



4.5.1 HARRASSMENT & VIOLENCE PROHIBITION POLICY

I. PURPOSE

- A. It will be a violation of this policy for any student or Oak Hill Montessori Community School (OHMCS) employee to harass a student or OHMCS employee through conduct (e.g., physical, verbal, graphic or written) that is based upon that student or employee's actual or perceived race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, disability, public assistance, or marital status or age [protected class] as defined by this policy. For purposes of this policy, an OHMCS employee includes school board members, school employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, or persons subject to the supervision and control of OHMCS.
- B. It will be a violation of this policy for any student or OHMCS employee to inflict, threaten to inflict, or attempt to inflict violence based upon a student or OHMCS employee's actual or perceived protected class as defined by this policy.
- C. OHMCS will investigate all complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment and/or violence based upon a student or employee's perceived or actual protected class and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student or OHMCS employee who is found to have violated this policy.

II. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions, which have been modified for purposes of this policy, are found in the Minnesota Human Rights Act. Please note that there is not a definition for every protected class.

- A. Disability. "'Disability" means any condition or characteristic that renders a person a disabled person. A disabled person is any person who (1) has a physical, sensory, or mental impairment which materially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment."¹
- B. Discriminate. "The term "discriminate" includes segregate or separate and, for purposes of discrimination based on sex, it includes sexual harassment."
- C. Educational institution. "Educational institution" means a public or private institution and includes an academy, college, elementary or secondary school, extension course,

¹ This includes students with an IFSP, IEP, and students who qualify for special education and related aids and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.



kindergarten, nursery, school system and a business, nursing, professional, secretarial, technical, vocational school, and includes an agent of an educational institution.”

- D. National origin. ““National origin” means the place of birth of an individual or of any of the individual's lineal ancestors.”²
- E. Sexual harassment. “Sexual harassment” includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:
 - (1) submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining employment, ... [or] education...;
 - (2) submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment, ...[or] education...; or
 - (3) that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's employment, ...[or] education..., or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment, ...[or] educational... environment.”
- F. Sexual orientation. "Sexual orientation" means having or being perceived as having an emotional, physical, or sexual attachment to another person without regard to the sex of that person or having or being perceived as having an orientation for such attachment, or having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one's biological maleness or femaleness.

III. HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE GENERAL APPLICABILITY

- A. The antidiscrimination laws apply to all of the academic and nonacademic (e.g. athletic, and extracurricular) programs of the school district, whether conducted in school district facilities or elsewhere.
- B. For purposes of this policy, any student who is harassed or discriminated against, including subject to violence, by peers or school district employees based upon that student’s actual or perceived sex/gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance, or marital status and age [protected class] may file a complaint as described more fully in section IV below.

² This includes harassment of students born in the United States who have relatives that are from other countries.



IV. DESCRIPTION OF HARASSMENT BASED UPON A PERSON'S PERCEIVED OR ACTUAL PROTECTED CLASS

Note: The MDE Model Policies Web page provides links to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights Web page and the federal Dear Colleague letters, which provide specific examples of harassment and violence based upon a person's actual or perceived race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, disability, public assistance, or marital status or age.

A. Harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based upon actual or perceived sex/gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance, or marital status and age.

(1) Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as nonverbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating.

(2) It is unwelcome if the student or employee did not request or invite it and considered the conduct to be undesirable or offensive.

(3) The conduct is considered harassment if it creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's participation in or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the school district's programs.

B. Sexual harassment based upon sex/gender and/or sexual orientation

(1) Sexual conduct that is unwelcome.

a. It is unwelcome if the student or employee did not request or invite it and considered the conduct undesirable or offensive.

b. A student's submission or failure to complain does not mean that the conduct was welcome – look at circumstances.

C. Sexual violence: Sexual violence is a physical act of aggression or force or the threat thereof which involves the touching of another's intimate parts, or forcing a person to touch any person's intimate parts. Intimate parts, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 609.341, includes the primary genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks or breast, as well as the clothing covering these areas.

(1) Sexual violence includes rape, sexual assault, and dating violence. This includes coerced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts. The physical act is considered



nonconsensual if a person is incapable of giving consent due to alcohol or drug use or due to an intellectual or other disability.

- (2) Sexual violence includes touching, patting, grabbing, or pinching another student's or employee's intimate parts of the clothing covering the intimate parts.
- (3) Sexual violence includes coercing or forcing or attempting to coerce or force a student or employee to touch anyone's intimate parts.
- (4) A police report does not relieve the school of its responsibilities under Title IX.

D. Assault: Assault, as defined in state statute is:

- (1) an act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death; or
- (2) the intentional infliction of or attempt to inflict bodily harm upon another.

