



SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

The City of Medford believes in the dignity of the individual and recognizes the right of all people to equal opportunities. Sexual harassment is defined by the Equal Opportunity Commission as “unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature”. It creates a negative, harmful work environment and therefore will not be tolerated in this municipality. We are committed to providing employees with a work environment free of unsolicited and unwelcomed sexual overtones that interfere with their work, productivity, and general sense of well-being.

As with harassment involving race, color, religion, age, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, Vietnam Era Veteran status, or disability, the City of Medford will not tolerate, not condone sexual harassment of its employees in any form, whether committed by supervisors, employees, or non-employees. All employees must take the necessary steps to prevent its occurrence. Sexual harassment can include a wide range of unwanted behavior. Examples of its subtle forms include sexual teasing, remarks, jokes, or questions; and sexually suggestive comments, gestures, or materials of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can also include requests for dates, requests for sexual favors, and sexual assault.

All persons associated with the Medford Public Schools including, but not necessarily limited to, the Committee, the administration, staff, and students, are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. Any person who engages in sexual harassment while acting, as a member of the school community, will be in violation of this policy. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating in an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

Because the Medford School Committee takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, we will respond promptly to complaints of sexual harassment and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth out goals of promoting a workplace and school environment that is free of sexual harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace or school conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment.

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

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person’s employment or educational development.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or education decisions affecting such individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work or educational performances or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

The Grievance Officer:

The committee will annually appoint a sexual harassment grievance officer who will be vested with the authority and responsibility of the processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure set out below:

Complaint Procedure:

1. Any member of the school community who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment will report the incident(s) to the grievance officer. All complaints shall be investigated promptly and resolves as soon as possible.
2. The grievance officer will attempt to resolve the problem in an informal manner through the following process:
 - a. The grievance officer will confer with the charging party in order to obtain a clear understanding of that party's statement of the facts, and may interview any witnesses.
 - b. The grievance officer will then attempt to meet with the charged party in order to obtain his/her response to the complaint.
 - c. The grievance officer will hold as many meetings with the parties as is necessary to establish the facts.
 - d. On the basis of the grievance officer's perception of the situation he/she may:
 - Attempt to resolve the matter informally through reconciliation.
 - Report the incident and transfer the record to the Superintendent or his/her designee, and so notify the parties by certified mail.
3. After reviewing the record made by the grievance officer, the Superintendent or designee may attempt to gather any more evidence necessary to decide the case, and thereafter impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including a recommendation to the committee for termination or expulsion. At this stage of the proceedings the parties may present witnesses and other evidence, and may also be represented. The parties, to the extent permissible by law, shall be informed of the disposition of the complaint. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct.
4. The grievance officer, upon request, will provide the charging party with government agencies that handle sexual harassment matters.