

Non-Discrimination 4000

Protected Class Discrimination Prohibited:

The Meriden Board of Education (the “Board”) will not make employment decisions (including decisions related to hiring, assignment, compensation, promotion, demotion, disciplinary action and termination) on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, alienage, ancestry, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, gender identity or expression, status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking, or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law (“Protected Class”), except in the case of a bona fide occupational qualification.

It is the policy of the Board that any form of discrimination or harassment on the basis of an individual's actual or perceived membership in a Protected Class, whether by students, Board employees, Board members or third parties subject to the control of the Board, is prohibited in the Meriden Public Schools (the “District”). The Board's prohibition of discrimination or harassment in its educational programs or activities expressly extends to academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities, including athletics.

Discrimination on the Basis of Erased Criminal History Prohibited:

The Board will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment solely on the basis of the individual's erased criminal history record information, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46a-80a.

Retaliation Prohibited:

The Board prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any individual who reports incidents in good faith that may be a violation of this policy, or who participates in the investigation of such reports.

Discrimination on the Basis of Protected Class Association Prohibited:

Discrimination and/or harassment against any individual on the basis of that individual's association with someone in a Protected Class may also be considered a form of Protected Class discrimination and/or harassment, and is therefore prohibited by this policy.

Scope and Applicability:

Students, Board employees, Board members and community members (e.g., other individuals affiliated with the District, accessing or seeking access to District facilities) are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful of the rights of all members of the school community.

Definitions:

The following definitions apply for purposes of this policy:

A. Discrimination

It is illegal for employers to treat employees differently in relation to hiring, discharging, compensating, or providing the terms, conditions, and privileges of employment because of such employee's actual or perceived membership in a Protected Class.

B. Harassment

Harassment is a form of Protected Class discrimination that is prohibited by law and by this policy. Harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on an employee's actual or perceived membership in a Protected Class. Harassment constitutes unlawful discrimination when 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.

The following non-exhaustive list provides examples of the types of prohibited conduct that may be considered Protected Class harassment that can lead to an intimidating, hostile, or abusive environment, and are therefore prohibited by this policy:

- ▶ objectively offensive racial, ethnic, or religious epithets (or epithets commonly associated with any Protected Class membership, including but not limited to epithets relating to sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity or expression);
- ▶ other words or phrases commonly considered demeaning or degrading on the basis of Protected Class membership;
- ▶ display of images or symbols commonly associated with discrimination against individuals on the basis of their membership in a Protected Class;
- ▶ graphic, written or electronic communications that are harmful or humiliating based on Protected Class membership;
- ▶ bigoted conduct or communications; or
- ▶ physical, written, electronic or verbal threats based on Protected Class membership.

Harassment does not have to involve intent to harm, be directed toward a specific person, or involve repeated incidents.

Sexual harassment is a form of harassment that is prohibited by law and Board policy. For more information regarding harassment based on sex, contact the District's Title IX Coordinator at:

The Office of Multilingual Education, Equity, and Instruction, Meriden Public Schools, 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, CT 06450; Telephone: (203) 630-4188

C. Genetic information

The information about genes, gene products, or inherited characteristics that may derive from an individual or a family member. “Genetic information” may also include an individual's family medical history, the results of an individual's or family member's genetic tests, the fact that an individual or an individual's family member sought or received genetic services, and genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or an individual's family member or an embryo lawfully held by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services.

D. Veteran

A veteran is any person honorably discharged from, released under honorable conditions from or released with an other than honorable discharge based on a qualifying condition from active service in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Air Force, and Space Force and any reserve component thereof, including the Connecticut National Guard. “Qualifying condition” means (i) a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury made by an individual licensed to practice medicine, or (ii) a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury made by an individual licensed to practice psychology.

Sexual orientation refers to a person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are romantically, emotionally or sexually attracted, inclusive of any identity that a person (i) may have previously expressed, or (ii) is perceived by another person to hold.

E. Race

The term race is inclusive of ethnic traits historically associated with race, including but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles. “Protective hairstyles” includes, but is not limited to, wigs, headwraps and hairstyles such as individual braids, cornrows, locs, twists, Bantu knots, afros and afro puffs.

F. Domestic violence

The term domestic violence means (1) a continuous threat of present physical pain or physical injury against a family or household member, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46b-38a; (2) stalking, including but not limited to, stalking as described in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-181d, of such family or household member; (3) a pattern of threatening, including but not limited to, a pattern of threatening as described in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-62, of such family or household member or a third party that intimidates such family or household member; or (4) coercive control of such family or household member, which is a pattern of behavior that in purpose or effect unreasonably interferes with a person's free will and personal liberty. “Coercive control” includes, but is not limited to, unreasonably engaging in any of the following: (a) isolating the family or household member from friends, relatives or other sources of support; (b) depriving the family or household member of basic necessities; (c) controlling, regulating or monitoring the family or household member's movements, communications, daily behavior, finances, economic resources or access to services; (d) compelling the family or household member by force, threat or intimidation, including, but not limited to, threats based on actual or suspected immigration status, to (i) engage in conduct from which such family or household member has a right to abstain, or (ii) abstain from conduct that such family or household member has a right to pursue; (e) committing or threatening to commit cruelty to animals that intimidates the family or household member; or (f) forced sex acts, or threats of a sexual nature, including, but not limited to, threatened acts of sexual conduct, threats based on a person's sexuality or threats to release sexual images.

Reporting to District Officials:vide health care services at a United States Department of Veterans Affairs facility, (ii) an experience of military sexual trauma disclosed to an individual licensed to provide health care services at a United States Department of Veterans Affairs facility, or (iii) a determination that sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression was more likely than not the primary reason for an other than honorable discharge, as determined in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 27-103(c),(d).

