



Book Draft Policies from NYSSBA

Section 0000

Title SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Code 0110

Status Proposed

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☐ Required  
☒ Local  
☐ Notice

Sexual harassment is against federal and state law. The Board is committed to maintaining an educational and working environment free from such harassment, and therefore prohibits sexual harassment of students and employees in the district. The district will establish detailed policies and regulations for both students and employees which address definitions, protections, prohibited behavior (including retaliation), prevention activities, training/education, complaint reporting, investigations, and consequences.

Cross-ref:

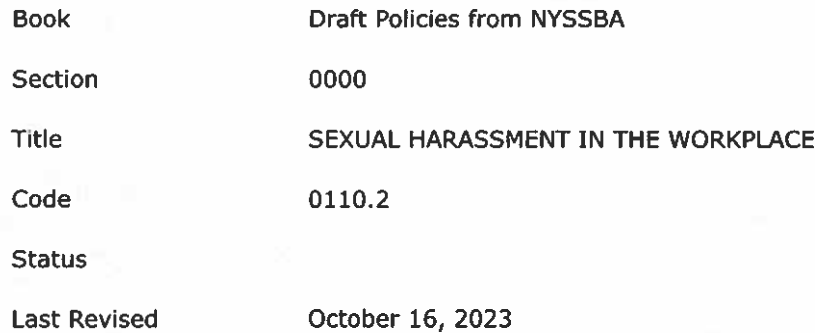
0110.2, Sexual Harassment of Employees  
 0111, Title IX/Sexual Harassment  
 0115, Student Harassment and Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Ref:

Education Amendments of 1972, Title IX, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.; 34 CFR 106 et seq.  
 Title VII of Civil Rights Act (1964), 42 U.S.C. 2000-e; 34 CFR 100 et seq.  
 Education Law 10-18 (Dignity for All Students Act)  
 Executive Law 296-d (prohibition of sexual harassment of employees and non-employees)  
 Labor Law 201-g (required workplace sexual harassment policy and training)  
 Civil Practice Law and Rules 5003-b (nondisclosure agreements optional); 7515 (mandatory arbitration prohibited)  
 General Obligations Law 5-336 (nondisclosure agreements optional)  
 Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, 526 U.S. 629, 652 (1999)  
 Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District, 524 U.S. 274 (1998)  
 Faragher v. City of Boca Raton, 524 U.S. 775 (1998)  
 Burlington Industries v. Ellerth, 524 U.S. 742 (1998)  
 Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc., 523 U.S. 75 (1998)  
 Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools, 503 U.S. 60 (1992)  
 Meritor Savings Bank, FSB v. Vinson, 477 U.S. 57 (1986)  
 Cannon v. University of Chicago, 441 U.S. 677 (1979)  
 Office for Civil Rights Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance (January 19, 2001)  
 Office for Civil Rights, Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Harassment Issues (2006)  
 Office for Civil Rights, Dear Colleague Letter: Bullying (October 26, 2010)

Adoption date:





**(X) Required**  
( ) Local  
(X) Notice

## Purpose and Goals

The Ogdensburg City School District ( the district ) is committed to maintaining a workplace free from harassment and discrimination. Sexual harassment is a form of workplace discrimination that subjects an employee to inferior conditions of employment due to their gender, gender identity, gender expression (perceived or actual), and/or sexual orientation. Sexual harassment is often viewed simply as a form of gender-based discrimination, but the district recognizes that discrimination can be related to or affected by other identities beyond gender. Under the New York State Human Rights Law, it is illegal to discriminate based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, citizenship/immigration status, military status, disability, pre-disposing genetic characteristics, familial status (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition), marital status, criminal history, or status as a victim of domestic violence. Our different identities impact our understanding of the world and how others perceive us. For example, an individual's race, ability, or immigration status may impact their experience with gender discrimination in the workplace. While this policy is focused on sexual harassment and gender discrimination, the methods for reporting and investigating discrimination based on other protected identities are the same. The purpose of this policy is to teach employees to recognize discrimination, including discrimination due to an individual's intersecting identities, and provide the tools to take action when it occurs. All employees, managers, and supervisors are required to work in a manner designed to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace. This policy is one component of the district's commitment to a discrimination-free work environment.

### A. Goals of this Policy

Sexual harassment and discrimination are against the law. After reading this policy, employees will understand their right to a workplace free from harassment. Employees will also learn what harassment and discrimination look like, what actions they can take to prevent and report harassment, and how they are protected from retaliation after taking action. The policy will also explain the investigation process into any claims of harassment. Employees are encouraged to report sexual harassment or discrimination by filing a complaint internally with the district. Employees can also file a complaint with a government agency or in court under federal, state, or local antidiscrimination laws. To file an employment complaint with the New York State Division of Human Rights, please visit <https://dhr.ny.gov/complaint>. To file a complaint with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, please visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/filing-charge-discrimination>.

## Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy

1. The district's policy applies to all employees, applicants for employment, and interns, whether paid or unpaid. The policy also applies to additional covered individuals. It applies to anyone who is (or is employed by) a contractor, subcontractor, vendor, consultant, or anyone providing services in the district.

