

County Board Policy 5145.3: Nondiscrimination/Harassment

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 09/18/2024 | **Last Revised Date:** 09/17/2025 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 09/17/2025

The County Board of Education desires to provide a welcoming, safe, and supportive school environment that allows all students equal access to and opportunities in the county office of education's (COE) academic, extracurricular, and other educational support programs, services, and activities.

This policy shall apply to all acts constituting unlawful discrimination or harassment related to school activity or to school attendance occurring within a COE school or program, to acts which occur off campus or outside of COE-related or COE-sponsored activities but which may have an impact or create a hostile environment at school, and to all acts of the County Board and the County Superintendent of Schools in enacting policies and procedures that govern the COE.

Unlawful discrimination against an individual or group in any COE school or school activity, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, and bullying, based on one, or a combination of two or more, protected characteristics, which include, but may not be limited to any of the following is prohibited: race or ethnicity; ancestry; color; ethnic group identification; nationality; national origin; immigration status; sex; sexual orientation; sex stereotypes; gender; gender identity; gender expression; religion; disability; medical condition; genetic information; pregnancy, false pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or related conditions or recovery; and parental, marital, and family status; a perception of one or more of such characteristics; or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. (Education Code 200, 210.1, 210.2, 212, 212.1, 220, 221.51, 230, 260; Government Code 11135, 12926; 20 USC 1681-1688, 42 USC 2000d-2000d-7)

Unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, may result from physical, verbal, nonverbal, or written conduct based on any of the categories listed above. Unlawful discrimination also occurs when prohibited conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; has the effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance; or otherwise adversely affects a student's educational opportunities.

Unlawful discrimination also includes disparate treatment of students based on one of the categories above with respect to the provision of opportunities to participate in any COE programs or activities or the provision or receipt of educational benefits or services.

Because unlawful discrimination could occur when disciplining students, including suspension and expulsion, discipline shall be enforced in a fair, consistent, and non-discriminatory manner.

The County Board also prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who reports or participates in the reporting of unlawful discrimination, files or participates in the filing of a complaint, or investigates, participates, or refuses to participate in the investigation of a complaint or report alleging unlawful discrimination. Retaliation complaints shall be investigated and resolved in the same manner as a discrimination complaint.

The COE shall facilitate students' access to the educational program by publicizing the COE's nondiscrimination policy and related complaint procedures to students, parents/guardians, and employees. In addition, the COE's policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying and other required information shall be posted on the COE's website in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students, in accordance with law and the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 234.1, 234.6; 34 CFR 106.8)

Training and/or information on the scope and use of the policy and complaint procedures shall be provided and other measures designed to increase understanding of the requirements of law related to discrimination shall be taken. The implementation of the COE's nondiscrimination policies and practices shall regularly be reviewed and, as necessary, action to remove any identified barrier to student access to or participation in the COE's educational program shall be taken. The findings and recommendations shall be reported to the County Board after each review.

Regardless of whether a complainant complies with the writing, timeline, and/or other formal filing requirements, all

complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, shall be investigated and prompt action taken to stop the discrimination, prevent recurrence, and address any continuing effect on students.

Students who engage in unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, in violation of law, County Board policy, or administrative regulation shall be subject to appropriate consequence or discipline, which may include suspension or expulsion when the behavior is severe or pervasive as defined in Education Code 48900.4. Any employee who permits or engages in prohibited discrimination, related to a COE activity, attendance, or COE-related or COE-sponsored activity, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

When a student has been suspended, or other means of correction have been implemented against the student for an incident of racist bullying, harassment, or intimidation, the principal, school administrator, or designee may engage both the victim and perpetrator in a restorative justice practice suitable to the needs of the students. The principal, school administrator, or designee may also require the perpetrator to engage in a culturally sensitive program that promotes racial justice and equity and combats racism and ignorance and may regularly check on the victim to ensure that the victim is not in danger of suffering from any long-lasting mental health issues. (Education Code 48900.5)

When appropriate based on the severity or pervasiveness of the bullying, the parents/guardians of victims and perpetrators shall be notified and law enforcement may be contacted.

Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination in COE programs and activities shall be investigated and resolved in accordance with County Board Policy 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures, when required by law. However, complaints alleging sexual harassment under Title IX shall be investigated and resolved in accordance with the procedures specified in Exhibit (1) 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.

Record-Keeping

A record of all reported cases of unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, shall be maintained to enable the COE to monitor, address, and prevent repetitive prohibited behavior in COE schools.

Antidiscrimination Measures

The County Board hereby incorporates by reference the policies, procedures, and measures implemented by the County Superintendent to prevent or address unlawful discrimination in COE schools, programs, and activities. COE nondiscrimination policies and practices shall be reviewed regularly, and action shall be taken to remove any identified barriers to student access to or participation in the educational program.
