

Book	Policy Manual
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3362 - **ANTI-HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE**

General Statement

Racial, sexual, and religious/ethnic harassment is a form of discrimination which violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000e, et seq., Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq., and WV Code 5-11-1, et seq., the West Virginia Human Rights Act.

It is the policy of the Board of Education to maintain an education and work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful harassment and violence.

This policy applies to any student, staff member or member of the public during any school related activity or during any education sponsored event whether in a building or other property used or operated by the Board of Education or in any other facility being used by the Board.

The Board will vigorously enforce its prohibition against discriminatory harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex (including transgender status, change of sex, or gender identity), disability, age, blindness, creed or religion, ancestry, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, sexual orientation, mental/physical/developmental/sensory disability, or genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes") that are protected by Federal civil rights laws (hereinafter referred to as "unlawful harassment"), and encourages those within the County School community as well as third parties, who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify such problems.

The Board will investigate all allegations of harassment and in those cases where unlawful harassment is substantiated, the Board will take immediate steps to end the harassment, prevent its reoccurrence, and remedy its effects. Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. (See West Virginia State Board of Education policy 4373)

For purposes of this policy, "County School community" means students, administrators, and professional and classified staff, as well as Board members, agents, volunteers, contractors, or other persons subject to the control and supervision of the Board.

For purposes of this policy, "third parties" include, but are not limited to, guests and/or visitors on County School property (e.g., visiting speakers, participants on opposing athletic teams, parents), vendors doing business with, or seeking to do business with, the Board, and other individuals who come in contact with members of the County School community at school-related events/activities (whether on or off County School property).

The Board will act promptly and confidentially to investigate all harassment and violence complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written, and will take appropriate disciplinary action based upon the results of the investigation.

- A. Retaliating against a person who has made a report or filed a complaint alleging unlawful harassment, or who has participated as a witness in a harassment investigation.
- B. Filing a malicious or knowingly false report or complaint of unlawful harassment.
- C.

Disregarding, failing to investigate adequately, or delaying investigation of allegations of harassment, when responsibility for reporting and/or investigating unlawful harassment charges comprises part of one's supervisory duties.

Furthermore, the Board is committed to providing an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying for all of its students and school employees. Policy 5517.01 Bullying addresses those instances of bullying and harassment which do not rise to the level of legally protected harassment under Federal law, but are, nonetheless, behaviors that may occur on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, on school buses, at school bus stops, and through school computer networks and through other electronic communication or transmission that will not be tolerated and must be appropriately identified, reported, investigated, and, when substantiated, be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action. An electronic act, communication, transmission, or threat includes but is not limited to one which is administered via telephone, wireless phone, computer, pager, or any electronic or wireless device whatsoever, and includes but is not limited to transmission of any image or voice, email or text message using any such device.

Definitions

A.

Sexual harassment – Sexual harassment consists of sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct, or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

1. submission to the conduct or communication is made a term or condition either explicitly or implicitly of obtaining or retaining employment, or of obtaining an education; or
2. submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment or education; or
3. creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive or educational environment.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

1. verbal or written harassment of a sexual nature or abuse;
2. pressure for sexual activity;
3. inappropriate or unwelcome patting, pinching, or physical conduct;
4. sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt threats and/or promises concerning an individual's employment or educational status;
5. unwelcome behavior, verbal or written words or symbols, directed at an individual because of gender;
6. the use of authority to emphasize the sexuality of a student in a manner that prevents or impairs that student's full enjoyment of educational benefits, climate or opportunities;
7. unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions from a member of the same or opposite sex;
8. verbal abuse of a sexual nature, without regard to whether the verbal abuse specifically refers to sexual characteristics at whom the verbal abuse is directed;
9. verbal or written comments about an individual's body;
- 10.

sexually degrading word(s) or actions used to intimidate, describe an individual or to refer to some aspect of the individual's behavior, appearance, attitude, or conduct;

11. the display, use or dissemination of sexually suggestive gestures, objects, pictures, and/or jokes by any means, including, but not limited to, printed materials and materials displayed by electronic means, sex based labeling or stereotyping with respect to mental, physical, or other abilities, talents, occupational or life goals, etc.;
12. nonsexual conduct, including words or actions, directed toward a person because of their gender that tends to ridicule, criticize, discriminate, or otherwise makes it more difficult for that person to perform their job and/or achieve an education;

It is the responsibility of all students and employees to promote and to maintain an environment free of all types of sexual harassment. Any sexual harassment, as defined, when perpetrated on any student, volunteer, third party or employee by any student, volunteer, third party or employee will be treated as sexual harassment under this policy.