These individuals include persons commonly referred to as independent contractors, gig workers, and temporary workers. Also included are persons providing equipment repair, cleaning services, or any other services through a contract with the district. For the remainder of this policy, we will use the term covered individual to refer to these individuals who are not direct employees of the company.

2. Sexual harassment is unacceptable. Any employee or covered individual who engages in sexual harassment, discrimination, or retaliation will be subject to action, including appropriate discipline for employees. In New York, harassment does not need to be severe or pervasive to be illegal. Employees and covered individuals should not feel discouraged from reporting harassment because they do not believe it is bad enough, or conversely because they do not want to see a colleague fired over less severe behavior. Just as harassment can happen in different degrees, potential discipline for engaging in sexual harassment will depend on the degree of harassment and might include education and counseling. It may lead to suspension or termination when appropriate.
3. Retaliation is prohibited. Any employee or covered individual that reports an incident of sexual harassment or discrimination, provides information, or otherwise assists in any investigation of a sexual harassment or discrimination complaint is protected from retaliation. No one should fear reporting sexual harassment if they believe it has occurred. So long as a person reasonably believes that they have witnessed or experienced such behavior, they are protected from retaliation. Any employee of the district who retaliates against anyone involved in a sexual harassment or discrimination investigation will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination. All employees and covered individuals working in the workplace who believe they have been subject to such retaliation should inform a supervisor, manager, or Superintendent of Schools. All employees and covered individuals who believe they have been a target of such retaliation may also seek relief from government agencies, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.
4. Discrimination of any kind, including sexual harassment, is a violation of our policies, is unlawful, and may subject the district to liability for the harm experienced by targets of discrimination. Harassers may also be individually subject to liability and employers or supervisors who fail to report or act on harassment may be liable for aiding and abetting such behavior. Employees at every level who engage in harassment or discrimination, including managers and supervisors who engage in harassment or discrimination or who allow such behavior to continue, will be penalized for such misconduct.
5. The district will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation that is fair to all parties. An investigation will happen whenever management receives a complaint about discrimination or sexual harassment, or when it otherwise knows of possible discrimination or sexual harassment occurring. The district will keep the investigation confidential to the extent possible. If an investigation ends with the finding that discrimination or sexual harassment occurred, the district will act as required. In addition to any required discipline, the district will also take steps to ensure a safe work environment for the employee(s) who experienced the discrimination or harassment. All employees, including managers and supervisors, are required to cooperate with any internal investigation of discrimination or sexual harassment.
6. All employees and covered individuals are encouraged to report any harassment or behaviors that violate this policy. All employees will have access to a complaint form to report harassment and file complaints. Use of this form is not required. For anyone who would rather make a complaint verbally, or by email, these complaints will be treated with equal priority. An employee or covered individual who prefers not to report harassment to their manager or employer may instead report harassment to the New York State Division of Human Rights and/or the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Complaints may be made to both the employer and a government agency. Managers and supervisors are required to report any complaint that they receive, or any harassment that they observe or become aware of, to the Superintendent of Schools.
7. This policy applies to all employees and covered individuals, such as contractors, subcontractors, vendors, consultants, or anyone providing services in the workplace, and all must follow and uphold this policy. This policy must be provided to all employees in person or digitally through email upon hiring and will be posted prominently in all work locations. For those offices operating remotely, in addition to sending the policy through email, it will also be available on the organization's shared network.

### **What Is Sexual Harassment?**

Sexual harassment is a form of gender-based discrimination that is unlawful under federal, state, and (where applicable) local law. Sexual harassment includes harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, self-identified or perceived sex, gender expression, gender identity, and the status of being transgender. Sexual harassment is not limited to sexual contact, touching, or expressions of a sexually suggestive nature. Sexual harassment includes all forms of gender discrimination including gender role stereotyping and treating employees differently because of their gender.

Understanding gender diversity is essential to recognizing sexual harassment because discrimination based on sex stereotypes, gender expression and perceived identity are all forms of sexual harassment. The gender spectrum is nuanced, but the three most common ways people identify are cisgender, transgender, and non-binary. A cisgender person is someone whose gender aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. Generally, this gender will align with the binary of male or female. A transgender person is someone whose gender is different than the sex they were assigned at birth. A non-binary person does not identify exclusively as a man or

- Remarks regarding an employee's gender expression, such as wearing a garment typically associated with a different gender identity; or
  - Asking employees to take on traditionally gendered roles, such as asking a woman to serve meeting refreshments when it is not part of, or appropriate to, her job duties.
- Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the workplace, such as:
  - Displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, promotional material, reading materials, or other materials that are sexually demeaning or pornographic. This includes such sexual displays on workplace computers or cell phones and sharing such displays while in the workplace;
  - This also extends to the virtual or remote workspace and can include having such materials visible in the background of one's home during a virtual meeting.
- Hostile actions taken against an individual because of that individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, such as:
  - Interfering with, destroying, or damaging a person's workstation, tools or equipment, or otherwise interfering with the individual's ability to perform the job;
  - Sabotaging an individual's work;
  - Bullying, yelling, or name-calling;
  - Intentional misuse of an individual's preferred pronouns; or
  - Creating different expectations for individuals based on their perceived identities:
    - Dress codes that place more emphasis on women's attire;
    - Leaving parents/caregivers out of meetings.

