

Community Relations

SUBJECT: TITLE IX POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEX DISCRIMINATION**I. TITLE IX NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

In compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Clarence Central School District (“the District”) does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs or activities it operates, including employment and admissions, and it is required by Title IX and its attendant regulations not to discriminate in such a manner. All forms of sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, are strictly prohibited by the District. Inquiries regarding Title IX may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator(s) or to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, or both.

II. TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

While all forms of sex-based discrimination are prohibited in the District, the primary purpose of this policy is to address *sexual harassment as defined in Title IX and its attendant regulations* that occurs within an education program or activity of the District, and to provide a grievance process for investigating and reaching a final determination regarding responsibility for a formal complaint of sexual harassment. The Title IX Grievance Process (“Grievance Process”) is set forth below in Section V. While the District must and will respond to all reports it receives of sex discrimination or sexual harassment, the Grievance Process herein is initiated only with the filing of a formal complaint which alleges sexual harassment in violation of Title IX. Please refer to the definitions below in Section II.A for an explanation of what constitutes a formal complaint of sexual harassment.

The Superintendent shall have overall responsibility for implementing this Policy, and shall annually appoint at least one Title IX Coordinator as that position is described in Section II.B below. Below please find contact information for the District’s Title IX Coordinator(s):

Title IX Coordinator(s)

- Robert Michel, Director of Personnel
9625 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14031, rmichel@clarenceschools.org, (716) 407-9107
- Kristin Overholt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
9625 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14031, koverholt@clarenceschools.org, (716) 407-9109

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“Actual knowledge” – notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator or to any District official with authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the District, or to any District employee (other than a “Respondent” or alleged harasser).

“Complainant” – an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment, whether or not that person files a report or formal complaint.

“Days” – all references to “days” shall mean calendar days unless otherwise specified. If a deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the next regular business day.

“Decision-Maker” – the person tasked with the responsibility of making determinations regarding responsibility. The Superintendent of Schools shall be responsible for designating the Decision-Maker on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the Title IX Coordinator. Neither the investigator nor the Title IX Coordinator may serve as the Decision-Maker.

“Determination regarding responsibility” – the formal finding by the Decision-Maker on each allegation of sexual harassment contained in a formal Complaint that the Respondent did or did not engage in conduct constituting sexual harassment under Title IX.

“Education program(s) or activity(ies)” – refers to locations, events or circumstances over which the District exercises substantial control over both the Respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs.

“Formal Complaint” – a document filed by a Complainant, the Complainant’s parent/guardian, or the Title IX Coordinator, alleging sexual harassment against a Respondent, and requesting that the District investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. [The phrase “document filed by a Complainant” includes the complaint form which is available on the District website or by request at District Office, or a document or electronic submission that contains the Complainant’s physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that the Complainant is the person filing the formal complaint.]

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“Respondent” – an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

“Sexual Harassment” – conduct on the basis of sex (including, without limitation, gender, sexual orientation and/or gender identity) that occurs in the District’s education programs or activities that satisfies one or more of the following:

- (1) An employee of the District conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of an education program or activity on an individual’s participation or refusal to participate in sexual conduct irrespective of whether the conduct is welcomed by the student or other employee (i.e. *quid pro quo* sexual harassment);
- (2) Unwelcome sex-based/related 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; or
- (3) Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking as defined in state or federal law (see e.g. 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A)(v); 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(10); 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(8); 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(30)).

Sexual harassment may be directed against a particular person or persons, or a group, whether of the opposite sex or the same sex. The context of behavior can make a difference between conduct falling within the technical definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, and conduct of a sexual nature that is offensive or hostile in itself but which does not rise to the level defined above. District policies prohibit both, but for purposes of its Title IX obligations, the District must address reports or complaints of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment as defined above in accordance with this Policy and the grievance procedures set forth herein. Unless otherwise specified, all references to “sexual harassment” in this Policy refer to sexual harassment as defined above. Please note, however, that conduct that otherwise satisfies that definition does not fall within the scope of this particular Policy if the conduct occurred (1) outside the United States or (2) under circumstances in which the District did not have substantial control over both the harasser/Respondent and the context in which the harassment occurred.

“Supportive Measures” – non-disciplinary, 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 are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District’s

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education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the District's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Examples may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, leaves of absence, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, and other similar measures.