NOTE: Sexual conduct/relationships with students by County employees or any other adult member of the County community is prohibited, and any teacher, administrator, coach, or other school authority who engages in sexual conduct with a student may also be guilty of the criminal charge of "sexual abuse or sexual assault as set forth in Article 8B, Chapter 61 of the West Virginia Code. The issue of consent may be irrelevant in regard to such criminal charge. In addition, under certain circumstances, sexual harassment may constitute child and/or sexual abuse under Chapter 49 of the West Virginia Code. In such situations, the Board shall comply with the provisions of law for reporting such abuse.

B.

Racial Harassment – Racial harassment consists of physical, verbal, or written conduct relating to an individual's race when the conduct:

1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment;
2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance;
3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities;
4. racial harassment includes racially degrading word(s) or actions used to intimidate, describe an individual or to refer to some aspect of the individual's behavior, appearance, attitude, or conduct;
5. the display, use, or dissemination of racially motivated gestures, objects, pictures, and/or jokes by any means, including, but not limited to, printed materials displayed by electronic means;
6. race based labeling or stereotyping with respect to mental, physical, or other abilities, talents, occupational or life goals, etc.;
7. unwelcome behavior, verbal or written words or symbols, directed at an individual because of race;
8. conduct, including word(s) or actions, directed toward a person because of their race that tends to distract or otherwise make it more difficult to perform their job and/or achieve an education.

It is the responsibility of all students and employees to promote and to maintain an environment free of all types of racial harassment. Any racial harassment, as defined, when perpetrated on any student, volunteer, third party or employee by any student, volunteer, third party or employee will be treated as racial harassment under this policy.

Religious/Ethnic Harassment – Religious/ethnic harassment consists of physical, verbal or written conduct which is related to an individual’s religion or ethnic background when the conduct:

1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment;
2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance;
3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities;
4. religious/ethnic degrading word(s) or actions used to intimidate, describe an individual or refer to some aspect of the individual’s behavior, appearance, attitude or conduct;
5. the display, use or dissemination of degrading religious/ethnic suggestive gestures, objects, pictures, and/or jokes by any means including, but not limited to, printed materials and materials displayed by electronic means;
6. religious/ethnic based labeling or stereotyping with respect to mental, physical or other abilities, talents, occupational or life goals, etc.;
7. conduct, including word(s) or actions, directed toward a person because of their religion or ethnicity that tends to distract or otherwise make it more difficult to perform their job and/or achieve an education.

It is the responsibility of all students and employees to promote and to maintain an environment free of all types of religious/ethnic harassment. Any religious/ethnic harassment, as defined, when perpetrated on any student, volunteer, third party or employee by any student, volunteer, third party or employee will be treated as religious/ethnic harassment under this policy.

D.

Sexual Violence – Sexual violence is a physical act of aggression or force or the threat thereof which involves the touching of another’s intimate parts or forcing a person to touch any person’s intimate parts. Intimate parts include the primary genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks, or breast, as well as the clothing covering these areas.

Sexual violence may include, but is not limited to:

1. touching, patting, grabbing or pinching another person's intimate parts, whether that person is of the same sex or the opposite sex;
2. coercing, forcing or attempting to coerce or force the touching of anyone's intimate parts;
3. coercing, forcing or attempting to coerce or force sexual intercourse or a sexual act on another;
4. threatening to force or coerce sexual acts, including the touching of intimate parts or intercourse, on another;
5. threatening or forcing exposure of intimate apparel or body parts by removal of clothing.

E.

Racial Violence - Racial violence is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another because of, or in a manner reasonably related to, race.

Religious/Ethnic Violence - Religious/ethnic violence is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another because of, or in a manner reasonably related to, religion or ethnicity.

G.

Assault - Assault is defined as an act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death; or the threat to do bodily harm to another with present ability to carry out the threat.

