

- Certified Personnel -

Title IX Sexual Harassment

Introduction and Scope

A United States Department of Education regulation published on May 19, 2020 defines sexual harassment for purposes of Title IX (sometimes referred to in policy and procedure as “Title IX Sexual Harassment”). In addition to numerous other matters, the regulation sets forth grievance procedure requirements that apply (including the initiation of a “formal complaint”) before there is a determination that an employee is responsible for Title IX Sexual Harassment. The applicable definition of sexual harassment describes serious sexual misconduct. If the alleged actions that are the subject of a formal complaint do not descend to the level of conduct described in the definition of Title IX Sexual Harassment; do not take place in a “program or activity” of the school District within the meaning of Title IX; or do not take place in the United States, the formal complaint must be dismissed.

Such a dismissal does not mean that the alleged offending party cannot be the subject of investigation or discipline on grounds other than “Title IX Sexual Harassment” as addressed in Board policy or law, including conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment or other sexual misconduct that does fall within the definition of “Title IX Sexual Harassment.”¹

Prohibition

Title IX Sexual Harassment in educational programs or activities of the District is prohibited.

Grievance Procedure

The District shall provide a Title IX Sexual Harassment grievance procedure that treats complainants and respondents equitably as required by Federal Regulation.²

Definitions

Title IX Sexual Harassment

“Title IX Sexual Harassment” means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

An employee of the District conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the District on an individual’s participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., quid pro quo sexual harassment);

Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District’s education program or activity;

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03.1621

(Continued)

Title IX Sexual Harassment

Definitions (continued)

Title IX Sexual Harassment (continued)

“Sexual assault” as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), “dating violence” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), “domestic violence” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or “stalking” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30). For purposes of this definition, “sexual assault” means an offense that meets the definition of rape, fondling, incest, or statutory rape as used in the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting system. A sex offense is an act directed against another person, without the consent of the second person, including instances where the second person is incapable of giving consent.³

The term “dating violence” means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim and where the existence of such a relationship shall be based on the following factors: the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

The term “domestic violence” includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.

The term “stalking” means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person’s safety or the safety of others; or suffer substantial emotional distress.

Consent

“Consent” means a voluntary expression of willingness, permission, or agreement to engage in sexual activity throughout a sexual encounter. Consent cannot be granted by an individual: who is less than the statutory age of consent under Kentucky criminal law, has a mental or physical condition or incapacity that prevents the giving of consent; or from whom ostensible “consent” is extracted through threat, coercion, or forcible compulsion.

Complainant

“Complainant” means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. This applies to such individual even if no formal complaint is filed. Only a complainant who is participating or attempting to participate in the District’s educational programs or activities may file a formal complaint.

Respondent

“Respondent” means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. This applies to such individual even if no formal complaint is filed. Only a person in his or her individual capacity is subject to a Title IX investigation.

Title IX Sexual Harassment

Definitions (continued)

Title IX Coordinator (TIXC)

The TIXC is the individual or individuals designated and authorized to coordinate District Title IX programs. The TIXC is expected to engage in activities intended to provide a fair and neutral process for all parties, including implementation of supportive measures and remedies where appropriate. The District may use co-coordinators and/or deputy coordinators.

Formal Complaint

“Formal complaint” means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the TIXC alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that the District investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. A formal complaint may be filed with the TIXC in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by using the contact information provided by the District. The complaint document may be physical or electronic, shall contain the complainant’s physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicate that the complainant is the person filing the formal complaint. Where the TIXC signs a formal complaint, the TIXC is not “the complainant” or otherwise considered a party, but is to comply with applicable procedures.

Supportive Measures

“Supportive measures” mean nondisciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, unilateral restrictions on contact that are not unreasonably burdensome on a respondent, changes in work or housing locations, authorized leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures. Supportive measures shall be confidential, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the District to provide the supportive measures. The TIXC is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures.

Education Program or Activity

“Education program or activity” means District operations and includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the District exercises substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs.

Preponderance of the Evidence

“Preponderance of evidence” means evidence that is of greater weight or more convincing that an asserted fact or facts occurred than evidence in opposition to such facts. It is evidence which as a whole shows that an assertion to be proven is more likely than not.