E. Racial, color, creed or national origin harassment/violence

- (1) Intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student, based on perceived or actual race, color, creed or national origin, that creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's participation in or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the school district's programs.
- (2) Racial violence: Racial violence is a physical act of aggression or force, or the threat thereof, which is directed toward a student or employee based upon their perceived or actual race, color, creed, or national origin.

F. Religious harassment/violence

- (1) Intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student based on perceived or actual religious beliefs that create a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's participation in or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the school district's programs.
- (2) Religious violence is the threat of or an actual physical act of aggression or force which is directed toward a student or employee based upon their perceived or actual religion.

G. Disability harassment



- (1) Intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student based on disability that creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's participation in or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the school district's programs.
- (2) Disability harassment also may deny a student with a disability a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Harassment of a student based on disability may decrease the student's ability to benefit from his or her education and amount to a denial of FAPE.

V. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. The adoption and implementation of a proper reporting system can help the school district comply with the Minnesota Human Rights Act by allowing the school district to promptly address allegations of harassment and violence.
- B. Pursuant to Title IX, each school district must designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under the regulations, including Title IX complaint investigation (Title IX Coordinator). 34 C.F.R., section 106.8(a). Each school district must also publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of sex discrimination complaints, including complaints of sexual harassment. In addition, under Section 504 and Title II, school districts are also required to have grievance procedures to address disability harassment.
- C. Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.03 requires that school districts have reporting procedures for sexual, religious, and racial harassment and/or violence complaints.
 - (1) For purposes of meeting the state reporting requirements, the following reporting procedure will be made available for students and staff who wish to report an incident or incidents that may involve harassment or violence based upon actual or perceived sex/gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance, or marital status and age.
 - (2) Designated school district person to receive oral or written complaints/reports of actual or perceived sex/gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance, or marital status and age.
- D. Human Rights Officer Designation
 - (1) The school board hereby designates the Executive Director of OHMCS as the school district human rights officer(s) to receive reports or complaints of harassment or violence based upon actual or perceived sex/gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance, or marital status



and age. If the complaint involves one of the designated human rights officers, the complaint will be filed directly with the school board.

- E. OHMCS conspicuously post the name of the human rights officer(s), Executive Director, and school board: including mailing addresses and telephone numbers.
 - (1) The Human Rights Officer is the Executive Director of OHMCS. Mailing address: 4665 Hodgson Road, Shoreview, MN 55126. Telephone number: 651-484-8242. Email address: admin@oakhillmontessori.org.
 - (2) The school board contact information is: Board Chair. Mailing address: 4665 Hodgson Road, Shoreview, MN 55126. Telephone number: 651-484-8242. Email address: board@ohmcs.org.

- F. These reporting procedures are not intended to prevent a person from reporting harassment or violence incident(s) to another school official.
 - (1) The school official must immediately notify the principal, who is then responsible to submit the oral or written complaint/report to the human rights officer without screening or investigating the credibility of the report. If the school principal is not available on the date of the report, then the school official must forward the oral or written report/complaint directly to the human rights officer.
 - (2) If the report was given verbally, the principal will personally reduce it to written form within 24 hours and forward it to the human rights officer.
 - a. If the school principal fails to forward any harassment or violence report or complaint (written or verbal) to the human rights officer within 24 hours, the principal will be subject to disciplinary action.
 - (3) If the complaint involves the building principal, the complaint will be made or filed directly with the superintendent or the school district human rights officer by the school official or reporting party or complainant.

- G. The human rights officer may request, but not insist, upon a written complaint. OHMCS encourages the reporting party to complete the complaint form for written complaints. It is available from the school office. Alternative means of filing a complaint, such as through a personal interview or by tape recording, will be made available upon request for qualified persons with a disability.



- H. The complaint (verbal or written) should be reported to a school official immediately, or within 30 calendar days whenever possible, of the alleged violation. OHMCS will accept reports of alleged incidents that are older than 30 calendar days; however, delays between the date of the alleged incident and the reporting date may make investigations more difficult.

VI. INVESTIGATION

- A. The human rights officer, upon receipt of a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment toward an employee or student, will promptly undertake an investigation if deemed appropriate. The Title IX coordinator may conduct the investigation complaints of sexual harassment, the 504 coordinator for complaints of disability harassment, or the human rights officer for other types of alleged harassment and violence covered by this policy. The Title IX coordinator/504 coordinator or human rights officer may designate a neutral third party to conduct the investigation. The investigation will be completed within 30 calendar days from receipt of the complaint, unless impracticable.
- B. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.
- C. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, OHMCS will consider the facts and the surrounding circumstances, such as the nature of the behavior, past incidents or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved, and the context in which the alleged incident occurred.
- D. OHMCS may take immediate steps to protect the parties involved in the complaint process, pending completion of an investigation of alleged unlawful discrimination or harassment of an employee or student.
 - (1) Upon completion of the investigation, OHMCS or neutral third party designated investigator will make a written report to the human rights officer. If the complaint involves the human rights officer, the report must be filed directly with the superintendent. If the complaint involves the superintendent, the report must be filed directly with the school board. The report will include the facts, a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated and whether a violation of this policy has occurred, as well as a description of any proposed resolution which may include alternate dispute resolution.
 - (2) Upon completion of the investigation, the human rights officer will inform the complainant/reporter of his or her right to review the written report at the school



building where the complainant/reporter is employed or enrolled, in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

(3) If the complainant/reporter is a student, the human rights officer will inform the parent/guardian of his or her right to review the written report at the school building where the student reporter is enrolled, in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

(4) OHMCS must comply with federal and state law pertaining to retention of records.

