

NONDISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY**General Prohibitions**

The East Central Special Education Unit(Unit) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment free from discrimination and harassment in all employment and educational programs, activities, and facilities. The Unit prohibits discrimination and harassment based on a student's, parent's, guardian's, or employee's race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, or other status protected by law.

It is a violation of this policy for any unit employee, or third party to discriminate against or harass another unit employee, based on any status protected by law, if the conduct occurred within the context of an education program or activity, or if the conduct had a continuing effect in the educational setting of a program or activity occurring on or off school district/unit property. The Unit will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of a unit student or employee by a third party. The Unit also prohibits aiding, abetting, inciting, compelling, or coercing discrimination or harassment; discriminating against or harassing any individual affiliated with another who is protected by this policy and/or law; knowingly making a false discrimination and/or harassment report; and retaliation against individuals who report and/or participate in a discrimination and/or harassment investigation, including instances when a complaint is not substantiated.

The Unit shall promptly investigate any discrimination, harassment, or retaliation complaint and act on findings as appropriate, or as required by law. Outcomes may include disciplinary measures such as termination of employment in accordance with board policy, law, and, when applicable, the negotiated agreement. Employees are expected to fully cooperate in the investigation process. The Unit will take steps to prevent recurrence of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation and remedy discriminatory effects on the complainant and others, if appropriate.

Definitions

- *Complainant* is the individual filing the complaint. If the complainant is not the victim of the alleged discrimination and/or harassment, the victim must be afforded the same rights as the complainant under this policy and regulations AAC-BR1 or AAC-BR2.
- *Disability* is defined in accordance with NDCC 14-02.4-02 (5).
- *Discrimination* means failure to treat an individual equally due to a protected status.
- *Protected status* is defined in applicable state (NDCC 14-02.4-02 (6)) and federal laws.
- *Employee* is defined in accordance with NDCC 14-02.4-02 (7).
- Harassment is a specific type of discrimination based on a protected status. It occurs under the following conditions:
 - a. For employees: When enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or the conduct is severe, persistent, and/or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable individual would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.

- b. For students: When the conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, and/or pervasive so as to limit the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the education program or to create a hostile or abusive education environment.
- *North Dakota Human Rights Act (NDCC ch. 14-02.4)* provides protection from discrimination in the workplace on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, the presence of any mental or physical disability, status with regarding to marriage or public assistance, or participation in lawful activity off the employer's premises during nonworking hours which is not in direct conflict with the essential business-related interests of the employer.
- *Section 504 (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 794)* is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education.
- *Sexual harassment* is a form of harassment based on sex. It is defined under Title IX as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal, written, or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature, that:
 - a. Constitutes *quid pro quo* harassment, meaning submission to such conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of the basis for employment decisions or educational decisions or benefits for students (e.g., receiving a grade);
 - b. Is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the Unit's education program or activity; or
 - c. Constitutes sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking as those offenses are defined in the Clery Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f) and the Violence Against Women Act, 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a).
- *Sexual harassment* examples include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Sexual or "dirty" jokes;
 - b. Sexual advances;
 - c. Pressure for sexual favors;
 - d. Unwelcome touching, such as patting, pinching, or constant brushing against another's body;
 - e. Displaying or distributing of sexually explicit drawings, pictures, and written materials;
 - f. Graffiti of a sexual nature;
 - g. Sexual gestures;
 - h. Touching oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activity in front of others;
 - i. Spreading rumors about or rating other's sexual activity or performance;
 - j. Remarks about an individual's sexual orientation; and
 - k. Sexual violence, including rape, sexual battery, sexual abuse, and sexual coercion.
- *Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act* extends the prohibition on discrimination established by Section 504 to all services, programs, and activities of State and local government entities.

- *Title VI* is a federal law that provides protection from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in employment and employment practices in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.
- *Title VII* is a federal law that provides protection from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Title VII applies to all public school units with 15 or more employees.
- *Title IX* is a federal law that provides protection from discrimination, based on sex, in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.

Other or different definitions may be set forth in board regulations AAC-BR1 or AAC-BR2.

Complaint Filing Procedure

The Board shall create an informal and formal discrimination and harassment complaint filing procedure in board regulations coded AAC-BR1. For Title IX sexual harassment complaints, grievance procedures shall be followed in accordance with federal regulations and board regulation AAC-BR2.