“Title IX” of the Educational Amendments of 1972 – No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Sex discrimination under Title IX includes sexual harassment and sexual violence.

B. Title IX Coordinator

The Title IX Coordinator shall be responsible for coordinating the District's efforts to comply with its responsibilities under Title IX. In this regard, the Title IX Coordinator shall receive general reports and formal complaints reports of sexual harassment (as well as other forms of sex discrimination), and shall coordinate the District's responses to such reports or complaints so that the same are prompt and equitable. In addition to any other specific responsibilities assigned under this Policy, or as assigned by the Superintendent, the Title IX Coordinator will be responsible for:

1. Identification and implementation of supportive measures;
2. Signing or receiving formal complaints of sexual harassment;
3. Coordinating with District and school-level personnel to facilitate and assure implementation of investigations, and remedies, and helping to assure that the District otherwise meets its obligations associated with reports and formal complaints of sexual harassment;
4. Coordinating with the Superintendent with respect to assignment of persons to fulfill the District's obligations, both general and case specific, relative to this Policy (e.g., investigator, Decision-Maker, etc., which may involve the retention of outside counsel or other third party personnel);

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5. Coordinating with District and school-level personnel to assure appropriate training and professional development of employees and others in accordance with Section II.C of this Policy; and
6. Helping to ensure that appropriate records are kept and maintained in connection with this Policy.

In cases where the Title IX Coordinator is unavailable, including unavailability due to a conflict of interest or other disqualifying reason, the Superintendent shall assure that another person with the appropriate training and qualifications is appointed as acting Title IX Coordinator for that case. In such instances, "Title IX Coordinator" shall include the acting Title IX Coordinator.

C. Training

All District employees shall receive training relative to mandatory reporting obligations, and any other responsibilities they may have relative to this Policy.

Title IX Coordinators, investigators, Decision-Makers, any individuals who decide appeals or who facilitate an informal resolution process, must receive training on:

- The definition of sexual harassment;
- The scope of the District's education program or activity;
- How to conduct an investigation and the Grievance Process, including appeals and the informal resolution process, as applicable; and
- How to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest and bias.

Decision-Makers, including individuals who decide appeals, must also receive training on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant.

Also, investigators must receive training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.

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Materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, Decision-Makers, individuals who decide appeals and individuals who facilitate an informal resolution process must not rely on sex stereotypes, must promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment. The training materials for the individuals identified in this paragraph shall be made publicly available on the District's website.

D. Confidentiality

The District will respect the confidentiality of a Complainant and Respondent as much as possible, however, some information may need to be disclosed to appropriate individuals or authorities. All disclosures shall be consistent with the District's legal obligations and the necessity to investigate allegations of sexual harassment and take appropriate action in response thereto. Examples of required disclosures include:

1. Information to either party to the extent necessary to provide the parties due process during the Grievance Process;
2. Information to individuals who are responsible for handling the District's investigation and determination regarding responsibility to the extent necessary to complete the District's Grievance Process;
3. Mandatory reports of child abuse or neglect; and
4. Information to the Complainant's and the Respondent's parent/guardian as required by this Policy and/or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA").

Additionally, any supportive measures offered to the Complainant or the Respondent shall remain confidential to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the District to provide the supportive measures.

Except as specified above, the District shall keep confidential to the extent permitted by law the identity of (1) any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination or sexual harassment; (2) any Complainant or Respondent; (3) any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination; and (4) any witness.

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Retaliation against any person who makes a report or complaint, or against any person who assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any investigation of an act alleged in this Policy is strictly prohibited. The District further prohibits any other intimidation, threats, coercion or discrimination against anyone for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX. Charging an individual with Code of Conduct violations that arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, also constitutes retaliation and is strictly prohibited.

However, charging an individual with a violation of the Code of Conduct or other applicable policy or rule for making a materially false statement in bad faith, or for submitting materially false information in bad faith, in the course of a grievance proceeding does not constitute retaliation. Please note that a determination regarding responsibility alone is not sufficient to conclude that any party made a materially false statement in bad faith.

Complaints of retaliation in connection with this Policy will be handled in accordance with District Policies [3420, 5571, 6120-6122, 7550-7551, and 8130]. Individuals who are found to have engaged in retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action.

F. Conflict of Interest

No person designated as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, Decision-Maker, nor any person designated by the District to facilitate an informal resolution process, may have a conflict of interest or bias for or against Complainants or Respondents generally, or against an individual Complainant or Respondent.

