

Regulation

Glen Ridge Board of Education

R 4352 SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERS

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Overview of Laws and Procedures

Federal and State laws combine to prohibit discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, sex, disability, or liability for service in the Armed Forces, sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is therefore illegal.

It is also illegal for anyone to take reprisals against an employee because that employee has filed a discrimination complaint or because an employee has assisted in a complaint proceedings.

The following laws prohibited employment discrimination:

New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.

Chapter 7 of New Jersey Department of Personnel Law, N.J.S.A. 11A:7-1 et seq.

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

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

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

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 12101

Any employees who believe that discrimination has occurred against themselves or others are urged to report the matter as soon as possible to:

Affirmative Action Officer

Glen Ridge Public Schools

235 Ridgewood Avenue

Glen Ridge, NJ 07028

(973)429-8305

Employees who violate the district's policy against discrimination are subject to disciplinary measures pursuant to applicable laws and regulations.

Employees also have the right to file discrimination complaints with the Division of Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action of the New Jersey Department of Personnel, the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights, and the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In addition, employees in bargaining units have access to grievance procedures according to the relevant union contract. Utilization of the district's internal complaint procedures does not preclude employees from filing in other forums.

If an employee has a reason for not wishing to report a matter to the Affirmative Action Officer, the employee should contact the Superintendent's office. In such a case, the Superintendent may appoint an Affirmative Action Officer designee to process the complaint.

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A. Definitions

1. Gender-based Harassment - Gender-based harassment that includes acts of verbal, nonverbal, physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on gender, but not involving conduct of a sexual nature, may be a form of sex discrimination if it is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive and directed at individuals because of their gender.

2. Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment - Sexual harassing conduct (which can include un-welcomed sexual advances, requests

for sexual favors or other favors, or other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature) by a school staff member that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit another staff member's ability to participate in a workplace environment or activity, or to create a hostile or abusive workplace environment.

3. Quid Pro Quo Harassment - When a school staff member explicitly or implicitly conditions another school staff member's conditions of employment on the staff member's submission to un-welcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other favors, or other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Quid Pro Quo Harassment is equally unlawful whether the staff member resists and suffers the threatened harm or submits and thus avoids the threatened harm.

B. Grievance Procedure

The following Grievance Procedure shall be used for an allegation(s) of harassment of school staff members by other school staff members:

1. Reporting of Sexual Harassment Conduct

a. Any person with any information regarding actual and/or potential sexual harassment of a staff member must report the information to the school Building Principal, their immediate supervisor or the Affirmative Action Officer.

b. The school district can learn of sexual harassment through other means such as from a witness to an incident, an anonymous letter, or telephone call.

c. A report to the school Building Principal or an immediate supervisor will be forwarded to the school district Affirmative Action Officer within one working day, even if the school Building Principal or immediate supervisor feels sexual harassment conduct was not present.

d. In the event the report alleges conduct by the Building Principal or the Affirmative Action Officer, the Superintendent will designate a school official to assume the Building Principal's or Affirmative Action Officer's responsibilities, as outlined in Policy No. 4352 and this Regulation.

2. Affirmative Action Officer's Investigation

a. Upon receipt of any report of potential sexual harassment conduct, the Affirmative Action Officer will begin an immediate investigation. The Affirmative Action Officer will promptly investigate all alleged complaints of sexual harassment, whether or not a formal grievance is filed and steps will be taken to resolve the situation, if needed. This investigation will be prompt, thorough, and impartial. The investigation will be completed no more than ten working days after receiving notice.

b. When a school staff member provides information or complains about sexual harassment, the Affirmative Action Officer will initially discuss what actions the staff member is seeking in response to the harassment.

c. The Affirmative Action Officer's investigation may include, but is not limited to, interviews with all persons with potential knowledge of the alleged conduct, interviews with any staff member(s) who may have been sexually harassed in the past by the school staff member and any other reasonable methods to determine if sexual harassment conduct existed.

d. The Affirmative Action Officer may request a staff member involved in the investigation to assist in the investigation.

e. The Affirmative Action Officer will provide a copy of Board Policy and Regulation No. 4352 to all persons who are interviewed with potential knowledge, upon request, and to any other person the Affirmative Action Officer feels would be served by a copy of such documents.

f. Any person interviewed by the Affirmative Action Officer may be provided an opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence.

g. The Affirmative Action Officer and/or Superintendent will contact law enforcement agencies if there is potential criminal conduct by any party.

h. The school district administration may take interim measures during an Affirmative Action Officer's investigation of a complaint.

i. The Affirmative Action Officer will consider particular issues of welcomeness based on the allegations.