The procedure provides for an impartial investigation free of conflicts of interest and bias. Nothing in this policy or in the discrimination and harassment grievance procedure prevents an individual from pursuing redress available through state and/or federal law.

Confidentiality

An individual wishing to file an anonymous discrimination and/or harassment complaint must be advised that confidentiality may limit the unit's ability to fully respond to the complaint and that retaliation is prohibited. The appropriate grievance coordinator (Title IX) shall perform a confidentiality analysis to determine when a request for confidentiality cannot be honored due to safety reasons or the unit's obligation to maintain a nondiscriminatory educational environment. The complainant must be notified in writing of the confidentiality analysis outcome. A discrimination or harassment investigation report is subject to the open records law after 60 days or when the investigation is complete (whichever comes first), with limited exceptions such as when the record is protected by FERPA.

Complaint Recipients

If any unit employee receives a discrimination or harassment complaint, the employee shall promptly forward it to the appropriate grievance coordinator. All unit employees must receive training on their reporting duties.

Grievance Coordinators

Units must designate at least one employee to be their Title IX Coordinator and authorize such individual(s) to coordinate the unit's efforts to comply with its responsibilities under the applicable regulations.

The Title IX Coordinator's responsibilities include overseeing the unit's response to Title IX reports and complaints and identifying and addressing any patterns or systemic problems revealed by such reports and complaints. The Title IX Coordinator must have knowledge of the requirements of Title IX, of the unit's policies and procedures on sex discrimination, and of all complaints raising Title IX issues throughout the Unit. To accomplish this, the Title IX Coordinator must be informed of any report or complaint

raising Title IX issues, even if the report or complaint was initially filed with another individual or office or if the investigation will be conducted by another individual or office.

The Board designates Unit Director as the Title IX Coordinator. They may be contacted at 16 8th Street S, New Rockford ND 58356, 701-947-5015. The Unit must notify students, parents or legal guardians, employees and unions of the name and specified contact information for the designated Title IX Coordinator(s). The notification must also state that inquiries about the application of Title IX and its regulations may be directed to the unit's Title IX Coordinator. Units must prominently display the Title IX Coordinator(s) contact information on their website, if any, and in each handbook it makes available to students, parents or legal guardians, employees and unions.

The Nondiscrimination Coordinator's core responsibilities include overseeing the unit's response to discrimination and harassment reports and complaints that do not include sex or disability under applicable federal laws, but instead the other protected statuses or sex or disability- based discrimination under state law. The Board designates Unit Director, as the Nondiscrimination Coordinator. They may be contacted at 16 8th Street S, New Rockford ND 58356, at 701-947-5015.

Policy Dissemination

The Director shall display this policy and complementary grievance procedures in a prominent place in each unit building and publish it in employee handbook.

Training

The Board authorizes the Director to develop discrimination and harassment awareness training for employees. Employee training requirements are delineated in board exhibit AAC-E3, Discrimination and/or Harassment Training Requirements for Employees.

The Title IX, and Nondiscrimination Coordinators, and any other unit official responsible for the investigation of discrimination complaints, shall receive training. This training must include:

1. The definition of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation;
2. The handling of complaints under the Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedure (AAC-BR1); and
3. The applicability of confidentiality requirements.

In addition, the Title IX Coordinator(s), investigators, decision-makers, and those facilitating an informal resolution process, if applicable, under Title IX shall receive training in a number of areas specified in board regulation AAC-BR2.

Complementing NDSBA Templates (may contain items not adopted by the Board)

- AAC-BR1, Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedure
- AAC-BR2, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure
- AAC-E1, Filing a State or Federal Discrimination and/or Harassment Complaint
- AAC-E2, Discrimination and/or Harassment Complaint Confidentiality Assessment
- AAC-E3, Discrimination and/or Harassment Training Requirements for Employees
- AAC-E4, Reasonable Accommodation Request Physician Form
- AAC-E5, Notice of Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint

REQUIRED

Descriptor Code: AAC

- ABBB, Non-Curricular Use of Unit Property
- DE, Staff Code of Conduct
- FGDB, Student Handbooks

End of East Central Special Education Unit Policy AAC..... Adopted: 12-21-22

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