G. Dissemination and Notice

The District shall publish on its website this Policy, and shall prominently display on its website the contact information for the Title IX Coordinator(s) and the Title IX Notice of Non-Discrimination (see Section I, above). The District shall also publish that information in any student or employee handbooks that it may produce. The District shall take any other steps that

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may be necessary in order to notify students, parents or legal guardians of students, employees, applicants for admission or employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the District of this Policy, the Title IX Coordinator's contact information and the District's notice of non-discrimination.

H. Records and Record Keeping

The District will maintain the following for a period of seven (7) years:

1. Records of each sexual harassment investigation, including any:
 - a. Determination regarding responsibility, including dismissal;
 - b. Disciplinary sanctions imposed on the Respondent; and
 - c. Remedies provided to the Complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education program or activity.
2. Any appeal and its result;
3. Any informal resolution and its result; and
4. All materials used to train the Title IX Coordinator(s), investigations, Decision-Maker(s), and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process;

In addition, when the District obtains actual knowledge of sexual harassment as defined herein, the District shall create and maintain for a period of seven (7) years the following:

1. Records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, as well as documentation:
 - a. Explaining why the District's response was not deliberately indifferent; and
 - b. That it took measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education program or activity;
2. In the event that no supportive measures were provided to the Complainant, documentation of the reason(s) why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

Please note that documentation of certain reasons or measures taken shall not limit or preclude the District in the future from providing additional explanations or detailing additional measures taken.

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Any individual seeking to report allegations of sex discrimination other than sexual harassment is encouraged to file a formal complaint form with the Title IX Coordinator, or contact the Title IX Coordinator. A copy of the formal complaint form is available on the District website or by request at the District Office. For discriminatory or harassing conduct which does not meet the definition of sexual harassment under this Policy, the District's response will be governed by other applicable laws and policies, such as Board Policies 3410, 3420, 6121, 7550-7551. All reports or complaints of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, are encouraged to be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator, who will determine the applicable process through which the allegations will be handled.

IV. REPORTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT, FORMAL COMPLAINTS AND DISTRICT RESPONSES

Please note that a report does not initiate the Grievance Process. That process is begun only upon the filing of a formal complaint, as explained further below.

Any person may report sexual harassment whether relating to her/himself or another person. **However, if any District employee – other than the employee harasser, or the Title IX Coordinator – reasonably believes a student has been discriminated against based on sex or who receives information of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment under this Policy, he/she shall immediately inform the Title IX Coordinator** of the alleged sexual harassment. Failure to report will subject the employee to discipline up to and including dismissal.

A report of sexual harassment may be made at any time, in person, by mail, by telephone, electronic mail, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Additionally, while the District encourages reports of sexual harassment to be made directly to the Title IX Coordinator, the report may be made to any District staff member, including, for instance, a guidance counselor, teacher or principal.

If a Title IX Coordinator is the alleged Respondent, the report or formal complaint may be made

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to a different Title IX Coordinator if the District has designated more than one Title IX Coordinator, or directly to the Superintendent, who shall thereafter fulfill the functions of the Title IX Coordinator regarding that report/complaint, or delegate the function to another person.

A. District Response to Report of Sexual Harassment

The District will promptly respond when there is actual knowledge of sexual harassment, even if a formal complaint has not been filed. The District shall treat Complainants and Respondents equitably by offering supportive measures to the Complainant and by following the Grievance Process prior to imposing any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a Respondent. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures.

As soon as reasonably possible after receiving a report of alleged sexual harassment from another District employee or after receiving a report directly through any means, the Title IX Coordinator shall contact the Complainant to:

- Discuss the availability of and offer supportive measures, as well as inform the Complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint;
- Consider the Complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; and
- Explain to the Complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

B. Formal Complaints and Disciplinary Action

Pursuant to federal regulations and this Policy, a formal complaint that contains an allegation of sexual harassment and a request that the District investigate the allegations is required before the District may conduct a formal investigation of sexual harassment or take any action (other than supportive measures) against a person accused of sexual harassment. Once a formal complaint of sexual harassment is received by the Title IX Coordinator, he/she shall commence the Grievance

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Process set forth below in Section V. The process for filing a formal complaint is explained below in Section V.A. if a formal complaint is filed, no disciplinary action may be imposed against a Respondent for conduct which may constitute sexual harassment until the Grievance Process has been completed. If no formal complaint is filed, no disciplinary action may be imposed against a Respondent based upon conduct that would constitute sexual harassment under this Policy.

