

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS REGARDING DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS (PERSONNEL) 4000(R)

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, 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”). Students, Board employees, Board members and third parties are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful of the rights of all members of the school community.

Discrimination on the Basis of Erased Criminal History Prohibited:

It is also 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.

Retaliation Prohibited:

The Board further 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.

The District will not tolerate any reprisals or retaliation that occur as a result of the good faith reporting of charges of Protected Class discrimination or harassment. Any such reprisals or retaliation may result in disciplinary action against the retaliator, and other corrective actions as appropriate.

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.

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.

It is also 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.

The following non-exhaustive list provides examples of the types of prohibited conduct that may be considered Protected Class harassment that can lead to a hostile environment, and are therefore prohibited:

- ▶ objectively offensive racial, ethnic, or religious epithets (or epithets commonly associated with any Protected Class membership);
- ▶ 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 include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents.

Reporting to District Officials:

It is the policy of the Board to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging Protected Class discrimination or harassment.

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

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 Board policy should report such concern in writing to Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Meriden Public Schools, 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, CT 06450, in accordance with the Board’s complaint procedures included in these Administrative Regulations Regarding Non-Discrimination/Personnel.

If a complaint involves allegations of discrimination or harassment based on sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or gender identity or expression, such complaints will be handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in Board Policy # 4030, Policy Regarding Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Personnel).

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 Board Policy# 4005, Section 504/ADA (Personnel).

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:

District 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 District employees witness such incidents or when District 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:**

Complaint Procedure

Preferably, complaints should be filed within thirty (30) calendar days of the alleged occurrence. Timely reporting of complaints facilitates the investigation and resolution of such complaints. The District will investigate such complaints promptly and equitably, and will take corrective action when allegations are verified.

As soon as an individual feels that they, or another employee has been subjected to Protected Class discrimination or harassment, the individual should make a written complaint to the Superintendent or designee.

The individual who is alleged to have experienced Protected Class discrimination/harassment (the “complainant”) and any individual accused of Protected Class discrimination/harassment (the “respondent”) (if applicable) will be provided a copy of the Board’s policy and regulation and made aware of the individual’s rights under this policy and regulation. In the event the Superintendent or designee receives a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment based on sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or gender identity or expression, the Superintendent or designee shall follow the procedures identified in Board Policy 4030, Policy Regarding Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Personnel). In the event the Superintendent or designee receives a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment based on disability, the Superintendent or designee shall follow the procedures identified in Board Policy 4005, Section 504/ADA (Personnel).

The complaint should state the:

1. Name of the complainant,
2. Date of the complaint,
3. Date(s) of the alleged harassment/discrimination,
4. Name(s) of the harasser(s) or discriminator(s),
5. Location where such harassment/discrimination occurred,
6. Names of any witness(es) to the harassment/discrimination,
7. Detailed statement of the circumstances constituting the alleged harassment/discrimination; and
8. Proposed remedy.

Any individual who makes an oral complaint of discrimination or harassment of an employee will be provided a copy of this regulation and will be requested to make a written complaint pursuant to the above procedure. If an individual is unable to make a written complaint, the employee receiving the oral complaint will either reduce the complaint to writing, assist the individual with completing the written complaint form or request that a District administrator assist the individual.

All complaints received by employees are to be forwarded immediately to the Superintendent or designee. Upon receipt of a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment of an employee under this complaint procedure, the Superintendent shall promptly investigate the complaint, or designate a District administrator or other trained individual to do so.

During the course of the investigation, the investigator shall interview or consult with all individuals reasonably believed to have relevant information, including the complainant, the reporter (if different from the complainant), the respondent, and any witnesses to the conduct. Complaints will be investigated promptly within the timeframes identified below. Timeframes may be extended as needed given the complexity of the investigation, availability of individuals with relevant information and/or other extenuating circumstances. Confidentiality will be maintained by all persons involved in the investigation to the extent possible, to the extent consistent with due process, as determined by the investigator.

