

PROHIBITION AGAINST ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The Lee's Summit R-7 School District Board of Education is committed to maintaining a workplace and educational environment that is free from illegal discrimination or harassment in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs, activities and facilities. Discrimination or harassment against employees, students or others on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability, age or any other characteristic protected by law is strictly prohibited in accordance with law. The Lee's Summit R-7 School District is an equal opportunity employer. Students, employees and others will not be disciplined for speech in circumstances where it is protected by law. The Board also prohibits:

1. Retaliatory actions based on making complaints of prohibited discrimination or harassment or based on participation in an investigation, formal proceeding or informal resolution concerning prohibited discrimination or harassment.
2. Aiding, abetting, inciting, compelling or coercing discrimination or harassment.
3. Discrimination or harassment against any person because of such person's association with a person protected from discrimination or harassment due to one (1) or more of the above stated characteristics.

All employees, students and visitors must immediately report to the district for investigation any incident or behavior that could constitute illegal discrimination or harassment.

Additional Prohibited Behavior

Behavior that is not unlawful or does not rise to the level of illegal discrimination or harassment might still be unacceptable for the workplace or the educational environment. Demeaning or otherwise harmful actions are prohibited, particularly if directed at personal characteristics including, but not limited to, socioeconomic level, sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.

Consequences

Employees who violate this policy will be disciplined, up to and including employment termination. Students who violate this policy will be disciplined, which may include suspension or expulsion. Patrons, contractors, visitors or others who violate this policy may be prohibited from school grounds or otherwise restricted while on school grounds. The superintendent or designee will contact law enforcement or seek a court order to enforce this policy when necessary or when actions may constitute criminal behavior.

In accordance with law and district policy, any person suspected of abusing or neglecting a child will be reported to the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services.

Definitions

Discrimination – Conferring, refusing or denying benefits or providing differential treatment to a person or class of persons in violation of law based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability, age or any other characteristic protected by law, or based on a belief that such a characteristic exists.

Harassment – A form of discrimination, as defined above, that occurs when the school or work environment becomes permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive enough that it unreasonably alters the employment or educational environment. Behaviors that could constitute illegal harassment include, but are not limited to, the following acts if based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability, age or any other characteristic protected by law or a belief that such a characteristic exists: graffiti; display of written material or pictures; name calling; slurs; jokes; gestures; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; theft; or damage to property.

Sexual Harassment – A form of discrimination, as defined above, on the basis of sex. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct that occurs when a) benefits or decisions are implicitly or explicitly conditioned upon submission to, or punishment is applied for refusing to comply with, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or conduct of a sexual nature; or b) the school or work environment becomes permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is based on sex or is sexual in nature and that is sufficiently severe or pervasive enough to alter the conditions of participation in the district's programs and activities or the conditions of employment. Sexual harassment may occur between members of the same or opposite sex. The district presumes a student cannot consent to behavior of a sexual nature with an adult regardless of the circumstance.

Behaviors that could constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

1. Sexual advances and requests or pressure of any kind for sexual favors, activities or contact.
2. Conditioning grades, promotions, rewards or privileges on submission to sexual favors, activities or contact.
3. Punishing or reprimanding persons who refuse to comply with sexual requests, activities or contact.
4. Graffiti, name calling, slurs, jokes, gestures or communications of a sexual nature or based on sex.
5. Physical contact or touching of a sexual nature, including touching of intimate parts and sexually motivated or inappropriate patting, pinching or rubbing.

Grievance – A verbal or written report (also known as a complaint) of discrimination or harassment made to the compliance officer.

Compliance Officer

The Board designates the following individual to act as the district's compliance officer:

Associate Superintendent of Human Resources
301 NE Tudor Road, Lee's Summit, Missouri, 64086
Phone (816) 986-1000; Fax (816) 986-1171

The compliance officer will:

1. Coordinate district compliance with this policy and the law.
2. Receive all grievances regarding discrimination and harassment in the Lee's Summit R-7 School District.
3. Serve as the district's designated Title IX, Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator, as well as the contact person for compliance with other discrimination laws.
4. Investigate or assign persons to investigate grievances; monitor the status of grievances; and recommend consequences.
5. Seek legal advice when necessary to enforce this policy.
6. Report to the superintendent and the Board aggregate information regarding the number and frequency of grievances and compliance with this policy.
7. Make recommendations regarding the implementation of this policy.
8. Coordinate and institute training programs for district staff and supervisors as necessary to meet the goals of this policy, including instruction in recognizing behavior that constitutes discrimination and harassment.
9. Perform other duties as assigned by the superintendent.

In the event the compliance officer is unavailable or is the subject of a report that would otherwise be made to the compliance officer, reports should instead be directed to the acting compliance officer:

Assistant Superintendent of Special Services
301 NE Tudor Road, Lee's Summit, Missouri, 64086
Phone (816) 986-1000; Fax (816) 986-1171

Public Notice

The superintendent or designee will continuously publicize the district's policy prohibiting illegal discrimination and harassment and disseminate information on how to report discrimination and harassment. Notification of the district's policy will be posted in a public area of each building used for instruction or employment or open to the public. Information will also be distributed annually to employees, parents/guardians and students as well as to newly enrolled students and newly hired employees. District bulletins, catalogs, application forms, recruitment material and the district's website will include a statement that the Lee's Summit R-7 School District does not discriminate in its programs, activities, facilities or with regard to employment. The district will provide information in alternative formats when necessary to accommodate persons with disabilities.