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(Continued)

Title IX Sexual Harassment

Regulation and Policy Does Not Affect Parent Rights

Absent a court order or other legal requirement to the contrary, a parent or guardian is authorized to act on behalf of a minor student regarding decision-making and the exercise of rights under the Title IX Sexual Harassment policy and procedure, including the opportunity to accompany a minor student to meetings and interviews.

Segregation of Functions / Conflict of Interest

The TIXC, investigator, decisionmaker(s), and any informal resolution facilitator shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent. These individuals are to serve impartially without prejudgment of the facts at issue. The

investigative, initial decision-making, appellate decision-making, and resolution functions must be performed by different trained individuals, who may be District employees or contractors.

Confidentiality

With respect to its administration of Title IX Sexual Harassment policies and corresponding procedures, the District must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted under FERPA⁵, required by law, or to carry out Title IX purposes, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing or Title IX judicial proceedings.

Investigative evidence directly related to the allegations of a formal complaint gathered by the District is subject to inspection and review by the parties but is not to be disseminated to the public. The United States Department of Education rule commentary provides that under the applicable FERPA definition of “education records” a parent of a complainant or respondent (or eligible student) has a right to inspect and review any witness statement that is directly related to the student, even if that statement contains information that is also directly related to another student, if the information cannot be segregated or redacted without destroying its meaning.⁴

Employees Shall Report

Employees who believe or have been made aware that they or any other employee, student, or visitor has been subject to Title IX Sexual Harassment shall report it to the TIXC. Failure to make such a report shall be grounds for discipline up to and including termination. If the knowledge of the reporting party gives rise to reasonable cause to believe that the reported conduct constitutes child abuse Policy 09.227 or a reportable criminal offense Policy 09.2211, notification of state officials shall be made as required by law.⁶

False Reports Prohibited

Employees or students who intentionally make false reports related to the District’s administration of this policy and the corresponding procedures, are subject to disciplinary sanctions under applicable District policy, law, or the Code of Acceptable Behavior and Discipline.

Title IX Sexual Harassment

Related Evidence Rules Summary

The following rules apply to the District investigation and grievance process under the Title IX Sexual Harassment regulation:

The District shall not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitutes or seeks disclosure of information protected under a legally recognized privilege unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

The District cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records made or maintained in connection with provision of treatment to the party by medical or mental health professionals or paraprofessionals unless the District obtains written consent from the party.

Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior behavior are not relevant unless such questions and evidence are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct or, such questions or evidence are offered to prove consent.

Retaliation Prohibited

No District or other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any Title IX investigation, proceeding, or hearing.

References:

234 C.F.R. § 106.45

3KRS 510.020

485 Fed. Reg. 30433 (May 19, 2020)

Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq., as amended; 28 C.F.R. § 35.107)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) (29 U.S.C. § 794 et seq., as amended; 34 C.F.R. § 104.7)

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC § 1681, et seq.); 34 C.F.R. Part 106

Clery Act (20 U.S.C. §1092(f)(6)(A)(v))

Violence Against Women Act (34 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A)(v))

34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(10)

34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(3)

34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(8)

Related Policies:

103.162; 03.262; 09.42811

509.14

609.227; 09.2211

03.2621; 09.428111

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03.1621 AP.2

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Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures

Refer to Procedure 09.428111 area for Title IX Sexual Harassment Notices, Grievance Procedures, and Reporting Forms.

Related Procedures:

03.2621 AP.2; 09.428111 (all procedures)

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03.162 AP.1

Notice to Individuals Complaining of Harassment/Discrimination

The District prohibits all forms of improper conduct, including sexual harassment and discrimination. A copy of the District's policy is attached for your information. Please be aware of the following provisions:

The District's Title IX/Equity Coordinator is Paula Turner. If you have any questions pertaining to sexual harassment or sexual discrimination, you may contact this person as follows:

(859) 336-5470, paula.turner@washington.kyschools.us, 120 Mackville Hill, Springfield, KY 40069

Address

Telephone Number

The District will investigate the allegations of harassment/discrimination that you have brought to its attention. The investigation will be conducted by a District administrator or other individual with specific training and/or experience in this area. If you have any questions for the District's investigator, you may contact him/her at the address listed above.

During the investigation, you have the right to: (a) provide the District with information and documentation concerning the alleged improper conduct; (b) advise the District of the identity and location of any possible witness(es); and (c) exercise all other rights set forth in law or in District policy.

