

**DISCRIMINATION/SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of Clinton-Essex-Warren-Washington BOCES (BOCES) that all employees and students have a right to work or study in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity which encompasses freedom from sexual harassment. The BOCES strongly disapproves of sexual harassment of its employees or students in any form, and states that all employees as well as students at all levels of the BOCES must avoid offensive or inappropriate sexual or sexually harassing behavior at school, on school grounds, school functions, and on school transportation and will be held responsible for ensuring that such workplace is free from sexual harassment. Specifically, the BOCES prohibits the following:

- Unwelcome sexual advances;
- Requests for sexual favors, whether or not accompanied by promises or threats with regard to the student-teacher, student-student or employment relationship;
- Other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature made to any employee or student that may threaten or insinuate either explicitly or implicitly that any person's submission to or rejection of sexual advances will in any way influence any decision regarding that person's employment, evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, shifts, academic performance, or any other condition of employment, academic or career development;
- Any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or regarding orientation or that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a person's ability to perform the individual's duties;
- Any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment.
- Any verbal or physical conduct regarding gender or sexual orientation that has the purpose of creating a hostile or offensive working or academic environment.

Such conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or suspension upon instruction.

Other sexually harassing conduct in the workplace, whether physical or verbal, committed by supervisors or non-supervisory personnel or students is also prohibited. This behavior includes, but is not limited to, commentary about an individual's body, sexually degrading words to describe an individual, offensive comments, off color language or jokes, innuendos, and displaying sexually suggestive objects, books, magazines, photographs, cartoons or pictures.

Employees or students who have complaints of sexual harassment by anyone in the school environment, including any supervisors, co-employees, students, or visitors are urged to report such conduct to the compliance officer so that the BOCES may investigate and resolve the problem. If the complaint involves the compliance officer, or if the person for any reason is

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uncomfortable in dealing with the compliance officer, the employee or student may go to the Superintendent or a person appointed by the Superintendent to handle the complaint.

The BOCES will endeavor to investigate all complaints as expeditiously and as professionally as possible. Where investigations confirm the allegations, appropriate corrective action will be taken.

The BOCES will endeavor to maintain the information provided to it in the complaint and investigation process as confidentially as possible, consistent with the laws of the State and, if applicable, the collective bargaining agreement.

Managers and supervisors are required to report any complaint that they receive, or any harassment that they observe to the Compliance Officer.

There will be no retaliation against employees or students for reporting sexual harassment or assisting the BOCES in the investigation of a complaint.

### **Investigating Complaints**

The procedure to investigate any complaint shall be consistent with the Anti-Discrimination Policy (#5010).

The Complaint form is available on the CVES website and is also available from the Civil Rights Compliance Officers who are listed on the same page.

### **Legal Protections and External Remedies**

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

Aside from the District's internal process, 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, an individual may seek the legal advice of an attorney.

In addition to those outlined below, individuals may have additional legal protections.

### **State Human Rights Law (HRL)**

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

Complaints with DHR may be filed any time within one year of the harassment. If an individual did not file with DHR, they can sue directly in state court under the HRL, 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 one year or three years is counted from the date of the most recent incident of harassment.

Individuals 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 are forwarded to a public hearing before an administrative law judge. If sexual harassment is found after a hearing, DHR has the power to award relief, which varies but may include requiring your employer to take action to stop the harassment, or redress the damage caused, including paying of monetary 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. Individuals may call (718) 741-8400 or visit: [www.dhr.ny.gov](http://www.dhr.ny.gov).

### **Contact DHR**

Contact DHR at (888) 392-3644 or visit [dhr.ny.gov/complaint](http://dhr.ny.gov/complaint) for more information about filing a complaint. The website has a complaint form that can be downloaded, filled out, notarized and mailed to DHR. The website also contains contact information for DHR's regional offices across New York State.

### **Civil Rights Act of 1964**

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces federal anti-discrimination laws, including Title VII of the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act (codified as 42 USC § 2000e et seq.). An individual can file a complaint with the EEOC anytime within 300 days from the 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, at which point the EEOC will issue a Right to Sue letter permitting the individual to file a complaint in federal court.

The EEOC does not hold hearings or award relief, but may take other action including pursuing cases in federal court on behalf of complaining parties. 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 individual 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 DHR, DHR will file the complaint with the EEOC to preserve the right to proceed in federal court.

## **Title IX**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Complaints may be filed with the Division of Human Rights or in New York State Supreme Court. Further, the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces federal discrimination laws, including Title VII of the Federal Civil Rights Act. Contact information is provided below.

## **Contact EEOC**

For more information about how to file a complaint, contact OCR at 800-421-3481 (TDD 800-877-8339) or visit: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html>. The website contains information about filing the complaint online, by mail, or by email.

## **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.

Adopted November 14, 2018