Reports and Complaints of Harassing Conduct

Members of the County School community, which includes all staff, and third parties are encouraged to promptly report incidents of harassing conduct to an administrator, supervisor or other County School official so that the Board may address the conduct before it becomes severe, pervasive, or persistent.

Members of the County School community or third parties who believe they have been unlawfully harassed by another member of the County School community or a third party are entitled to utilize the Board's complaint process that is set forth below. Initiating a complaint, whether formally or informally, will not adversely affect the complaining individual's employment unless the complaining individual makes the complaint maliciously or with knowledge that it is false.

If, during an investigation of alleged bullying, aggressive behavior and/or harassment in accordance with Policy 5517.01 – Bullying, the principal believes that the reported misconduct may have created a hostile work environment and may have constituted unlawful discriminatory harassment based on a Protected Class, the principal shall report the act of bullying, aggressive behavior and/or harassment to one of the Anti-Harassment Compliance Officers who shall investigate the allegation in accordance with this policy. While the Compliance Officer investigates the allegation, the principal shall suspend his/her Policy 5517.01 investigation to await the Compliance Officer's written report. The Compliance Officer shall keep the principal informed of the status of the Policy 3362 investigation and provide him/her with a copy of the resulting written report.

Reporting procedures are as follows:

A.

Any employee who believes s/he has been the victim of harassment prohibited under this policy is encouraged to report the alleged harassment to the appropriate school official as identified in D below.

B.

Teachers, administrators, and other school officials who have or receive notice that an employee has or may have been the victim of harassment prohibited under this policy shall immediately report the alleged harassment to the appropriate school official as defined in D below.

C.

Any other person with knowledge or belief that an employee has or may have been the victim of harassment prohibited by this policy shall be encouraged to immediately report the alleged acts to an appropriate school official as identified in D below.

D.

Appropriate school officials are as follows:

1.

Any complaint under this policy shall be reported to the County's Compliance Officer unless the complaint is regarding the Compliance Officer. In such cases, the complaints shall be reported to the Superintendent, who shall assume the role of the County School Compliance Officer for such complaints.

2.

Any complaint under this policy regarding the Superintendent or Board Member that is received by the County School Compliance Officer shall be referred to the School Board's legal counsel, who shall assume the role of the County School Compliance Officer for such complaints.

3.

Any complaint under this policy regarding the principal, who serves as the Building Compliance Officer, shall be reported to the County's Compliance Officer, and the County Compliance Officer shall conduct the investigation.

E.


The reporting party or complainant shall be encouraged to use a report form available from the principal of each building or available from the County School office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well. Use of

formal reporting forms shall not be mandated. However, all oral complaints shall be reduced to writing. Further, nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting harassment directly to the Superintendent.

- F. To provide individuals with options for reporting harassment to an individual of the gender with which they feel most comfortable, the County School shall designate both a male and a female County School Compliance Officer.
- G. The investigation should be conducted by the CO or by the Superintendent within ten (10) school days of receiving the complaint, the investigating party shall provide a written status report to the Superintendent.
- H. The investigation may be conducted by school officials or by a third party designated by the school officials if necessary.

Anti-Harassment Compliance Officer

The Board designates the following individual to serve as "Anti-Harassment Compliance Officer" for the County School. S/He is hereinafter referred to as the "CO".

Jamie Harris
 Personnel Director
 304-258-2430 
 247 Harrison Avenue
 Berkeley Springs, WV 25411
 j.harris@k12.wv.us

In Each School Building. The building principal is the person responsible for receiving oral or written reports of racial, sexual or religious/ethnic harassment or violence at the building level. Upon receipt of a report of student conduct, the principal must notify the CO promptly, and shall commence investigation of the complaint. No later than ten (10) school days of receiving the complaint, a written report will be forwarded to the CO and to the Superintendent.

The name, title, and contact information of this individual will be published annually in the County School's calendar.

The name of the CO, including a mailing address and telephone number, shall be conspicuously posted in the office of each school building and in other buildings to which employees of the Board are assigned to work.

The CO will be available during regular school/work hours to discuss concerns related to unlawful harassment, to assist students, other members of the County School community, and third parties who seek support or advice when informing another individual about "unwelcome" conduct, or to intercede informally on behalf of the individual in those instances where concerns have not resulted in the filing of a formal complaint and where all parties are in agreement to participate in an informal process.

