

Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy

Please also see the Title IX policy posted on the WCS website.

Woods Charter School is committed to providing an environment that is conducive to learning, free from improper and illegal discrimination and harassment, particularly that which is based on race, religion, gender/gender identity, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected classification.

Furthermore, WCS is committed to promoting the worth and dignity of all individuals, regardless of race, religion, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, or disability. The faculty and staff will establish and maintain an atmosphere in which students can develop attitudes and skills for effective, cooperative living, including the following:

- Respect for individuals as noted above;
- Respect for cultural differences;
- Respect for economic, political, and social rights of others;
- Respect for the rights of others to seek and maintain their own identities.

Any student who believes they are the victim of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination should immediately inform a teacher or advisor whom they trust. Students may also directly inform their division director or the Principal.

Discrimination involves intentionally treating anyone in an unequal or disparate manner because of that person's inherent or natural personal characteristics when such treatment causes the victim to suffer adverse educational, employment, or other school-related consequences.

Harassment is any unwelcome offensive verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive as to significantly affect the conditions of one's employment or a student's learning. Harassment includes, but is not limited to the following: abusive jokes, insults, slurs, name-calling, threats, bullying or intimidation, unwelcome sexual advances, or the exchange of benefits for performance of sexual or other favors.

Bullying includes behaviors or communications, explicit and implicit, by one person or group toward another person or group that intimidate, threaten, or otherwise reasonably place the recipient(s) in fear of harm of person, property, or reputation. Bullying can occur in person, through traditional forms of communication, and electronically via such means as e-mail, text messaging and similar venues.

Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are prohibited at the School and during school-related activities between students, employees, school agents, volunteers, visitors and any other person associated with or under the control of the School.

Procedures established by the School for reporting suspected discrimination, harassment or bullying shall be followed in any instances involving such conduct.

WCS prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. This policy, however, shall not be used to bring frivolous or malicious complaints.

The principal is authorized and expected to establish training and administrative procedures to help eliminate discrimination, harassment, and bullying and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all individuals.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Of the various types of harassment, sexual harassment is worthy of special considerations beyond those applicable under the School's general Harassment Policy. No employee or student shall engage in sexual harassment against any other student, employee, or another person in the school community.

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or sexually suggestive comments when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for student or employment decisions affecting such individual.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following: deliberate, unwelcome touching; suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises or threats; pressure for sexual activity; continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body; sexually degrading words used toward, or in the presence of, an individual or to describe an individual; or the display of sexually suggestive objects, signals, or pictures.

A hostile environment exists if the conduct of a sexual nature is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program or creates a hostile or abusive educational or work environment.

Romantic or sexual advances toward students by employees or romantic or sexual relationships between school employees and students are always prohibited in all circumstances. School employees are prohibited from engaging in romantic or other inappropriate relationships with students and are required to report such relationships or reasonable suspicions thereof, to the Principal or other appropriate supervisory official. Procedures established by the School for reporting suspected sexual harassment shall be followed in any instances involving such conduct.

Procedures for Handling Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

1. Any student who believes they are the victim of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination should immediately inform a trusted teacher or advisor. Students may also directly inform their division director or the Principal. Students are also encouraged to inform their parents.
2. Any adult (faculty, parent volunteer, visitor, et al) who believes they are the victim of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination should immediately inform a member of the core administrative team (Principal, division director, EC director, Personnel Director, Volunteerism Director, Guidance Counselor).
3. When anyone reports harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination to a school employee, that employee shall notify the Principal, Assistant Principal, or Personnel Director as soon as possible and within 24 hours. Reports that fall under the Title IX policy must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator.

4. If the Principal is involved in the allegation, then the Assistant Principal or Personnel Director will immediately inform the School Board Chair who will chair the investigation, working in concert with the School Board. In all other cases, the Principal will be immediately informed and will chair the investigation or appoint a designee to chair the investigation.
5. The Investigation Chair will conduct an investigation of the matter. The Chair may convene a group, including some or all of the following: the student's advisor, other teachers or administrators, the school counselor, the personnel director, and the School Resource Officer, as appropriate. Interviews will be conducted as appropriate. The Investigation Chair will balance confidentiality and the need to gather facts at all times during the investigation.
6. The Investigation Chair will communicate, as appropriate, with the student's parents. A confidential report will be prepared and filed. Based upon the outcome of the investigation, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.