VII. APPEAL

If the grievance has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant/reporter, s/he may appeal to the human rights officer within ten (10) school days of receipt of the findings of the OHMCS investigation. The school district investigator will conduct a review of the appeal and, within ten (10) school days of receipt of the appeal, will affirm, reverse, or modify the findings of the report. The decision of the OHMCS investigator is final, and action will occur as addressed in VIII below.

VIII. OHMCS ACTION

- A. Upon conclusion of the investigation and receipt of the findings, OHMCS will take appropriate and effective action. If the investigator determined that a violation of this policy has occurred, such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge. Actions may also include alternative dispute resolution, including restorative justice programs, school wide training, counseling, and class transfer. OHMCS action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, state and federal law, and OHMCS policies.
- B. The result of OHMCS's investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant by the school district in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

IX. REPRISAL

- A. OHMCS will take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports alleged unlawful



harassment toward an employee or student or any person who testifies, assists, participates in an investigation or hearing related to alleged unlawful harassment covered by this policy. Reprisal also includes retaliation against a student or OHMCS employee who associates with a person or group or persons who are disabled or who are of different race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation or harassment. Reprisal is also prohibited based upon a request for a religious or disability accommodation.

X. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- A. If there is a conflict of interest with respect to any party affected by this policy, appropriate accommodations will be made, such as, but not limited to, appointing or contracting with a neutral third party investigator to conduct the investigation, or recusal from the process by the person for whom a conflict or potential conflict of interest exists.

XI. HARASSMENT OR VIOLENCE AS ABUSE

- A. Under certain circumstances, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under Minnesota law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting under Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556 may be applicable.
- B. Nothing in this policy will prohibit OHMCS from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, violence, or abuse.

XII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND TRAINING

- A. This policy must be conspicuously posted throughout each school building in areas accessible to students and staff members.
- B. This policy must be given to each OHMCS employee and independent contractor at the time of entering into the person's employment contract.
- C. This policy must be included in OHMCS's student handbook on school policies.
- D. The school board will review this policy annually for compliance with state and federal law.
- E. The school district will post this policy on its website and ensure that it is easily accessible to view and download. If the school district does not have a website, the



school district has made the policy accessible for parents and community members by [insert how it is made accessible].

XIII. RIGHT TO ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

- A. These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse which may include filing charges with the agencies below, filing a report with a law enforcement agency, or initiating action in state or federal court. For claims of unlawful discrimination/harassment:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
Freeman Building
625 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55155
toll free: 800.657.3704
tty: 651.296.1283
fax: 651.296.9042
<http://www.humanrights.state.mn.us>

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil rights, Region V
500 W. Madison Street- Suite 1475
Chicago IL 60661
Tel: 312.730.1560
TDD: 312.730.1609

Legal References & Resources:

Minn. Stat. § 121A.03, Subd. 2 (Sexual, Religious and Racial Harassment and Violence Policy)
Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A (Minnesota Human Rights Act)
Minn. Stat. § 609.224 (Assault in the Fifth Degree)
Minn. Stat. § 626.556 *et seq.* (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)
42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.* (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act) (Title VI)
20 U.S.C. § 1681, *et. seq.* Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX)
29 U.S.C. §794 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)



42 U.S.C. § 12131 *et. seq.* Title II of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II)

Resources for Definitions and Examples of Discrimination or Harassment

Federal Resources

Department of Justice: Dear Colleague Letter: Enrollment practices addressing actual or perceived citizenship (2011) (US Department of Justice)

Office of Civil Rights (OCR)

Dear Colleague Letter dated April 4, 2011: Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence (2011)

Dear Colleague Letter: Bullying and Harassment (2010)

Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Harassment Issues (2006)

Dear Colleague Letter: Religious Discrimination (2004)

Dear Colleague Letter: First Amendment (2003)

Dear Colleague Letter: Prohibited Disability Harassment (2000)

The OCR Dear Colleague Letters can be viewed on the U.S. Department of Education website:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/publications.html>.

Sexual Harassment: It's Not academic (Revised 2008)

Sexual Harassment Guidance (revised 2001)

Racial Incidents and harassment against Students (1994)

State Resource:

MDH website for more information about the Minnesota Human Rights Act:
<http://www.humanrights.state.mn.us/>.