

Section A - Introduction

It is the policy of the Board of Education of District #225 to foster an environment which maximizes student learning and employee performance, and a climate of civility among students and employees of the district. Harassment by any student or employee of any other student or employee for whatever reason is inimical to the environment and climate desired by the Board and therefore will not be permitted.

No person, including a district employee or agent, or student, shall harass or intimidate another employee, student, or another person based upon a person's sex, color, race, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual or gender orientation, other legally protected group status or, pertaining to students, based upon their class standing, activities, or affiliations. The district will not tolerate harassing or intimidating conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that affects material benefits of employment or education, that interferes with a student or employee's educational or work performance, that denigrates the reputation of the individual or school district, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment.

Section B – Jurisdiction

The provisions of this policy shall be in force:

1. In any physical area attendant to school or District-sponsored or related activities, whether or not such area is on school or District property (including but not limited to, school buildings and lands, District offices), or at any school-sponsored or related activities, performances, extracurricular and athletic events, school-sponsored travel at other venues; and
1. On means of school-supplied or sanctioned transportation to or from any of the above; and
2. With respect to activities or events at other locations, if the administration determines that the incident bears a nexus (i.e. impact or connection) to the school, safety at school, or is disruptive to the educational environment.

In addition to the above jurisdiction, the administration is authorized to establish a Code of Conduct that imposes progressive loss of privileges by reason of any conduct by a student in violation of these policies wherever the conduct or event occurs. Students who participate in extracurricular activities such as inter-scholastic athletic, drama, fine arts and other competitions or who participate in clubs and activities are representatives of our schools, and as such are expected to conform their behavior to these policies as a condition to continued enjoyment of these privileges.

Section C - Definition of Harassment

Harassment is defined as any unwelcome and personally offensive conduct (including, but not limited to, advances, gestures, or words of a sexual, intimidating, or threatening nature) which:

1. Unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or performance; or
2. Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work/school environment; or
3. Implies that submission to such conduct is made an explicit or implicit term of employment; or
4. Implies that submission to, or rejection of, such conduct will be used as a basis for decision-making affecting the individual.

Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to, name calling, using derogatory slurs, wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred, ridicule, or prejudice of one of the characteristics or protected classes stated in Section A.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, unwelcome, or unpermitted touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics, demands or requests for sexual favors, spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities, and subjecting individuals to embarrassment, hostility, humiliation, or intimidation because of their gender.

Section D - Complaint Procedure

1. The superintendent is directed to develop and implement complaint procedures consistent with this policy.
2. Any student who alleges harassment by a student or employee, or any third person with knowledge of conduct which may constitute harassment, should report the alleged harassment promptly to the building or district complaint coordinators designated by the superintendent as set forth in the procedures of this policy.

Section E - Education and Information Program

1. The superintendent is directed to develop and implement an education and information program for all students and employees which shall be intended to familiarize students and employees with the contents of this policy and the prevention of harassment within the district.
2. As part of the education and information program, the subject of harassment and its prevention shall be included in the curriculum of the district's required health education course.

3. The superintendent is directed to publish this policy in the district's policy manual and student and employee handbooks. The publication shall include the names of the designated school and district harassment complaint coordinators.

Section F - Disciplinary Action

1. A student who violates the terms of this policy shall be considered guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct and shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the procedures of Policy 8410: Disciplinary Action Relative to Student Misconduct. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, suspension from school, and in those instances of repeated or flagrant gross disobedience or misconduct, expulsion from school.
2. The superintendent shall be informed by the building and district complaint coordinators of any activity which may constitute criminal conduct, and if the superintendent concurs that such conduct may constitute criminal conduct, the superintendent shall report that conduct to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Section G - Responsibilities of District Employees

All district employees who receive complaints of harassment from students or staff members are required to notify the building complaint coordinator regarding such complaints.

Section H - Miscellaneous

1. False Reports. Any individual who makes a report of alleged harassment which is later found upon investigation to be completely lacking credible evidence, shall be subject to disciplinary measures under the provisions of this policy.
2. Confidentiality. The rights of confidentiality of both the complainant and the respondent shall be respected consistent with the district's legal obligations, with the necessity to investigate allegations, and to take corrective action. In all cases, however, only those individuals who have a "need to know" shall be provided only that information required by the investigation and corrective action, or required by the individual's professional responsibilities.
3. Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. The district shall report instances of sexual harassment of students who are under eighteen years of age to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, under circumstances required by the provisions of the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.
4. Status of Complainant. Filing of a harassment complaint, except in those complaints found upon investigation to be completely lacking credible evidence, shall not adversely affect the employment status of an employee filing the complaint, or the student status of a student filing a complaint.

Approved: May 10, 1993

Revised: August 23, 1993; September 25, 2000; August 11, 2003

Adopted: April 11, 2005 (Adapted from former Policy 6440: Harassment)