### *B. Who Can be a Target of Sexual Harassment?*

Sexual harassment can occur between any individuals, regardless of their sex or gender. Harassment does not have to be between members of the opposite sex or gender. New York Law protects employees and all covered individuals described earlier in the policy. Harassers can be anyone in the workplace. A supervisor, a supervisee, or a coworker can all be harassers. Anyone else in the workplace can also be harassers including an independent contractor, contract worker, vendor, client, student, volunteer, parent, community member, board member, or visitor.

Sexual harassment does not happen in a vacuum and discrimination experienced by an employee can be impacted by biases and identities beyond an individual's gender. For example:

- Placing different demands or expectations on black women employees than white women employees can be both racial and gender discrimination;
- An individual's immigration status may lead to perceptions of vulnerability and increased concerns around illegal retaliation for reporting sexual harassment; or
- Past experiences as a survivor of domestic or sexual violence may lead an individual to feel re-traumatized by someone's behaviors in the workplace.

Individuals bring personal history with them to the workplace that might impact how they interact with certain behavior. It is especially important for all employees to be aware of how words or actions might impact someone with a different experience than their own in the interest of creating a safe and equitable workplace.

### *C. Where Can Sexual Harassment Occur?*

Unlawful sexual harassment is not limited to the physical workplace itself. It can occur while employees are traveling for business or at employer or industry sponsored events or parties. Calls, texts, emails, and social media usage by employees or covered individuals can constitute unlawful workplace harassment, even if they occur away from the workplace premises, on personal devices, or during non-work hours.

Sexual harassment can occur when employees are working remotely from home as well. Any behaviors outlined above that leave an employee feeling uncomfortable, humiliated, or unable to meet their job requirements constitute

harassment even if the employee or covered individual is at home when the harassment occurs. Harassment can happen on virtual meeting platforms, in messaging apps, and after working hours between personal cell phones.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation is unlawful and is any action by an employer or supervisor that punishes an individual upon learning of a harassment claim, that seeks to discourage a worker or covered individual from making a formal complaint or supporting a sexual harassment or discrimination claim, or that punishes those who have come forward. These actions need not be job-related or occur in the workplace to constitute unlawful retaliation. For example, threats of physical violence outside of work hours or disparaging someone on social media would be covered as retaliation under this policy.

a woman. They might identify as both, somewhere in between, or completely outside the gender binary. Some may identify as transgender, but not all do. Respecting an individual's gender identity is a necessary first step in establishing a safe workplace.

Sexual harassment is unlawful when it subjects an individual to inferior terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. Harassment does not need to be severe or pervasive to be illegal. It can be any harassing behavior that rises above petty slights or trivial inconveniences. Every instance of harassment is unique to those experiencing it, and there is no single boundary between petty slights and harassing behavior. However, the Human Rights Law specifies that whether harassing conduct is considered petty or trivial is to be viewed from the standpoint of a reasonable victim of discrimination with the same protected characteristics. Generally, any behavior in which an employee or covered individual is treated worse because of their gender (perceived or actual), sexual orientation, or gender expression is considered a violation of the district's policy. The intent of the behavior, for example, making a joke, does not neutralize a harassment claim. Not intending to harass is not a defense. The impact of the behavior on a person is what counts. Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome conduct which is either directed at an individual because of that individual's gender identity or expression (perceived or actual) or is of a sexual nature when:

- The purpose or effect of this behavior unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. The impacted person does not need to be the intended target of the sexual harassment;
- Employment depends implicitly or explicitly on accepting such unwelcome behavior; or
- Decisions regarding an individual's employment are based on an individual's acceptance to or rejection of such behavior. Such decisions can include what shifts and how many hours an employee might work, project assignments, as well as salary and promotion decisions.

There are two main types of sexual harassment:

- Behaviors that contribute to a hostile work environment include, but are not limited to, words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation, or physical violence which are of a sexual nature, or which are directed at an individual because of that individual's sex, gender identity, or gender expression. Sexual harassment also consists of any unwanted verbal or physical advances, sexually explicit derogatory, or discriminatory statements which an employee finds offensive or objectionable, causes an employee discomfort or humiliation, or interferes with the employee's job performance.
- Sexual harassment also occurs when a person in authority tries to trade job benefits for sexual favors. This can include hiring, promotion, continued employment or any other terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. This is also called quid pro quo harassment.

Any employee or covered individual who feels harassed is encouraged to report the behavior so that any violation of this policy can be corrected promptly. Any harassing conduct, even a single incident, can be discrimination and is covered by this policy.