The CO shall accept complaints of unlawful harassment directly from any member of the County School community or a visitor to the County School, or receive complaints that are initially filed with a school building administrator. Upon receipt of a complaint either directly or through a school building administrator, a CO will begin either an informal or formal process (depending on the request of the person alleging the harassment or the nature of the alleged harassment), or the CO will designate a specific individual to conduct such a process. In the case of a complaint, the CO will prepare recommendations for the Superintendent or will oversee the

preparation of such recommendations by a designee. All members of the County School community must report incidents of harassment that are reported to them to the CO at his/her first opportunity, but no later than two (2) business days of learning of the incident.

All alleged incidents of harassment or violence observed by faculty, staff or other employees of the Board must report the incident to either the building principal or the County School's Anti-Harassment Compliance Officer within twenty-four (24) hours of observing the incident. Additionally, any Board employee who observes an act of unlawful harassment is expected to intervene to stop the harassment, unless circumstances make such an intervention dangerous, in which case the staff member should immediately notify other Board employees and/or local law enforcement officials, as necessary, to stop the harassment.

Thereafter, the CO, or designee must contact the student, if age eighteen (18) or older, or the student's parents if under the age eighteen (18), within two (2) business days to advise s/he/them of the Board's intent to investigate the alleged misconduct, including the obligation of the CO or designee to conduct an investigation following all the procedures outlined for a formal complaint.

The Board's investigation of racial, sexual or religious/ethnic harassment or violence complaints will be conducted with maximum effort to protect the confidentiality of all those involved in the complaint or investigative process and to facilitate prompt resolution of the complaint. School officials may, in their discretion, take immediate steps to protect individual privacy and safety pending resolution.

Investigation, Complaint Procedure and Recommendation

An individual who believes s/he has been subjected to harassment and/or violence (hereinafter referred to as the "Complainant"), may file a complaint, either orally or in writing, with a principal, the CO, Superintendent, or other County-level employee. Due to the sensitivity surrounding complaints of unlawful discrimination and retaliation, timelines are flexible for initiating the complaint process; however, individuals should make every effort to file a complaint within thirty (30) calendar days after the conduct occurs. If a Complainant informs a principal, Superintendent, or other County-level employee, either orally or in writing, about any complaint of discrimination/retaliation, that employee must report such information to the CO at his/her first opportunity, but no later than two (2) business days.

Throughout the course of the process, the CO should keep the parties informed of the status of the investigation and the decision-making process.

All complaints must include the following information to the extent it is available: the identity of the individual believed to have engaged in, or be engaging in, the discriminatory/retaliatory conduct; a detailed description of the facts upon which the complaint is based; a list of potential witnesses; and the resolution sought by the Complainant.

If the Complainant is unwilling or unable to provide a written statement including the information set forth above, the CO shall ask for such details in an oral interview. Thereafter, the CO will prepare a written summary of the oral interview, and the Complainant will be asked to verify the accuracy of the reported charge by signing the document.

Upon receiving a complaint, the CO will consider whether any action should be taken in the investigatory phase to protect the Complainant from further discrimination or retaliation, including, but not limited to, a change of work assignment or schedule for the Complainant and/or the person who allegedly engaged in the misconduct.

Pursuant to West Virginia State Board of Education policy 4373, upon receiving a complaint, the CO, in consultation with the Superintendent, will take reasonable steps to protect the Complainant, students, teachers, administrators, or other personnel in any manner throughout the pending investigation.

In making such a determination, the CO should consult the Complainant to assess his/her agreement to the proposed action. If the Complainant is unwilling to consent to the proposed change, the CO may still take whatever actions s/he deems appropriate in consultation with the Superintendent.

Within two (2) business days of receiving the complaint, the CO will initiate a formal investigation to determine whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation.

Simultaneously, the CO will inform the individual alleged to have engaged in the discriminatory or retaliatory conduct (hereinafter referred to as the "Respondent"), that a complaint has been received. The Respondent will be informed about the nature of the allegations and provided with a copy of any relevant policies and/or administrative guidelines, including Policy 3122 - Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity. The Respondent must also be informed of the opportunity to submit a written response to the complaint within five (5) business days.