The District is interested in knowing what actions you are seeking in response to your complaint. Although law does not require the District to comply with all requested actions in order to eliminate harassment/discrimination, a collaborative dialogue may be a useful tool in insuring that it is eliminated.

The District will take reasonable steps to preserve confidentiality and will make every effort to prevent public disclosure of the names of the parties involved, except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation. The District is interested in knowing your views about confidentiality issues and will try to accommodate them, subject to the District being able to fulfill its commitment to eliminate harassment/discrimination.

District employees and students who are alleged perpetrators of harassment/discrimination misconduct may be entitled to due process and may be protected by certain confidentiality rights. Subject to the rights of students or employees, the District will make an effort to keep you advised of the progress of its investigation and of any decisions it reaches concerning the situation. If you have any questions concerning the progress of the investigation or the actions taken by the District to remediate any harassment/discrimination that may have occurred, please feel free to contact the Title IX/Equity Coordinator or the individual assigned to investigate a complaint.

If you are dissatisfied with the progress of the investigation, the progress of rendering a decision, or the decision itself, you have the right to appeal to the Board of Education.

If it is concluded following the investigation that the allegations have merit and that action will be taken to remediate the situation, the District may follow up with you to make sure that there is not a recurrence of the improper conduct. If there is any repeat of any improper conduct, we ask you to notify immediately the Title IX/Equity Coordinator and/or a District administrator.

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(Continued)

Notice to Individuals Complaining of Harassment/Discrimination

The District will make every effort to correct the effects of any improper conduct on the complainant and others. Please advise us of the actions you believe the District should take to correct the discriminatory effects of the improper conduct.

Retaliation against an individual who has reported improper conduct by faculty, staff or students, including sexual harassment/discrimination, is strictly forbidden. If you believe that any of those parties is retaliating against you in any way, please notify the Title IX/Equity Coordinator and/or a District administrator immediately. If you are not satisfied with the District's response, you have the right to file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights at the following address:

Wanamaker Building, Suite 515

100 Penn Square East

Philadelphia, PA 19107

STUDENTS

09.42811 AP.1

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District employees and students who are alleged perpetrators of harassment/discrimination misconduct may be entitled to due process and may be protected by certain confidentiality rights. Subject to the rights of students or employees, the District will make an effort to keep you advised of the progress of its investigation and of any decisions it reaches concerning the situation. If you have any questions concerning the progress of the investigation or the actions taken by the District to remediate any harassment/discrimination that may have occurred, please feel free to contact the Title IX/Equity Coordinator or the individual assigned to investigate a complaint.

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(Continued)

Notice to Individuals Complaining of Harassment/Discrimination

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09.42811 AP.21

Harassment/Discrimination Investigation and Appeals

(For Internal Administrative Tracking Purposes Only)

Student Complainant _____

Student's School _____ Grade _____ Homeroom/Classroom _____

The Superintendent shall appoint an investigator who is not an alleged party in the complaint to investigate allegations of harassment/discrimination. The investigator shall be trained in this area, and her/his duties shall be assigned by the Superintendent/designee or, for contractors, set out in a contract, as appropriate. If the Superintendent is the alleged party, the Board shall designate an outside investigator and, after presentation of the final investigative report, determine when and how it is to be released. All instances involving suspected child abuse or criminal conduct shall be reported as required by law.

Alleged Harasser/Discriminating Party: _____

Investigator: _____ Date Complaint Form is Received: _____

Informal Procedure

If both parties agree, prior to a formal grievance process an administrator may facilitate a conversation between the complainant and the party alleged to have harassed or discriminated against the complainant. Both the complainant and the accused party may be accompanied by a person of their choice. If both parties feel that a resolution has been achieved, no further action need be taken. The results of an informal resolution shall be reported by the facilitator, in writing, to the Principal, along with a signed agreement, if one is reached. If any of the interested parties choose not to utilize the informal procedure, or feel that it has been unsuccessful, s/he may opt to proceed to the formal grievance procedure. However, any complaints directed at District employees or alleging criminal acts must be formally investigated and/or reported to state authorities as required by law.

Was this complaint resolved informally, as indicated by an agreement signed by both parties?