#### *A. Examples of Sexual Harassment*

The following describes some of the types of acts that may be unlawful sexual harassment and that are strictly prohibited. This list is just a sample of behaviors and should not be considered exhaustive. Any employee who believes they have experienced sexual harassment, even if it does not appear on this list, should feel encouraged to report it:

- Physical acts of a sexual nature, such as:
  - Touching, pinching, patting, kissing, hugging, grabbing, brushing against another employee's body, or poking another employee's body; or
  - Rape, sexual battery, molestation, or attempts to commit these assaults, which may be considered criminal conduct outside the scope of this policy (please contact local law enforcement if you wish to pursue criminal charges).
- Unwanted sexual comments, advances, or propositions, such as:
  - Requests for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning the target's job performance evaluation, a promotion, or other job benefits;
  - Subtle or obvious pressure for unwelcome sexual activities; or
  - Repeated requests for dates or romantic gestures, including gift-giving.
  - Sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks or jokes, or questions and comments about a person's sexuality, sexual experience, or romantic history which create a hostile work environment. This is not limited to interactions in person. Remarks made over virtual platforms and in messaging apps when employees are working remotely can create a similarly hostile work environment.
  - Sex stereotyping, which occurs when someone's conduct or personality traits are judged based on other people's ideas or perceptions about how individuals of a particular sex should act or look:

Examples of retaliation may include, but are not limited to:

- Demotion, termination, denying accommodations, reduced hours, or the assignment of less desirable shifts;
- Publicly releasing personnel files;
- Refusing to provide a reference or providing an unwarranted negative reference;
- Labeling an employee as difficult and excluding them from projects to avoid drama ;
- Undermining an individual's immigration status; or
- Reducing work responsibilities, passing over for a promotion, or moving an individual's desk to a less desirable office location.

Such retaliation is unlawful under federal, state, and (where applicable) local law. The New York State Human Rights Law protects any individual who has engaged in protected activity. Protected activity occurs when a person has:

- Made a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination, either internally or with any government agency;
- Testified or assisted in a proceeding involving sexual harassment or discrimination under the Human Rights Law or any other anti-discrimination law;
- Opposed sexual harassment or discrimination by making a verbal or informal complaint to management, or by simply informing a supervisor or manager of suspected harassment;
- Reported that another employee has been sexually harassed or discriminated against; or
- Encouraged a fellow employee to report harassment.

Even if the alleged harassment does not turn out to rise to the level of a violation of law, the individual is protected from retaliation if the person had a good faith belief that the practices were unlawful. However, the retaliation provision is not intended to protect persons making intentionally false charges of harassment. Intentionally false or malicious complaints of sexual harassment may result in corrective or disciplinary action taken against the complainant.

### **Reporting Sexual Harassment**

Everyone must work toward preventing sexual harassment, but leadership matters. Supervisors and managers have a special responsibility to make sure employees feel safe at work and that workplaces are free from harassment and discrimination. Any employee or covered individual is encouraged to report harassing or discriminatory behavior to a supervisor, manager or Superintendent, or his/her designee. Anyone who witnesses or becomes aware of potential instances of sexual harassment should report such behavior to a supervisor, manager, or Superintendent, or his/her designee.

Reports of sexual harassment may be made verbally or in writing. A written complaint form is attached to this policy if an employee would like to use it, but the complaint form is not required. Employees who are reporting sexual harassment on behalf of other employees may use the complaint form and should note that it is on another employee's behalf. A verbal or otherwise written complaint (such as an email) on behalf of oneself or another employee is also acceptable.

Employees and covered individuals who believe they have been a target of sexual harassment may at any time seek assistance in additional available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.

### **Supervisory Responsibilities**

Supervisors and managers have a responsibility to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination. All supervisors and managers who receive a complaint or information about suspected sexual harassment, observe what may be sexually harassing or discriminatory behavior, or for any reason suspect that sexual harassment or discrimination is occurring, are required to report such suspected sexual harassment to Superintendent, or his/her designee. Managers and supervisors should not be passive and wait for an employee to make a claim of harassment. If they observe such behavior, they must act.

Supervisors and managers can be disciplined if they engage in sexually harassing or discriminatory behavior themselves. Supervisors and managers can also be disciplined for failing to report suspected sexual harassment or allowing sexual harassment to continue after they know about it.

Supervisors and managers will also be subject to discipline for engaging in any retaliation.

While supervisors and managers have a responsibility to report harassment and discrimination, supervisors and managers must be mindful of the impact that harassment and a subsequent investigation has on victims. Being identified as a possible victim of harassment and questioned about harassment and discrimination can be



intimidating, uncomfortable and re-traumatizing for individuals. Supervisors and managers must accommodate the needs of individuals who have experienced harassment to ensure the workplace is safe, supportive, and free from retaliation for them during and after any investigation.

## Bystander Intervention

Any employee witnessing harassment as a bystander is encouraged to report it. A supervisor or manager that is a bystander to harassment is required to report it. There are five standard methods of bystander intervention that can be used when anyone witnesses harassment or discrimination and wants to help.