C. Emergency Removal and Administrative Leave

At any point after receiving a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator (or other District official charged with a specific function under this Policy or applicable regulations, such as the investigator or Decision-Maker, for example) may request the Superintendent to direct that an individualized safety and risk analysis be performed to determine whether a Respondent student is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any person arising from the allegations of sexual harassment. In the event that the safety and risk analysis determines that the Respondent student does present such a threat and removal is therefore justified, the District may remove the Respondent student on an emergency basis, provided that such removal is in full compliance with the IDEA, a student's IEP and or 504 plan if applicable. Such emergency removal shall not be disciplinary. However, the District must provide the Respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal, and shall continue to offer educational programming until a final determination is made pursuant to the Grievance Process.

The Title IX Coordinator shall keep the Superintendent of Schools informed of any employee Respondents so that he/she can make any necessary reports to the New York State Education Department. In appropriate cases, the Superintendent may place an employee Respondent on non-disciplinary administrative leave until a final determination on responsibility is made pursuant to the Grievance Process.

V. GRIEVANCE PROCESS

PURPOSE: The purpose of these procedures is to secure prompt and equitable resolutions of formal complaints of sexual harassment, and to treat both Complainants and Respondents equitably in the process. **These procedures apply only to formal complaints alleging sexual**

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harassment prohibited by Title IX. Upon receipt of a formal complaint of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will coordinate the District's efforts to comply with its responsibilities related to the Grievance Process. These procedures shall be followed prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against the Respondent unless otherwise noted herein.

A. Process for Filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment

The Title IX Grievance Process is initiated by way of a formal complaint filed by the Complainant, the Complainant's parent/guardian, or the Title IX Coordinator. A formal complaint should be filed with the Title IX Coordinator. The Complainant may file a formal complaint or choose not to file a formal complaint and simply receive the supportive measures. If the Complainant does not file a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator may sign a formal complaint, but only if initiating the Grievance Process against the Respondent is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances, or in other cases where, in the exercise of good judgment, the Title IX Coordinator determines that a Grievance Process is necessary to comply with the obligation not to be deliberately indifferent to known allegations of sexual harassment. If the formal complaint is filed by the Title IX Coordinator, he/she is not a party to the action, and the District must comply with all of the provisions of the Title IX Grievance Process relative to Respondents and Complainants.

Although there is no limit *per se* to filing a formal complaint, **a Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the District at the time of filing.** Delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to the allegations.

At a minimum, a formal complaint must:

1. Contain the name and address of the Complainant;
2. Describe the alleged sexual harassment;
3. Request an investigation of the matter; and

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4. Be signed by the Complainant or otherwise indicate that the Complainant is the person filing the formal complaint.

The formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by email. A complaint form may be obtained from the Title IX Coordinator or on the District's website. A written narrative may be attached to the complaint form explaining the nature of the formal complaint. The complaint form or narrative should contain information that describes the conduct and identifies with reasonable particularity the Complainant(s), the Respondent(s), and any witness(es) to the alleged conduct.

B. Initial Steps and Notice of Formal Complaint

Following receipt of a formal complaint:

1. The Title IX Coordinator will provide notice to the Complainant and to the Respondent (if known), as well as to any other known parties, of the following:
 - a. this Grievance Process, including any informal resolution process;
 - b. the allegations of sexual harassment potentially constituting sexual harassment, including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview. "Sufficient details" shall include to the extent known identities of persons involved, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the incident(s);
 - c. a statement that the Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility will be made at the conclusion of the Grievance Process;
 - d. that each party has the right to have an advisor of his or her choice who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney;
 - e. that each party is entitled to inspect and review evidence; and