G. Gender identity or expression

Gender identity or expression refers to a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including, but not

limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held, part of a person's core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose.

It is the policy of the Board to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging Protected Class discrimination or harassment. The District will investigate both formal and informal complaints of discrimination, harassment or retaliation.

Any employee who believes they or another employee has experienced Protected Class discrimination or harassment or an act of retaliation or reprisal in violation of this policy should report such concern in writing to **the Office of Multilingual Education, Equity, and Instruction, Meriden Public Schools, 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, CT 06450; Telephone: (203) 630-4188** in accordance with the Board's complaint procedures included in the Board's Administrative Regulations Regarding Non-Discrimination/Personnel, which accompany this policy and are available online at [\[https://policies.meridenk12.org/policy/default.aspx?id=1\]](https://policies.meridenk12.org/policy/default.aspx?id=1) or upon request from the main office of any District school.

Employees are encouraged to report incidents of alleged Protected Class discrimination, harassment, or retaliation immediately.

If a complaint involves allegations of discrimination or harassment based on sex, such complaints will be handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in the applicable Board policy regarding sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

If a complaint involves allegations of discrimination or harassment based on disability, such complaints will be addressed in accordance with the procedures set forth in the applicable Board policy regarding Section 504/ADA.

In the event conduct reported as Protected Class discrimination and/or harassment allegedly violates more than one policy, the Board will coordinate any investigation in compliance with the applicable policies.

Mandatory Staff Reporting for Student Incidents:

Board employees are required to report incidents of alleged student-to-student and employee-to-student discrimination, harassment or retaliation that may be based on a Protected Class when Board employees witness such incidents or when Board employees receive reports or information about such incidents, whether such incidents are verbal or physical or amount to discrimination, harassment or retaliation in other forms. **Reports should be made to any District administrator or to:**

The Office of Multilingual Education, Equity, and Instruction, Meriden Public Schools, 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, CT 06450; Telephone: (203) 630-4188

Remedial Action:

If the District makes a finding of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, the District will take remedial action designed to:

- A.** eliminate the discriminatory/harassing/retaliatory conduct,
- B.** prevent its recurrence, and
- C.** address its effects on the complainant and any other affected individuals.

Examples of appropriate action may include, but are not limited to:

- A.** In the case of a student respondent, interventions for the individual who engaged in the discrimination/harassment may include, but are not limited to, discipline (including but not limited to suspension and/or expulsion), educational interventions, exclusion from extra-curricular activities and/or sports programs, and/or referral to appropriate state or local agencies;
- B.** In the case of an employee respondent, interventions for the individual who engaged in the discrimination/harassment may include, but are not limited to, supervisor notification, discipline (including possible termination of employment), training, and/or referral to appropriate state or local agencies;
- C.** In the case of respondent who is otherwise associated with the school community, interventions for the individual who engaged in the discrimination/harassment may include, but are not limited to, exclusion from school property and/or activities and/or referral to appropriate state or local agencies;
- D.** Follow-up inquiries with the complainant and witnesses to ensure that the discriminatory/harassing conduct has stopped and that they have not experienced any retaliation;
- E.** Supports for the complainant; and
- F.** Training or other interventions for the larger school community designed to ensure that students, staff, parents, Board members and other individuals within the school community understand the types of behavior that constitute discrimination/harassment, that the District does not tolerate it, and how to report it.

Reporting to State and Federal Agencies:

In addition to reporting to the Board, any employee also may file a complaint with the following agencies:

Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education ("OCR"):

Office for Civil Rights, Washington DC Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1475
202 453-6020)
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html>

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Boston Area Office
John F. Kennedy Federal Building
475 Government Center
Boston, MA 02203
(800-669-4000)

Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities:

Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities
450 Columbus Blvd.
Hartford, CT 06103-1835
(860-541-3400 or Connecticut Toll Free Number 1-800-477-5737)

Questions/Requests for Accommodation:

Any employee who:

- 1.** has questions or concerns about this policy or its accompanying regulations;
- 2.** wishes to request or discuss accommodations based on religion; OR
- 3.** would like a copy the Board's complaint procedures or complaint forms related to claims of discrimination or harassment

should contact the following District official:

The Office of Multilingual Education, Equity, and Instruction, Meriden Public Schools, 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, CT 06450; Telephone: (203) 630-4188

Any employee who has questions or concerns about the Board's policies regarding discrimination on the basis of sex applicable to employees should contact the District's Title IX Coordinator:

The Office of Multilingual Education, Equity, and Instruction, Meriden Public Schools, 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, CT 06450; Telephone: (203) 630-4188

Any employee who:

- 1.** has specific questions or concerns about the Board's policies regarding discrimination on the basis of disability applicable to employees; OR
- 2.** wishes to request an accommodation on the basis of disability

should contact the District's Section 504/ADA Coordinator:

The Office of Multilingual Education, Equity, and Instruction, Meriden Public Schools, 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, CT 06450; Telephone: (203) 630-4188

Legal References:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.

Age Discrimination in Employment Act, 29 U.S.C. § 621 et seq.

Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794

Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, Pub.L.110-233, 42 U.S.C. § 2000ff; 29 CFR 1635.1 et seq.
Connecticut General Statutes § 1-1n, “Gender Identity or Expression” defined
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-153, Discrimination on the basis of sex, gender or expression or marital status prohibited
Connecticut General Statutes § 27-103
Connecticut General Statutes § 31-51i
Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-51, Definitions
Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-58, Deprivation of rights
Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Act, Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-60
Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-80a
Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-81c, Sexual orientation discrimination: Employment
Connecticut General Statutes § 46b-1, Family relations matters and domestic violence defined
Public Act No. 25-139, “An Act Concerning Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault Victims”
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