1. A bystander can interrupt the harassment by engaging with the individual being harassed and distracting them from the harassing behavior;
2. A bystander who feels unsafe interrupting on their own can ask a third party to help intervene in the harassment;
3. A bystander can record or take notes on the harassment incident to benefit a future investigation;
4. A bystander might check in with the person who has been harassed after the incident, see how they are feeling and let them know the behavior was not ok; and
5. If a bystander feels safe, they can confront the harassers and name the behavior as inappropriate. When confronting harassment, physically assaulting an individual is never an appropriate response.

Though not exhaustive, and dependent on the circumstances, the guidelines above can serve as a brief guide of how to react when witnessing harassment in the workplace. Any employee witnessing harassment as a bystander is encouraged to report it. A supervisor or manager that is a bystander to harassment is required to report it.

## Complaints and Investigations of Sexual Harassment

All complaints or information about sexual harassment will be investigated, whether that information was reported in verbal or written form. An investigation of any complaint, information, or knowledge of suspected sexual harassment will be prompt, thorough, and started and completed as soon as possible. The investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible. All individuals involved, including those making a harassment claim, witnesses, and alleged harassers deserve a fair and impartial investigation.

**Any employee may be required to cooperate as needed in an investigation of suspected sexual harassment. The district will take disciplinary action against anyone engaging in retaliation against employees who file complaints, support another's complaint, or participate in harassment investigations.**

The district recognizes that participating in a harassment investigation can be uncomfortable and has the potential to retraumatize an employee. Those receiving claims and leading investigations will handle complaints and questions with sensitivity toward those participating.

While the process may vary from case to case, investigations will be done in accordance with the following steps. Upon receipt of a complaint, Superintendent, or his/her designee:

1. Will conduct a prompt review of the allegations, assess the appropriate scope of the investigation, and take any interim actions (for example, instructing the individual(s) about whom the complaint was made to refrain from communications with the individual(s) who reported the harassment), as appropriate. If complaint is verbal, request that the individual completes the complaint form in writing. If the person reporting prefers not to fill out the form, **Superintendent, or his/her designee** will prepare a complaint form or equivalent documentation based on the verbal reporting;
2. Will take steps to obtain, review, and preserve documents sufficient to assess the allegations, including documents, emails or phone records that may be relevant to the investigation. Superintendent, or his/her designee will consider and implement appropriate document request, review, and preservation measures, including for electronic communications;
3. Will seek to interview all parties involved, including any relevant witnesses;
4. Will create a written documentation of the investigation (such as a letter, memo or email), which contains the following:
  - a. A list of all documents reviewed, along with a detailed summary of relevant documents;
  - b. A list of names of those interviewed, along with a detailed summary of their statements;
  - c. A timeline of events;
  - d. A summary of any prior relevant incidents disclosed in the investigation, reported or unreported; and
  - e. The basis for the decision and final resolution of the complaint, together with any corrective action(s).



5. Will keep the written documentation and associated documents in a secure and confidential location;
6. Will promptly notify the individual(s) who reported the harassment and the individual(s) about whom the complaint was made that the investigation has been completed and implement any corrective actions identified in the written document; and
7. Will inform the individual(s) who reported of the right to file a complaint or charge externally as outlined in the next section.

**The district will retain the written documentation described above for a period of seven years.**

## **Appeals**

Either party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal to the Superintendent by submitting a written request within 15 calendar days of receiving notification of the outcome. The Superintendent will review the documentation from the initial complaint and will hold an informal hearing within 15 calendar days of the receipt of the appeal, where all involved parties may appear. The Superintendent will make a determination in writing within 15 calendar days of the hearing and notify the complainant and alleged harasser in writing of the determination, or that additional time is needed to complete the appeal.

If the Superintendent is the subject of the complaint, the appeal must be filed with the Board President, who will refer the complaint to a trained investigator not employed by the district.

## **Legal Protections and External Remedies**

Sexual harassment is not only prohibited by the district, but it is also prohibited by state, federal, and, where applicable, local law.

The internal process outlined in the policy above is one way for employees to report sexual harassment. Employees and covered individuals may also choose to pursue legal remedies with the following governmental entities. While a private attorney is not required to file a complaint with a governmental agency, you may also seek the legal advice of an attorney.

### *A. New York State Division of Human Rights*

The New York State Human Rights Law (HRL), N.Y. Executive Law, art. 15, 290 et seq., applies to all employers in New York State and protects employees and covered individuals, regardless of immigration status. A complaint alleging violation of the Human Rights Law may be filed either with the New York State Division of Human Rights (DHR) or in New York State Supreme Court.

Complaints of sexual harassment filed with DHR may be submitted any time within three years of the harassment. If an individual does not file a complaint with DHR, they can bring a lawsuit directly in state court under the Human Rights Law, within three years of the alleged sexual harassment. An individual may not file with DHR if they have already filed a HRL complaint in state court.

Complaining internally to the district does not extend your time to file with DHR or in court. The three years are counted from the date of the most recent incident of harassment.