Upon receipt of a written complaint of discrimination or harassment of an employee, the investigator should:

1. Offer to meet with the complainant and respondent (if applicable) within ten (10) business days (provided that such timeframe may be reasonably extended based on the availability of necessary witnesses and/or participants, the complexity of the investigation, and/or other extenuating circumstances) to discuss the nature of the complaint, discuss the availability of interim measures, identify individuals the complainant or respondent believes has relevant information, and obtain any relevant documents the complainant or respondent may have;
2. Provide the complainant and respondent (if applicable) with a copy of the Board’s non-discrimination policy and accompanying regulations;
3. Conduct an investigation that is adequate, reliable, and impartial. Investigate the factual basis of the complaint, including, as applicable, conducting interviews with the parties to the complaint and any relevant witnesses or other individuals deemed relevant to the complaint;
4. Review any records, notes, statements, or other documents relevant to the complaint;
5. Maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable throughout the investigative process, in accordance with state and federal law;
6. Complete a final investigation report that includes: (i) a findings of fact based on the evidence gathered; (ii) for each allegation, the conclusion(s) and reasoning(s) as to whether the discrimination or harassment occurred; and (iii) for any individual(s) found to have engaged in discrimination or harassment, a broad statement of consequences imposed (to the extent permitted by state and federal confidentiality requirements) (i.e. “Consequences were imposed.”).
7. Communicate the outcome of the investigation in writing to the complainant and respondent (if any) (to the extent permitted by state and federal confidentiality requirements), within thirty (30) business days (provided that such timeframe may be reasonably extended based on the availability of necessary witnesses and/or participants, the complexity of the investigation, and/or other extenuating circumstances) from the date the complaint was received by the Superintendent’s office. The complainant and respondent (if any) shall be notified of such extension. The written notice shall include a finding whether the complaint was substantiated and if so, shall identify, to the extent possible, how the District will remedy the discrimination or harassment, adhering to the requirements of state and federal law;
8. If a complaint is made during summer recess, the complaint will be reviewed and addressed as quickly as possible given the availability of employees and/or other individuals who may have information relevant to the complaint. If fixed timeframes cannot be met, the complainant and respondent (if any) will receive notice and interim measures may be implemented as necessary (see sub-paragraph 6);
9. Whenever allegations are verified, ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken (including, but not limited to, disciplinary action) aimed at preventing the recurrence of the discrimination or harassment. Corrective action should include steps to avoid continuing discrimination or harassment;
10. If a complainant or a respondent is not satisfied with the findings and conclusions of the investigation, such party may present the complaint and written outcome to the Superintendent within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the findings. Upon review of a written request from the party requesting an appeal, the Superintendent shall review the investigative results of the investigator and determine if further action and/or investigation is warranted. Such action may include consultation with a designated investigator (if applicable), complainant, and respondent (if any) and meeting with appropriate individuals to attempt to resolve the complaint, or a decision affirming or overruling a designated investigator’s conclusions or findings (if applicable). The Superintendent shall provide written notice to the complainant and respondent (if any) of the proposed actions within thirty (30) business days (provided that such timeframe may be reasonably extended based on the availability of necessary witnesses and/or participants, the complexity of the investigation, and/or other extenuating circumstances) following the receipt of the written request for review.

Complaint Procedure for Superintendent/Board Members Complaints:

Any District administrator or Board member who receives a complaint of discrimination, harassment or retaliation of any employee by a Board Member or by the Superintendent shall forward the complaint promptly to Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Meriden Public Schools, 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, CT 06450. Complaints pertaining to the Superintendent or Board of Education members will be forwarded to the Chair of the Board of Education. Complaints pertaining to the Board Chair will be forwarded to the Board Vice Chair. In all cases, the individual receiving the complaint shall take appropriate steps to cause the matter to be investigated in a manner consistent with the procedures described above.

If a complainant or a respondent is not satisfied with the findings and conclusions of an investigation in which the Superintendent or a member of the Board is the respondent, within (30) calendar days of receiving the findings such party may present the complaint and written outcome to the Board Chair (or, if initially presented by the Board Chair, the Board Vice Chair), who will take appropriate steps to cause the matter to be reviewed in a manner consistent with the Board's non-discrimination policy and regulation. Such steps may include retention of an independent investigator different from the investigator who investigated the complaint.

Remedial Action:

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

1. eliminate the discriminatory/harassing/retaliatory conduct,
2. prevent its recurrence, and
3. address its effects on the complainant and any other affected individuals.

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

1. 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;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. 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;
5. Supports for the complainant; and
6. 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.

Staff Development:

The District will periodically provide staff development for District administrators and periodically distribute the Board's Non-Discrimination policies and the implementing administrative regulations to staff and students in an effort to maintain an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

Reporting to State and Federal Agencies:

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

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

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office

U.S. Department of Education

8th Floor

5 Post Office Square

Boston, MA 02109- 3921

(617-289-0111)

<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:

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Meriden Public Schools, 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, CT 06450

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

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Meriden Public Schools, 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, CT 06450

Any employee who:

has specific questions or concerns about the Board's policies regarding discrimination on the basis of disability applicable to employees; OR

- 1. wishes to request an accommodation on the basis of disability

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

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Meriden Public Schools, 22 Liberty Street, Meriden, CT 06450

11/20/2023

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