Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in February	**Discrimination / Harassment of Employees (Sexual, Racial, Ethnic, Religious)**	**5.500**	**06/09/25**
		Rescinds:	Issued: **05/10/99; 07/08/13; 06/10/19**

Employees shall be provided a work environment free from sexual, racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination/harassment (including the definition of antisemitism found in policy 4.100). It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee or any student to discriminate against or harass an employee through disparaging conduct or communication that is sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious in nature.

Employee discrimination/harassment will not be tolerated.[1] Discrimination/harassment is defined as conduct, advances, gestures, or words, either written or spoken, of a sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious nature that:

1. Unreasonably interferes with the individual's work or performance;

2. Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment;

3. Implies that submission to such conduct is made an explicit or implicit term of employment; or

4. Implies that submission to or rejection of such conduct will be used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed employee.

Alleged victims of sexual, racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination/harassment shall report these incidents immediately.[2] This report shall be made to the immediate supervisor, except when the immediate supervisor is the offending party. If the immediate supervisor is the offending party, the report may be made to the Federal Rights Coordinator. Allegations of discrimination/harassment shall be fully investigated. An oral complaint may be submitted; however, such complaint shall be reduced to writing to ensure a more complete investigation. The complaint shall include the following information:

1. Identity of the alleged victim and person accused;

2. Location, date, time, and circumstances surrounding the alleged incident;

3. Description of what happened;

4. Identity of witnesses; and

5. Any other evidence available.

The privacy and anonymity of all parties and witnesses to complaints will be respected. However, because an individual's need for confidentiality shall be balanced with obligations to cooperate with

police investigations or legal proceedings, to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation, or to take necessary action to resolve a complaint, the identity of parties and witnesses may be disclosed in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know.

A substantiated charge against an employee shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including, termination. A substantiated charge against a student may result in corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including, suspension.

There will be no retaliation against any person who reports discrimination/harassment or participates in an investigation. However, any employee who refuses to cooperate or gives false information during the course of any investigation may be subject to disciplinary action. The willful filing of a false report will itself be considered harassment and will be treated as such.

An employee disciplined for violation of this policy may appeal the decision by contacting the Federal Rights Coordinator.

Legal References

1. 29 CFR §1604.11; TCA 5-23-104; Public Acts of 2025, Chapter No. 293
2. 20 USCA § 1681

Cross References

Instructional Program 4.100
Equal Opportunity Employment 5.104
Complaints and Grievances 5.501
Title IX & Sexual Harassment 6.3041