You do not need an attorney to file a complaint with DHR, and there is no cost to file with DHR.

DHR will investigate your complaint and determine whether there is probable cause to believe that sexual harassment has occurred. Probable cause cases receive a public hearing before an administrative law judge. If sexual harassment is found at the hearing, DHR has the power to award relief. Relief varies but it may include requiring your employer to take action to stop the harassment, or repair the damage caused by the harassment, including paying of monetary damages, punitive damages, attorney's fees, and civil fines.

DHR's main office contact information is: NYS Division of Human Rights, One Fordham Plaza, Fourth Floor, Bronx, New York 10458. You may call (718) 741-8400 or visit: [www.dhr.ny.gov](http://www.dhr.ny.gov).

Go to [dhr.ny.gov/complaint](http://dhr.ny.gov/complaint) for more information about filing a complaint with DHR. The website has a digital complaint process that can be completed on your computer or mobile device from start to finish. The website has a complaint form that can be downloaded, filled out, and mailed to DHR as well as a form that can be submitted online. The website also contains contact information for DHR's regional offices across New York State.

Call the DHR sexual harassment hotline at 1(800) HARASS3 for more information about filing a sexual harassment complaint. This hotline can also provide you with a referral to a volunteer attorney experienced in sexual harassment matters who can provide you with limited free assistance and counsel over the phone.

### *B. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces federal anti-discrimination laws, including Title VII of the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq. An individual can file a complaint with the EEOC anytime within 300 days from the most recent incident of harassment. There is no cost to file a complaint with the EEOC. The EEOC will investigate the complaint and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred. If the EEOC determines that the law may have been violated, the EEOC will try to reach a voluntary settlement with the employer. If the EEOC cannot reach a settlement, the EEOC (or the Department of Justice in certain cases) will decide whether to file a lawsuit. The EEOC will issue a Notice of Right to Sue permitting workers to file a lawsuit in federal court if the EEOC closes the charge, is unable to determine if federal employment discrimination laws may have been violated, or believes that unlawful discrimination occurred by does not file a lawsuit.

Individuals may obtain relief in mediation, settlement or conciliation. In addition, federal courts may award remedies if discrimination is found to have occurred. In general, private employers must have at least 15 employees to come within the jurisdiction of the EEOC.

An employee alleging discrimination at work can file a Charge of Discrimination. The EEOC has district, area, and field offices where complaints can be filed. Contact the EEOC by calling 1-800-669-4000 (TTY: 1-800-669-6820), visiting their website at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov) or via email at [info@eeoc.gov](mailto:info@eeoc.gov).

If an individual filed an administrative complaint with the New York State Division of Human Rights, DHR will automatically file the complaint with the EEOC to preserve the right to proceed in federal court.

### *C. Local Protections*

Many localities enforce laws protecting individuals from sexual harassment and discrimination. An individual should contact the county, city or town in which they live to find out if such a law exists. For example, employees who work in New York City may file complaints of sexual harassment or discrimination with the New York City Commission on Human Rights. Contact their main office at Law Enforcement Bureau of the NYC Commission on Human Rights, 22 Reade Street, 1st Floor, New York, New York; call 311 or (212) 306-7450; or visit [www.nyc.gov/html/cchr/html/home/home.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/cchr/html/home/home.shtml).

### *D. Contact the Local Police Department*

If the harassment involves unwanted physical touching, coerced physical confinement, or coerced sex acts, the conduct may constitute a crime. Those wishing to pursue criminal charges are encouraged to contact their local police department.

## **Notice and Training**

The district will provide all existing employees with either a paper or electronic copy of the district's sexual harassment policy and regulation, and will provide the same to new employees before the employee starts their job. These materials will be provided in English and in an employee's primary language, for those languages for which the NYS Department of Labor has provided a translated template policy.

All new employees will receive training on this policy and regulation at new employee orientation or as soon as possible after starting their job, unless they can demonstrate that they have received equivalent training within the past year from a previous employer. All other employees will be provided training at least once a year regarding this policy and the district's commitment to a harassment-free working environment. Principals and other administrative employees who have specific responsibilities for investigating and resolving complaints of sexual harassment will receive yearly training on this policy, regulation and related legal developments. Training will be provided in English and in an employees primary language, for those languages for which the NYS Department of Labor has provided translated model training.

Annual employee training programs will be interactive and include: (i) an explanation of sexual harassment consistent with guidance issued by the NYS Department of Labor and the NYS Division of Human Rights; (ii) examples of conduct that is unlawful sexual harassment; (iii) information on federal and state laws about sexual harassment and remedies available to victims of sexual harassment; (iv) information concerning employees' right to make complaints and all available forums for investigating complaints; and (v) address the conduct and responsibilities of supervisors.

## **Conclusion**

The policy outlined above is aimed at providing district employees and covered individuals an understanding of their right to a discrimination and harassment free workplace. All employees should feel safe at work. Though the focus of this policy is on sexual harassment and gender discrimination, the New York State Human Rights law protects against discrimination in several protected classes including sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, race, creed, color, national origin, military status, disability, pre-disposing genetic characteristics, familial status, marital status, criminal history, or domestic violence survivor status. The prevention policies outlined above should be considered applicable to all protected classes.