Although certain cases may require additional time, the CO will complete an investigation into the allegations of discrimination/retaliation as soon as practical, but no later than ten (10) business days of receiving the formal complaint. The investigation, at a minimum, must include:

- A. interviews with the Complainant;
- B. interviews with the Respondent;
- C. interviews with any other witnesses who may reasonably be expected to have any information relevant to the allegations;
- D. consideration of any documentation or other information presented by the Complainant, Respondent, or any other witness that is reasonably believed to be relevant to the allegations.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes racial, sexual, or religious/ethnic harassment or violence, consideration shall be given to the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the conduct involved, relationships between the parties involved, and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the CO shall prepare and deliver a written report to the Superintendent that summarizes the evidence gathered during the investigation and provides recommendations based on the evidence and the definition of unlawful discrimination/retaliation as provided in Board policy and State and Federal law as to whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation. The CO's recommendations must be based upon the totality of the circumstances. In determining if discrimination or retaliation occurred, a preponderance of evidence standard will be used.

Absent extenuating circumstances, within five (5) business days of receiving the report of the CO or the designee, the Superintendent must either issue a final decision regarding whether the charges have been substantiated or request further investigation. A copy of the Superintendent's final decision will be delivered to both the Complainant and the Respondent.

If the Superintendent requests additional investigation, the Superintendent must specify the additional information that is to be gathered, and such additional investigation must be completed within five (5) business days. At the conclusion of the additional investigation, the Superintendent must issue a final written decision as described above.

If the Superintendent determines the Complainant was subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation, s/he must identify what corrective action will be taken to stop, remedy, and prevent the recurrence of the discrimination/retaliation. The corrective action should be reasonable, timely, age-appropriate and effective, and tailored to the specific situation.

A Complainant or Respondent who is dissatisfied with the final decision of the Superintendent may appeal through a signed written statement to the Board within five (5) business days of his/her receipt of the Superintendent's final decision.

In an attempt to resolve the complaint, the Board shall meet with the concerned parties and their representatives within twenty (20) business days of the receipt of such an appeal. A copy of the Board's disposition of the appeal shall be sent to each concerned party within ten (10) business days of this meeting. The decision of the Board will be final. (See Policy 9130 – Public Complaints and West Virginia State Board of Education policy 7211 – Appeals Procedure for Citizens.)

The Board reserves the right to investigate and resolve a complaint or report of unlawful discrimination/retaliation regardless of whether the employee alleging the unlawful discrimination/retaliation pursues the complaint. The Board also reserves the right to have the formal complaint investigation conducted by an external person in accordance with this policy or in such other manner as deemed appropriate by the Board or its designee.

The Complainant may be represented, at his/her own cost, at any of the above-described meetings/hearings.

The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights or the filing of a court case. Use of this internal complaint procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.

Privacy/Confidentiality

Confidentiality of the filing of complaints, the identity of subjects and witnesses of any complaint, and of any action taken as a result of such complaints is essential to the effectiveness of this policy. Only those individuals necessary for the investigation and resolution of the complaint shall be given information about it.

The County will employ all reasonable efforts to protect the rights of the Complainant, the Respondent(s), and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under the terms of this policy shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law. Confidentiality, however, cannot be guaranteed. All Complainants proceeding through the formal investigation process will be advised that their identities may be disclosed to the Respondent(s).

During the course of a formal investigation, the CO or designee will instruct each person who is interviewed about the importance of maintaining confidentiality. Any individual who is interviewed as part of an investigation is expected not to disclose to third parties any information that s/he learns and/or provides during the course of the investigation.

All public records created as a part of an investigation of a complaint of discrimination/retaliation will be maintained by the CO in accordance with the School Board's records retention policy.

Results of the Investigation

The result of the investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant and his/her legal guardian by the Superintendent, or, if the Superintendent is the subject of the complaint, by the President of the Board.

Discipline and Other Actions

In determining the appropriate response and/or punishment, the appropriate school official shall consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incident occurred.

- A. Upon receipt of a finding that the complaint is substantiated, the appropriate school official shall take action appropriate to the status of the offender (student, staff, or public guest). Such action for students may include all options West Virginia State Board policy 4373 and in Policy 5600 - Student Discipline. Actions for staff may include but not be limited to warning, suspension, termination, revocation of licensure, notification of law enforcement, and/or human services. Actions for public guests may include but not be limited to removal from school property and school sponsored functions, notification of law enforcement, and/or human services.
- B. The appropriate school official shall also initiate such other action as is appropriate to ease tensions and affirm the values of respect and understanding in accordance with this policy.
- C. The Superintendent shall immediately file a report with the West Virginia Department of Education of all reports of harassment or violence when an investigation shows that harassment or violence did occur and all actions taken in response to the incident.