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- f. any provisions in the District's Code of Conduct or other applicable District policies, rules or collective bargaining agreements that prohibit knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information in the course of the grievance procedures.
2. The Title IX Coordinator will contact the Complainant to discuss and offer supportive measures as appropriate.
3. The Title IX Coordinator may contact the Respondent to discuss, and/or impose, non-disciplinary supportive measures.
4. The Title IX Coordinator will examine the allegations in the formal complaint to determine whether the allegations, if assumed to be true, are sufficient to sustain a finding of sexual harassment under this Policy.
 - a. If the Title IX Coordinator was not involved with preparing the formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will contact the Complainant to discuss the allegations in the formal complaint and whether amendment is appropriate. In the event that amendment is appropriate, the Title IX Coordinator shall immediately provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.
 - b. If the allegations set forth in the formal complaint are insufficient to sustain a finding of sexual harassment under this Policy, the complaint shall be dismissed. Please refer to Section V.H, below, for additional details regarding dismissal, including additional grounds on which a formal complaint must/may be dismissed.
5. If the formal complaint is not dismissed, then the Title IX Coordinator will consult with the Superintendent with regard to designating an appropriate investigator and Decision-Maker, both of whom must be properly trained and otherwise qualified.

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1. Copies and Notices. Except as specifically stated elsewhere in this Policy, for any document, information or material required to be delivered to a party or to a person assigned with responsibility under the Grievance Process, the manner of transmittal may be by hand delivery, electronic mail, regular mail or such other manner reasonably calculated to assure prompt delivery with evidence thereof. However, hand delivery to the District will only be permitted if made to the District official charged with the specific function under this Policy (e.g., Title IX Coordinator, Superintendent, investigator, Decision-Maker(s), etc.).
2. Legal Privileges. Nothing in the Grievance Process shall require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege (e.g. medical records, attorney-client privileged information, etc.), unless the person or entity holding such privilege has waived the privilege.
3. Additional Allegations. If, in the course of an investigation, the District decides to investigate allegations about the Complainant or Respondent that were not included in the previous notice, the District shall simultaneously provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.
4. Consolidation of Complaints. The District may consolidate formal complaints where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances and the formal complaints are against more than one Respondent; or by more than one Complainant against one or more Respondents; or by one party against the other party. When the District has consolidated formal complaints so that the Grievance Process involves more than one Complainant or more than one Respondent, references to the singular “party”, “Complainant”, or “Respondent” include the plural, as applicable.

D. Timeframe of Grievance Process

The District shall make a good faith effort to conduct a fair, impartial grievance process in a timely manner designed to provide all parties with a prompt and equitable resolution. It is expected that in most cases, the Grievance Process will be concluded through at least the determination regarding

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responsibility within ninety (90) days after filing the formal complaint. In more complex cases, where a determination regarding responsibility cannot reasonably be made within that time frame, additional time may be required in order to complete a fair and thorough investigation, or to complete other aspects of the Grievance Process.

Delays and Extensions of Time. At any stage of the Grievance Process, the District may for good cause allow for temporary delays or extensions of time upon request of either party, or on its own initiative. Examples of good cause may include such things as availability of parties or witnesses; school or school administrative office holidays or vacations; school recess periods; referral back to an earlier stage of the grievance process; concurrent law enforcement or other agency activity; or need to obtain interpreters or accommodation of disabilities. For any such delay or extension of time, the Title IX Coordinator, Superintendent or any other individual appointed to play a role in the Grievance Process will provide written notice to the parties of the delay/extension and the reason(s).

E. Investigation

The Title IX Coordinator will coordinate the investigation in accordance with his or her duties as Title IX Coordinator. The investigator designated by the District shall conduct the investigation. The investigator may but is not required to be a District employee so long as the investigator is appropriately trained and does not have a conflict of interest or other bias prohibited by this Policy. The investigation shall include the following:

1. An objective evaluation of all relevant evidence including inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, and shall not make credibility determinations based on a person's status as a Complainant, Respondent or witness;
2. Ensure that the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on the District and not on either of the parties;
3. Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, and not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence;

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4. Provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any interview or other part of the investigation, including the opportunity to be accompanied by an advisor of their choice. However, the District, including the investigator, may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which an advisor may participate in the proceedings as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.
5. Provide, to a party (e.g., Respondent or Complainant, and parent/guardian as appropriate) whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.
6. Provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, regardless of whether the evidence may or may not be relied upon in reaching a determination regarding responsibility.
7. Prior to completion of the investigative report, the District, through the Title IX Coordinator, must send to each party as well as each party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties shall have 10 days from transmission of same to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report.
8. The investigator must prepare a written investigative report that:
 - a. Fairly summarizes relevant evidence;
 - b. Identifies allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;
 - c. Describes the procedural steps taken from receipt of the formal complaint through the preparation of the investigative report, including notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits and any methods used to gather other evidence; and
 - d. Addresses any witness credibility issues, if applicable.