3. Investigation Results

a. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, but not later than ten working days after reported to the Affirmative Action Officer, the Affirmative Action Officer will prepare a summary of findings to the parties. At a minimum, this summary shall include the person(s) providing notice to the school district and the staff member(s) who was alleged to be sexually harassed.

b. The Affirmative Action Officer shall make a determination whether sexual harassment conduct was present.

c. If the Affirmative Action Officer concludes sexual harassment conduct was not, or is not present, the investigation is concluded.

d. If the Affirmative Action Officer determines that sexual harassment has occurred, the school district administration shall take reasonable and effective corrective action, including steps tailored to the specific situation. Appropriate steps will be taken to end the harassment such as counseling, warning, and/or disciplinary action. The steps will be based on the severity of the harassment or any record of prior incidents or both. A series of escalating consequences may be necessary if the initial steps are ineffective in stopping the harassment.

e. In the event the Affirmative Action Officer determines a hostile environment exists, the Superintendent shall take steps to eliminate the hostile environment. The school district may need to deliver special training or other interventions to repair the educational environment. Other measures may include directing the harasser to apologize to the harassed staff member, dissemination of information, distribution of new policy statements or other steps to communicate the message that the Board does not tolerate harassment and will be responsive to any school staff member that reports such conduct.

f. In some situations, the school district may need to provide other services to the staff member that was harassed, if necessary, to address the effects of the harassment on that staff member. Depending on the type of harassment found, these additional services may include an independent re-assessment of the harassed staff member's work performance, counseling and/or other measures that are appropriate to the situation.

g. The Superintendent will take steps to avoid any further sexual harassment and to prevent any retaliation against the staff member who made the complaint, was the subject of the harassment, or against those who provided the information or

were witnesses. The Affirmative Action Officer will inform the sexually harassed staff member to report any subsequent problems and will make follow-up inquiries to see if there have been any new incidents or retaliation.

h. All sexual harassment grievances and accompanied investigation notes will be maintained in a confidential file by the Affirmative Action Officer.

4. Affirmative Action Officer's Investigation Appeal Process

a. Any person found by the Affirmative Action Officer's investigation to be guilty of sexual harassment conduct, or any person who believes they were sexually harassed but not supported by the Affirmative Action Officer's investigation, may appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will make his/her determination within ten working days of receiving the appeal.

b. Any person who is not satisfied with the Superintendent's determination may appeal to the Board. The Board will make its determination within forty-five calendar days of receiving an appeal from the Superintendent's determination.

C. Office Of Civil Rights (OCR) Case Resolution

Persons not satisfied with the resolution of an allegation of sexual harassment by school district officials or the Board may request the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the United States Department of Education to investigate the allegations.

1. Any alleged victim of sexual harassment may appeal a decision of the Affirmative Action Officer, Superintendent, or the Board to the Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

2. Any person may report an allegation of sexual harassment to the OCR at any time. If the OCR is asked to investigate or otherwise resolve incidents of sexual harassment of school staff members, OCR will consider whether:

a. The school district has a policy prohibiting sexual harassment and a grievance procedure;

b. The school district appropriately investigated or otherwise responded to allegations of sexual harassment; and

c. The school district has taken immediate and appropriate corrective action responsive to Quid Pro Quo or Hostile Environment Harassment.

External Complaint Process

In addition to utilizing the district's internal process, an employee has the right to file a complaint with the outside agencies that investigate discrimination charges. External complaints must be filed directly with the agency. The time frames indicated below are provided for informational purposes only; specific questions about filing deadlines should be directed to the respective agency.

Division of EEO/AA (30 calendar days)
NJ Department of Personnel
3 Station Plaza, CN 314
Trenton, NJ 08625
(609) 520-0299

Division of Civil Rights (180 calendar days)
NJ Department of Law and Public Safety
140 E. Front Street, CN 090
Trenton, NJ 08625
(609) 292-4605

US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (300 calendar days)
21 South 5th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 451-5800

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