

## **HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES**

Harassment of school employees because of race, color, sexual orientation, gender, socio-economic class, religion, ancestry or national origin, age, or disability is prohibited. Such conduct is a violation of Board policy and may constitute illegal discrimination under state and federal laws.

### **Harassment**

Harassment includes but is not limited to verbal abuse, threats, physical assault and/or battery based on race, color, sexual orientation, gender, socio-economic class, religion, ancestry or national origin, age, or disability. Under the Maine Civil Rights Act, violence or threats of violence against a person or their property based on their sexual orientation are also illegal.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Unwelcome sexual advances, suggestive or lewd remarks, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- A. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an employee's work environment or employee benefits;
- B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee is used as the basis for decisions on employment benefits; and/or
- C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Any employee who engages in harassment or sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Any student who engages in harassment or sexual harassment of a school employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

All complaints of harassment will be investigated in accordance with the School Employee Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Procedure.

### **Notice and Training**

Annually, each employee shall receive a copy of this policy and the School Employee Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Procedure. This may be accomplished by including the policy/procedure with employee paychecks or by using other appropriate means to ensure that each employee receives a copy. All newly hired employees shall be provided training about sexual harassment in accordance with Maine law.

Individuals should also be advised of the importance of informing the harasser that his/her behavior is unwelcome, offensive, in poor taste, or highly inappropriate. Individuals who believe that they are victims of harassment should report such occurrences to the Affirmative Action Officer. The

Affirmative Action Officer shall advise the person who has allegedly been harassed of the various options available to the person:

- Human Rights Commission complaint
- Title IX civil action
- Formal request for discipline by the Superintendent and/or Board

The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that the school unit complies with all legal requirements for posting, notification and training of employees regarding harassment and sexual harassment.

Legal Reference: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC § 1681 et seq.)  
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 USC § 2000d)  
Americans with Disabilities Act (42 USC § 12101 et seq.)  
Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC § 794 et seq.)  
Title VII (42 USC § 2000c-2; 29 CFR § 1604.11)  
Age Discrimination in Employment Act (29 USC § 623)  
5 MRSA §§ 4602; 4681 et seq.  
20-A MRSA § 6553  
26 MRSA §§ 806-807

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