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9. The completed investigative report shall be provided in hard copy or electronic format to the Title IX Coordinator, to each party and each party's advisor, if any, and to the Decision-Maker. The Title IX Coordinator shall ensure that the report is provided to the appropriate individuals. In transmitting the report to the parties and their advisors, if any, the parties shall be notified in writing that they have ten (10) days from the date on which the report is transmitted to:
 - a. Submit a written response to the report, if they desire;
 - b. Submit written, relevant questions that the party wants asked of any party or witness, if they desire; and
 - c. That any such written response or relevant questions must be sent directly to the Decision-Maker, along with the Decision-Maker's contact information.

F. Determination Regarding Responsibility and Decision-Maker

The determination regarding responsibility of Respondent shall be made by the Decision-Maker. In addition to allowing the parties an opportunity to submit a written response to the investigation report as well as relevant questions, per the above, the Decision-Maker shall adhere to the following in rendering a determination regarding responsibility:

1. In event the Decision-Maker decides to exclude a question posed by a party as not relevant, the Decision-Maker must explain that decision to the party.
2. The Decision-Maker will provide the relevant questions to the party/witness, with copies to each party, and shall provide at least five (5) days for written responses, which responses shall be provided to each party.
3. After the parties have received responses to their initial questions, the Decision-Maker will provide five (5) days for additional, limited follow-up questions and five (5) days for written responses to same. The Decision-Maker may but is not required to provide for additional rounds of follow-up questions, as long as the provision is extended to both parties equally.

(Continued)

Community Relations

SUBJECT: TITLE IX POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEX DISCRIMINATION (Cont'd.)

4. The Decision-Maker may not make any credibility determinations based on the person's status as a Complainant, Respondent or witness. The Respondent must be deemed to be not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
5. In rendering his or her determination regarding responsibility, the Decision-Maker shall apply a preponderance of evidence standard, which requires evidence establishing that it is more likely than not that Respondent engaged in sexual harassment in violation of this Policy.
6. The Decision-Maker shall issue a written determination regarding responsibility within fifteen (15) business days after the close of the period for responses to the last round of follow-up questions. The written determination must include:
 - a. Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;
 - b. A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination regarding responsibility, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits and methods used to gather evidence;
 - c. Findings of fact supporting the determination;
 - d. Conclusions regarding the application of the District's Code of Conduct or other policies, rules or regulations to the facts;
 - e. A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility (i.e., whether or not the Respondent is responsible for sexual harassment); any disciplinary sanctions or remedies that are imposed or that are recommended to be imposed; and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education program or activity will be provided by the District to Complainant; and
 - f. The District's procedures and permissible bases for Complainant or Respondent to appeal (see section V.I, below).

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SUBJECT: TITLE IX POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEX DISCRIMINATION (Cont'd.)

7. The Decision-Maker shall provide his or her determination regarding responsibility to the Title IX Coordinator, the Superintendent and the parties simultaneously.
8. The determination regarding responsibility shall become final on the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely, or if an appeal is timely filed, when the District provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal.

G. Remedies Upon Final Determination Regarding Responsibility

1. Remedies must be designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education program or activity. Remedies may include supportive measures and/or disciplinary sanctions, as appropriate under the circumstances.
2. Disciplinary sanctions against an employee Respondent may include any sanction available for the discipline of employees, up to and including dismissal, in accordance with any applicable collective bargaining agreement as well as any applicable state or federal laws or regulations.
3. Disciplinary sanctions against a student may include any available discipline or sanction, up to and including expulsion, pursuant to the District's Code of Conduct and any other applicable policies or rules, and in accordance with any applicable state or federal laws or regulations.

H. Dismissal of a Formal Complaint

1. The District must dismiss a formal complaint with regard to Title IX sexual harassment if the alleged conduct:
 - a. Does not fall within the scope of this policy (e.g. the allegations do not constitute sexual harassment as defined herein), even if proved;
 - b. Did not occur in the District's education program or activity; or
 - c. Did not occur against a person in the United States.

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SUBJECT: TITLE IX POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEX DISCRIMINATION (Cont'd.)

