

**DIGHTON-REHOBOTH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

All persons associated with the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District, including but not necessarily limited to, the Regional School Committee, administration, professional personnel, classified personnel, and students, are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. Any person acting as a member of the school district who engages in sexual harassment against another member of the school district will be in violation of this policy. The Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District is committed to providing a safe, positive learning and working environment and will not tolerate sexual harassment.

The school district will investigate all formal and informal, verbal and written complaints of sexual harassment. Any student or employee who is found to have used sexual harassment and sexual violence toward any other student or employee will be disciplined.

Definition of Sexual Harassment: Unwelcomed advances; requests for sexual favors; or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment where:

Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of a person's employment or educational development. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or education decisions affecting such individual. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interference with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment. A range of behaviors include leering, pinching, patting, verbal comments, subtle pressure for sexual activity, attempted rape, rape, other unwanted touching, unwelcomed sexual advances, displaying sexually suggestive objects, and discussion of one's sexual activities.

School personnel are required to report and/or investigate all incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence and take appropriate action, whether they personally observe or are made aware by some other means. Reporting, investigation, and action must occur even if the victim does not express any overt disapproval of the harassment. Such reports must be made to the Grievance Officer:

Rachel Lawrence, Special Education Director
Dighton~Rehoboth Regional School District
2700 Regional Road
North Dighton, MA 02764
(508) 252-5000 ext. 165

Information concerning any sexual harassment and sexual violence complaint shall be treated confidentially and consistently with the district's legal obligations, the need to investigate, and the need to take disciplinary action if it is found that sexual harassment or sexual violence has occurred.

Procedures for Responding to Complaints:

Any member of the school district who believes that she/he has been subjected to sexual harassment will report the incident(s) to the Grievance Officer. A verbal report shall be documented in writing within twenty-four hours. The report should identify what happened, when it happened, how she/he felt, what she/he did or said in response to the harasser, what the alleged harasser did or said, and the names of witnesses, if any. The grievance officer will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing the complaint within ten days. The grievance officer will attempt to resolve the problem in an informal manner through the following process: (1) confer with the charging party in order to obtain a clear understanding of that party's statements of facts; (2) meet with the charged party in order to obtain her/his response to the complaint; (3) hold as many meetings with the parties as is necessary to gather the facts; and, (4) on the basis of the grievance officer's perception of the situation she/he may attempt to resolve the matter informally through conciliation, or report the incident and transfer the record to the superintendent, and so notify the parties by mail. After reviewing the record made by the grievance officer, just or School Committee Chairperson may gather more information or evidence necessary to decide the case, and thereafter, impose any sanctions deemed appropriate within her/his authority. The victim and/or accused may appeal the action of the superintendent to the Regional School Committee.

Consequences:

Depending upon the seriousness of the harassing behaviors and whether the student or employee has been previously involved in harassing behavior, the student or employee will face one or more of the following consequences:

Consequences for Students:

A verbal warning; reprimand; a written warning/reprimand entered in the student's file; suspension; expulsion; an apology to the victim; a written paper on the topic; learning about sexual harassment; referral for psychological assessment; parental/student/school administrator conference; police involvement; community service; other sanctions deemed appropriate by the school administrator.

Consequences for Employees:

A verbal warning; reprimand; a written reprimand/warning, entered into the employee's personnel file; suspension without pay; termination of employment; an apology to the victim;

learning about sexual harassment; referral for psychological assessment; police involvement; other sanctions deemed appropriate by the school administration.

The victim may seek informal resolution in the form of telling or writing the harasser to stop the behavior.

This policy shall be published in the high school's student handbook. All employees shall receive a copy of this policy annually, and new employees will receive a copy of this policy when they commence employment.

It is unlawful to sexually harass or retaliate against an individual involved in a sexual harassment case. Anyone who retaliates against an individual who reports sexual harassment or sexual violence will be disciplined. Anyone who retaliates against an individual who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, proceedings, or hearing related to a complaint of sexual harassment and sexual violence will be disciplined.

Submission of a complaint or a report shall not affect the individual's employment, grade, work assignment, etc.

Retaliation includes but is not limited to any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment.

Students in grades K-12 shall receive age appropriate education in sexual harassment and sexual violence. This instruction will emphasize the importance of treating others with respect.

The state and federal agencies responsible for enforcing nondiscrimination statutes include:

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination
1 Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108 (617-727-3990)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
1 Congress Street
Boston, MA 02114 (617-565-3200)

The Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District recognizes that not every advance or comment of a sexual nature constitutes harassment. Every complaint, however, requires an investigation of the facts. Accusations of sexual harassment are serious matters and will be so treated. If such accusations are falsely made or without good faith, they can have a serious effect on innocent parties.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended 45
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq. (Title IX)
Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

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