Ref:

Title VII of Civil Rights Act (1964), 42 U.S.C. 2000-e; 34 CFR 100 et seq.

Executive Law 296

Executive Law 296-d (prohibition of sexual harassment of employees and non-employees)

Labor Law 201-g (required workplace sexual harassment policy and training)

Civil Practice Law and Rules 5003-b (nondisclosure agreements optional); 7515 (mandatory arbitration prohibited)

General Obligations Law 5-336 (nondisclosure agreements optional)

*Faragher v. City of Boca Raton*, 524 U.S. 775 (1998)

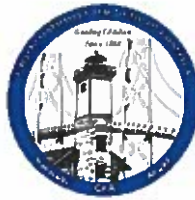
*Burlington Industries v. Ellerth*, 524 U.S. 742 (1998)

*Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc.*, 523 U.S. 75 (1998)

*Meritor Savings Bank, FSB v. Vinson*, 477 U.S. 57 (1986)

Adoption date:





Book Draft Policies from NYSSBA  
 Section 0000  
 Title SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF EMPLOYEES EXHIBIT  
 Code 0110.2-E  
 Status First Reading

### Complaint Form For Reporting Sexual Harassment

New York State Labor Law requires all employers to adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy that includes a complaint form for targets to report alleged incidents of sexual harassment.

If you believe that you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you are encouraged to complete this form and submit it to the Central Office Administration, 1100 State Street, Ogdensburg, NY 13669. You will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint.

If you are more comfortable reporting verbally or in another manner, the district should complete this form, provide you with a copy and follow its sexual harassment prevention policy by investigating the claims as outlined at the end of this form. For additional resources, visit: <http://www.ny.gov/programs/combating-sexual-harassment-workplace>

### COMPLAINANT INFORMATION

Work Address:  
 Work Phone:  
 Job Title: Email:  
 Preferred Communication Method: ☐ Email ☐ Phone ☐ in person

### SUPERVISORY INFORMATION

Immediate Supervisor's Name:  
 Title:  
 Work Phone:  
 Work Address:

### COMPLAINT INFORMATION

1. Your complaint of Sexual Harassment is made about:

Name: Title Position:

Address: Phone:

Relationship to you: ☐ Supervisor ☐ Subordinate ☐ Co-Worker ☐ Other:

2. Please describe what happened and how it is affecting you and your work. Please use additional sheets of paper if necessary and attach any relevant documents or evidence.

3. Date(s) and location(s) sexual harassment occurred:

Is the sexual harassment continuing? ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Please list the name and contact information of any witnesses or individuals who may have information related to your complaint:

The last question is optional, but may help the district's investigation.

5. Have you previously complained about or provided information (verbal or written) about sexual harassment or related incidents to the district? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, when and to whom did you complain or provide information?

If you have retained legal counsel and would like us to work with them, please provide their contact information.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions for the District

If you receive a complaint about alleged sexual harassment, follow the district's sexual harassment prevention policy.

An investigation involves:

- Speaking with the employee
- Speaking with the alleged harasser
- Interviewing witnesses
- Collecting and reviewing any related documents

While the process may vary from case to case, all allegations should be investigated promptly and resolved as quickly as possible. The investigation should be kept confidential to the extent possible.

Document findings of the investigation and basis for your decision along with any corrective actions taken and notify the employee and the individual(s) against whom the complaint was made (if the alleged harasser is a student, also notify the parent/guardian). This may be done via email.

Adoption date:



Book Draft Policies from NYSSBA  
 Section 0000  
 Title TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT  
 Code 0111  
 Status First Reading

**(X) Required**

( ) Local  
 (X) Notice

The **Board of Education** is committed to maintaining an educational and **working environment** free from such harassment, **and therefore adopts** this policy to address complaints of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, made under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and its implementing regulations (Title IX). It is just one component of the district's overall commitment to maintaining a discrimination and harassment-free educational and work environment.

Under Title IX, sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A district employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the district on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome 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 **as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), dating violence as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), domestic violence as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or stalking as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).**

Other **Board** policies and documents address sex-based misconduct and may have different definitions, standards of review, and grievance procedures. These documents must be read in conjunction with this policy as they may cover incidents of sex-based misconduct not addressed by Title IX.

The Board designated and authorized the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology as the Title IX Coordinator.

The Title IX Coordinator can be contacted at 315-393-0900, ext. 31901, Ogdensburg Free Academy, 1100 State Street, Ogdensburg, NY 13669. If contacted by a potential alleged victim of sexual harassment under Title IX, the Title IX Coordinator will explain the process for filing a formal complaint, which initiates an investigation into the Title IX sexual harassment allegations.

A formal complaint is a document filed by an alleged victim or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment under Title IX against an individual and requesting that the district investigate the allegation of sexual harassment under Title IX. The formal complaint must be a written document but need not be in any specific form.