2. The District may dismiss a formal complaint with regard to Title IX sexual harassment if at any time during the investigation or determination regarding responsibility stage(s):
 - a. A Complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the Complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein;
 - b. The Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the District; or
 - c. Specific circumstances prevent the District from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.
3. Prior to dismissal of a formal complaint, the person responsible at that stage shall consult with the Superintendent.
4. Upon dismissal of a formal complaint, the District must promptly send written notice of the dismissal and the reason(s) therefor simultaneously to the parties.
5. NOTE: The dismissal of a formal complaint under Title IX does not preclude the District from continuing any investigation or taking action under other applicable policies, rules or Code of Conduct of the District. In some cases, the District may have an obligation to continue an investigation and proceed under a different policy or mandated process.

I. Appeals Process

1. Complainant(s) or Respondent(s) may appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, or from a dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases only:
 - a. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter.

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SUBJECT: TITLE IX POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEX DISCRIMINATION (Cont'd.)

- b. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; or
 - c. The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or Decision-Maker had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual Complainant or Respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.
 2. Appeals for any other reason, or upon any determination regarding responsibility not included in the written appeal, will not be heard.
 3. An appeal must be filed within seven (7) days from the date on which the determination regarding responsibility is transmitted to the parties. An appeal must be submitted in writing to the Title IX Coordinator, with a copy to the Superintendent of Schools, and shall state with particularity the basis(es) for the appeal as well as all information and evidence in support of the basis(es) identified. Appellants should include with the appeal any documentary or electronic evidence in support of the appeal. Any supportive measures shall remain in place during the pendency of an appeal unless a change in circumstances warrant modifications to those measures.
 4. Following receipt of the appeal, the Title IX Coordinator shall notify all parties in writing of the appeal, any deadlines associated with the appeal process, and the individual who will decide the appeal (i.e. the Superintendent or a member of the District's Administration who is not the Title IX Coordinator, investigator or Decision-Maker, who does not have a conflict of interest, and who underwent the training specified in this Policy). The non-appealing party(ies) shall also be provided a copy of the appeal and any information submitted in connection with the appeal.
 5. Either party may submit a written statement in response to the appeal, whether in support of or challenging the outcome. Any such written statement must be received by the Title IX Coordinator, with a copy to the individual who will decide the appeal, within seven (7) days from the date on which the appeal was transmitted to the non-appealing party(ies). Each party which submits a written statement shall simultaneously provide a copy to the other party(ies) and to the Title IX Coordinator.

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Community Relations

SUBJECT: TITLE IX POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEX DISCRIMINATION (Cont'd.)

6. The individual who will decide the appeal, in rendering a decision on the appeal, shall consider the record as well as any statements or information submitted by the parties in connection with the appeal.
7. The individual who will decide the appeal shall issue a written decision within ten (10) business days after the deadline for either party to submit a written statement in response to the appeal. The written decision shall describe the result of the appeal and the rationale. The decision may deny or grant the appeal, in whole or in part, and may but is not required to refer an appealed issue back to a prior point in the Grievance Process, if appropriate under the circumstances. The written decision shall be provided to both parties as well as the Title IX Coordinator.

J. Informal Resolution

At any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, but only after a formal complaint has been filed, the District may offer an optional informal resolution process (e.g. mediation) that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication of the formal complaint. In order to do so, the District must:

1. Provide written notice to the parties disclosing:
 - a. The allegations of the formal complaint;
 - b. The requirements of the informal resolution process, including that the parties will be precluded from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations in the event that an informal final resolution is agreed to during the informal resolution process, and that any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the Grievance Process with respect to the formal complaint at any time prior to agreeing to an informal final resolution;
 - c. Any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared; and

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SUBJECT: TITLE IX POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEX DISCRIMINATION (Cont'd.)

2. Obtain the parties' voluntary written consent to the informal resolution process.

In no event may the District offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

If the parties' consent to the informal resolution process, the District will attempt to complete that process within thirty (30) days. If at any point during the informal resolution process it is determined that the allegations are unlikely to be resolved, the District reserves the right to resume the Grievance Process.

20 USC § 1092(f)(6)(A)(v)
20 USC § 1681, et. seq.
34 USC § 12291(a)(8, 10 and 30)
34 CFR Part 106
Education Law § 13
8 NYCRR § 100.2(kk)

NOTE: Refer also to Policies #3420 – Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment in the District
#6121 – Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
#7550 – Dignity for All Students
District Code of Conduct

Adopted: 2/22/2021