Reporting

All persons must report incidents that might constitute illegal discrimination or harassment directly to the compliance officer or acting compliance officer. All district employees will direct all persons seeking to make a grievance directly to the compliance officer. Even if the potential victim of discrimination or harassment does not file a grievance, district employees are required to report to the compliance officer any observations, rumors or other information regarding discrimination or harassment prohibited by this policy. If a verbal grievance is made, the person will be asked to submit a written complaint to the compliance officer or acting compliance officer. If a person refuses or is unable to submit a written complaint, the compliance officer will summarize the verbal complaint in writing. A grievance is not needed for the district to take action upon finding a violation of law, district policy or district expectations.

Students, employees and others may address concerns directly with the person alleged to have caused harassment or discrimination in an attempt to resolve the issue, but are not expected or required to do so.

Student-to-Student Harassment

Building-level administrators are in a unique position to identify and address discrimination and harassment between students, particularly when behaviors are reported through the normal disciplinary process and not through a grievance. The administrator has the ability to immediately discipline a student for any behavior that otherwise would lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the district's discipline policy. The administrator will report all incidents of harassment and discrimination to the compliance officer and will direct the parent/guardian and student to the compliance officer for further assistance. The compliance officer may determine that the incident has been appropriately addressed or recommend additional action. When a grievance is filed, the investigation and complaint process detailed below will be used.

Investigation

The district will immediately investigate all grievances. All persons are required to cooperate fully in the investigation. The district compliance officer or other designated investigator may utilize an attorney or other professionals to conduct the investigation.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes discrimination or harassment, the district will consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, the relationships between the parties involved, past incidents, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred and all other relevant information. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. If, after investigation, school officials determine that it is more likely than not that discrimination, harassment or other prohibited behavior has occurred, the district will take immediate corrective action.

Grievance Process Overview

1. If a person designated to hear a grievance or appeal is the subject of the grievance, the next highest step in the grievance process will be used.
2. Investigation and reporting deadlines are not mandatory upon the district when more time might be necessary to adequately conduct an investigation and to render a decision. When extended, the person filing the complaint will be notified. If more than twice the allotted time has expired without a response, the appeal may be taken to the next level.
3. Failure of the person filing the grievance to appeal within the timelines given will be considered acceptance of the findings and remedial action taken.
4. The district will investigate all grievances, even if an outside enforcing agency such as the Office for Civil Rights, law enforcement or the CD is also investigating a complaint arising from the same circumstances.
5. The district will only share information regarding an individually identifiable student or employee with the person filing the grievance or other persons if allowed by law and in accordance with Board policy.
6. Upon receiving a grievance, district administrators or supervisors, after consultation with the compliance officer, will take immediate action if necessary to prevent further potential discrimination or harassment during the pending investigation.

Grievance Process

1. Level I – A grievance is filed with the district's compliance officer. The compliance officer may, at his or her discretion, assign a school principal or other appropriate supervisor to conduct the investigation when appropriate. Regardless of who investigates the grievance, an investigation will commence immediately, but no later than ten (10) working days after the compliance officer receives the grievance. The compliance officer will complete a written report within 30 working days of receiving the grievance that 1) summarizes the facts; 2) makes conclusions on whether the facts constitute a violation of this policy; and 3) if a violation of this policy is found, recommends corrective action to the superintendent. If someone other than the compliance officer conducts the investigation, the compliance officer or acting compliance officer will review and sign the report. The person who filed the grievance will be notified in writing, in accordance with law and district policy, regarding whether the policy has been violated.
2. Level II – Within five (5) working days after receiving the Level I decision, the person filing the grievance may appeal the compliance officer's decision to the superintendent by notifying the superintendent in writing. The superintendent may, at his or her discretion, designate another person (other than the compliance officer) to review the matter when appropriate. Within ten (10) working days, the superintendent will complete a written decision on the appeal, stating whether a violation of this policy is found and, if so, stating what corrective actions will be implemented. If someone other than the superintendent conducts the appeal, the superintendent will review and sign the report before it is given to the person appealing. A copy of the appeal and decision will be given to the compliance officer or acting compliance officer. The person who filed the grievance will be notified in writing, in accordance with law and district policy, regarding whether the policy has been violated.
3. Level III – Within five (5) working days after receiving the Level II decision, the person filing the grievance may appeal the superintendent's decision to the Board by notifying the Board secretary in writing. The person filing the grievance will be allowed to address the Board, and the Board may call for the presence of such other persons deemed necessary. The Board will issue a decision within 30 working days for implementation by the administration. The Board's decision and any actions taken are final. The Board secretary will give the compliance officer or acting compliance officer a copy of the appeal and decision. The person who filed the grievance will be notified in writing, in accordance with law and district policy, regarding whether the policy has been violated.

Confidentiality and Records

To the extent permitted by law and in accordance with Board policy, the district will keep confidential the identity of the person filing a grievance and any grievance or other document that is generated or received pertaining to grievances. Information may be disclosed if necessary to further the investigation, appeal or resolution of a grievance, or if necessary to carry out disciplinary measures. The district will disclose information to the district's attorney, law

enforcement, the CD and others when necessary to enforce this policy or when required by law. In implementing this policy, the district will comply with state and federal laws regarding the confidentiality of student and employee records. Information regarding any resulting employee or student disciplinary action will be maintained and released in the same manner as any other disciplinary record.