse is reported to district personnel. The information in the written record will also include the action taken by the district in response to each allegation. The written record will be kept in the district's administrative offices and will not, at any time, be purged by district personnel.

Legal References: Code of Idaho 16-1619, IDAPA 08.02.03.160, copyright 1999 Eberharter-Maki Tappen, PA