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit contacting law enforcement or other personnel, including the Human Rights Commission, regarding the actions of any party subject to a complaint.

Retaliation

Submission of a complaint or report of racial, sexual, or religious/ethnic harassment or violence will not affect the future employment, grades, or work assignments of the person who submits the complaint or report.

Retaliation against a person who makes a report or files a complaint alleging anti-harassment and violence, or participates as a witness in an investigation is prohibited. Specifically, the Board will not retaliate against, coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with any individual because the person opposed any act or practice made unlawful by any Federal or State civil rights law, or because that individual made a charge, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under those laws, or because that individual exercised, enjoyed, aided, or encouraged any other person in the exercise or enjoyment of any right granted or protected by those laws. "Retaliation" includes, but is not limited to, any form of retaliation or intimidation, reprisal, coercion, provocation, or harassment.

Reprisal

The Board will discipline, as appropriate, any individual who retaliates against any person who reports allegations of racial, sexual or religious/ethnic harassment or violence, or any person who cooperates, testifies, assists, or participates in any racial, sexual or religious/ethnic harassment or violence investigation, proceeding, or hearing. The Board will also discipline, as appropriate, any person who falsely reports religious/ethnic, racial or sexual harassment.

Student-Employee Relationships Prohibited

Amorous relationships between employees of the Board and students are prohibited, and staff members found to have violated this prohibition shall be subject to the penalties and disciplinary action defined herein.

Non-Harassment

The Board recognizes that not every advance, conduct, or interaction of a racial, sexual or religious/ethnic or violent nature constitutes harassment. Whether a particular act, conduct, interaction, or incident is a personal, consensual, welcome interaction or social relationship without discriminatory motivation or effect on employment or education status will be determined based upon consideration of all facts and surrounding circumstances.

The Board recognizes that not all reports of allegations of sexual, racial, and/or religious/ethnic harassment will result in findings that such an incident has occurred. However, the Board encourages all persons who believe that they are a

victim of such harassment to come forward and affirms its policy that no adverse action will be taken upon the filing of a complaint under this policy, unless it is shown, through investigation, that the complaint is patently false.

Right to Alternative Complaint Procedures

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse which may include the filing of charges with the West Virginia Human Rights Commission, filing an employee grievance under WV Code 18-29-1, et seq., filing a citizen's appeal under West Virginia Board of Education policy 7211, filing a Title IX grievance under the appropriate procedures, filing charges with the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or initiating civil or criminal action under State and/or Federal law.

Sexual Harassment as Abuse

Under certain circumstances, sexual harassment may constitute child and/or sexual abuse under Chapter 49 of the West Virginia Code. In such situations, the County School and its employees shall comply with the provisions of law for reporting such abuse.

Dissemination of the Policy

This policy or a summary shall be conspicuously posted throughout each school or facility of the Board in areas accessible to students and staff members.

This policy shall appear in the Student and Staff Handbooks and, if no handbook is available, a copy shall be distributed to all students, faculty, and staff.

The students and staff of the Board shall be trained on these regulations and on means for effectively promoting the goals of this policy.

The Board policy shall be reviewed at least bi-annually to assure compliance with State and Federal law and with State Board of Education policy.

Groups and persons utilizing school properties for curricular and extra-curricular activities shall be provided a copy of this policy prior to the use of any Board facility. Failure to comply with this policy by a non-student group will result in the immediate forfeiture of the group's use of the school properties.

Implementation and Education

The CO shall develop a program designed to raise the awareness of the different types of harassment, how it manifests itself, and its emotional, educational and legal consequences. Multi-cultural education programs must be established to foster an attitude of understanding and acceptance of individuals from a variety of cultural, ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds.

The CO shall present written and verbal information to all faculty, staff and students at least once annually. Dissemination of written and verbal information may be made by a designee(s) of the CO as appropriate, and such presentation must be age-appropriate for students K-4, 5-8, and 9-12.