Yes No Date: _____ Facilitator _____

Formal Procedure

Students should make their complaint to their Principal or other designated administrator, who shall immediately, without screening or beginning an investigation, inform the Superintendent of receipt of the complaint. Otherwise, the complaint can be filed directly with the Superintendent or, in cases involving sexual harassment/discrimination, with the Title IX/Equity Coordinator. Employees who have knowledge of alleged or observed student harassment/discrimination shall immediately notify the alleged victim's Principal.

The Superintendent shall designate an individual to investigate the complaint. If necessary, the investigator will seek assistance from District administrators. In some instances it may be necessary to involve legal counsel, when authorized by the Superintendent, or by the Board if the Superintendent is the subject of the complaint.

Timeline

The investigator shall provide the complainant and the accused with a copy of the District's Policy 09.42811 and Notice to Individuals Complaining of Harassment/Discrimination and inform the complainant and the accused of required timelines that have been established for initiation and completion of an investigation.

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09.42811 AP.21

(Continued)

Harassment/Discrimination Investigation and Appeals

Formal Procedure (continued)

Corrective Action

If corrective action is needed, the investigator shall recommend to the Superintendent/designee the type of corrective action and methods to prevent reoccurrence of the harassment/discrimination.

Using the designated form (09.42811 AP.24), a response shall be presented to the complainant and the accused (and to their parents/guardians if student is under age eighteen or if student has reached age eighteen and has a legal guardian) within three (3) school days of completion of this level of investigation.

=====

Board policy allows for appeal of the investigator's decision and the opportunity to address the complaint to a higher level of authority. An appeal must be made within ten (10) school days of receipt of a response at this level.

Is this complaint to be referred/appealed to a higher level of authority? Yes No

If , to whom will the complaint be referred? _____ Date: _____

First Appeal Level

Student Complainant _____

Student's School _____ Grade ____ Homeroom/Classroom _____

Alleged Harasser/Discriminating Party: _____

Superintendent/designee who will consider appeal: _____

Date appeal and related data received by Superintendent/designee: _____

In some instances it may be necessary to involve legal counsel at the appeal level, when authorized by the Superintendent or by the Board if the Superintendent is the subject of the complaint.

Corrective Action

If corrective action is needed, the investigator shall recommend to the Superintendent/designee the type of corrective action and methods to prevent reoccurrence of the harassment/discrimination.

Using the designated form (09.42811 AP.24), a response shall be presented to the complainant and the accused (and to their parents/guardians if the student is under age eighteen or if student has reached age eighteen and has a legal guardian) within three (3) school days of completion of this level of investigation.

Board policy allows for appeal of the decision made at this level and the opportunity to address the complaint to the Board of Education. An appeal must be made within ten (10) school days of receipt of a response at this level.

Is this complaint to be referred/appealed to a higher level of authority? o Yes o No

If , to whom will the complaint be referred? _____ Date: _____

STUDENTS

09.42811 AP.21

(Continued)

Harassment/Discrimination Investigation and Appeals

Corrective Action (continued)

Second Appeal Level

Student Complainant _____

Student's School _____ Grade ____ Homeroom/Classroom _____

Alleged Harasser/Discriminating Party: _____

Board Chairperson: _____

Date appeal and related data received by the Chairperson on behalf of the Board: _____

Corrective Action

If corrective action is needed, the investigator shall recommend to the Superintendent/designee the type of corrective action and methods to prevent reoccurrence of the harassment/discrimination.

Using the designated form (09.42811 AP.24), a response shall be presented to the complainant and the accused (and to their parents/guardians if student is under age eighteen or if student has reached age eighteen and has a legal guardian) within three (3) school days of completion of this level of investigation.

Guidelines

The Board shall not hear grievances concerning personnel actions taken by the Superintendent/designee, unless the grievance is based on an alleged violation of constitutional, statutory, regulatory, or policy provisions.

In some instances it may be necessary to involve legal counsel, when authorized by the Board.

The Superintendent/designee shall implement corrective action as determined by the Superintendent or by the Board, as appropriate under law, after appeal rights have been exhausted. If the Superintendent is subject to corrective action, the Board shall implement the action.

The District is prohibited from disclosing personally identifiable information contained in student discipline records under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act and corresponding state law.

Employee evaluation and private reprimand information generally is confidential and may require consent of the employee prior to release.

Related Policies:

09.2211; 09.227

Related Procedures:

09.227 AP.1, 09.42811 (all procedures)