The Title IX Coordinator will promptly contact the alleged victim of sexual harassment under Title IX and discuss the availability of supportive measures regardless of whether the alleged victim chooses to file a formal complaint under Title IX or not.

Potential supportive measures will include:

- Counseling,
- Extensions of deadlines or other adjustments,



- Modifications of work schedules,
- Mutual restrictions on contact between the parties,
- Changes in work locations,
- Leaves of absence,
- Increased security and monitoring of certain areas.

The Title IX coordinator will discuss and determine the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures.

The formal complaint investigation and process will only be triggered when the complainant files a formal complaint of sexual harassment under Title IX.

The district will investigate the complaint and make determinations regarding a complaint's allegations using a preponderance of evidence standard.

The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker or facilitator of an informal resolution process, if applicable, will not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against alleged victims or the accused. Any such individual with a conflict of interest or bias will be required to recuse himself or herself.

The roles of Title IX Coordinator, investigator, and decision-maker will be held by different persons.

Throughout the Title IX process the district will, among other things:

- Treat alleged victims and those accused equitably.
- Perform an objective evaluation of all available evidence.
- Presume that the accused is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
- Provide reasonably prompt time frames for the conclusion of the grievance process, appeals and informal resolution process, if available.
- Describe the range of possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies or list the possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies that the district may implement.
- Ensure that no information protected by a legal privilege such as the attorney-client privilege may be used for any purpose or be sought through disclosure unless the person holding the privilege has waived such privilege.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint of sexual harassment under Title IX, the district will provide written notice to the alleged victim and the accused in sufficient time to allow the accused to prepare a response before an initial interview. The written notice will be issued no less than five (5) calendar days prior to the initial interview.

The notice to the alleged victim and accused will include, among other items:

- Information regarding the grievance process and the informal resolution process.
- The conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment under Title IX, and if known, the identities of the parties involved in the incident, as well as the date and location of the alleged incident.
- A statement that the accused is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
- Notification that the parties may inspect and review evidence.
- Policies regarding knowingly making false statements or submitting false information during the grievance process.
- Notification that after commencing an investigation of a formal complaint, the district may decide to also investigate allegations that were not included in the initial notice to the parties. In that case, the district will provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint of sexual harassment under Title IX, the Title IX Coordinator will assign an investigator. The assigned harassment investigator will:

- Gather additional information through interviews of the complainant, respondent, and witnesses and synthesize the information in a report.
- The investigator has the discretion to determine the relevance of any witness or other evidence and may exclude information in preparing the investigation report if the information is irrelevant, immaterial, or more prejudicial than informative.
- Produce a written report that contains the relevant information and facts learned during the investigation, and may include direct observations and reasonable inferences drawn from the facts and any consistencies or inconsistencies between the various sources of information. The investigator may exclude statements of personal opinion by witnesses and statements as to general reputation for any character trait, including honesty. The investigator will not make a finding or recommended finding of responsibility. The investigator's report will include credibility assessments based on their experience with the complainant, respondent, and witnesses, as well as the evidence provided.

- The investigator's written report will be provided to both parties and their representatives, if any.

During the formal complaints process, the parties will have an equal opportunity to:

- Present witnesses and to gather and present relevant evidence.
- Have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the representative of their choice who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.
- Inspect and review all evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations in the complaint.

Dismissal of a formal complaint will only occur when:

- The conduct alleged in the formal complaint of sexual harassment under Title IX would not constitute sexual harassment under Title IX even if proved, or did not occur in the district's education program or activity.
- Such a dismissal does not preclude action under another provision of the district's code of conduct.
- A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein; the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the district; or specific circumstances prevent the district from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.
- If a complaint is dismissed, the decision-maker will send written notice of the dismissal and reason(s) therefor simultaneously to the parties.

Prior to issuing a written determination, the decision-maker(s) will afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

Following the question and answer process and upon receipt of the investigative report, the decision-maker will issue a written determination. The decision-maker's written determination will address:

- The allegations,
- The procedural steps taken in the case at hand,
- The findings of fact,
- The applicability of code of conduct and local rules to the facts, and
- The result with corresponding rationale for each addressed allegation, including a determination of responsibility, disciplinary sanctions, and whether remedies to restore or preserve access will be provided.

Following a decision-maker's written determination, either party may appeal the written determination or dismissal of the complaint.

An appeal must be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator within **7 calendar days** of receipt of the determination or dismissal (as applicable) and must identify all information a party wishes to have considered on appeal. Any appeal statement will be shared with the other party, who will have 48 hours to submit a response to the Title IX Coordinator. The appeal and any response will be considered by a decision-maker other than the decision-maker who issued the determination or dismissal that is being appealed.

Grounds for an appeal are limited to the following:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter; and/or
- 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; and/or
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or any 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; and/or
- The sanction is inappropriate.

A decision responding to the written appeal will be issued to the parties and the Title IX Coordinator **within 30 calendar days**.

Adoption date:

