

COVENTRY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY****PURPOSE:**

Coventry Public Schools is proud of its tradition of a collegial work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including sexual harassment.

It shall be the expectation of the Coventry School Committee that the Administration will take actions considered essential to assuring that an atmosphere free of harassment and/or improprieties exists in the classrooms and work stations of the Coventry Public Schools. To this end, the Administration shall:

1. Prohibit and discourage any employee from harassing any job applicant to the District or any other employee of the District.
2. Provide a harassment-free work environment.
3. Remedy in a speedy manner any consequences of harassment.
4. Provide on-going education and awareness of the problem of harassment.
5. Provide information about how to pursue claims of harassment.

DEFINITIONS:

Harassment: Verbal, physical or visual conduct of racial, ethnic, or other type which impairs an employee's ability to perform the job.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances or visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition encompasses many forms of offensive behavior, including gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser, conduct of a sexual nature that creates an offensive, intimidating or hostile work environment; and coerced sexual conduct by a person in a position of authority in the workplace. Examples of prohibited sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual flirtation or advances
- Offering employment, promotions or other benefits in exchange for sexual favors
- Making or threatening reprisals for refusing sexual advances

- Visual conduct such as leering; making sexual gestures; displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures; cartoons or posters; suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations
- Verbal conduct such as derogatory comments; epithets; slurs; sexual innuendo; sexual jokes; graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual
- Physical conduct such as unwanted, suggestive or offensive touching; assault; impeding or blocking movement.

Reports of sexual or other forms of harassment of an individual by any Coventry Public School employee will be immediately investigated and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Sexual harassment by a non-employee, for example, a customer, vendor or supplier, is also prohibited.

1. OBLIGATIONS OF ADMINISTRATORS:

- a. A copy of this directive shall be posted in appropriate and conspicuous locations in each school building, administration, and physical plant.
- b. The Human Resources Office shall provide a copy of this directive to all new employees within one (1) week of their first day of employment and to all employees upon revisions.
- c. At the beginning of each school year, each building/department administrator shall review with all employees assigned to their supervision the obligation of the employee and the investigative/corrective procedures which have been established for the handling of sexual harassment complaint(s) and shall review the redress which is available.

2. OBLIGATIONS OF ALL EMPLOYEES:

- a. Employees shall report to their building administrator/director any conduct of a student, another employee or on the part of non-employees, such as sales representatives or service vendors, who sexually harass any employee of the District.
- b. Employees shall cooperate with any investigation of any alleged act of sexual discrimination conducted by the District or by an appropriate State or Federal agency.
- c. No employee of this District shall take any action to discourage a victim of harassment from reporting such an instance or from attempting to pursue any internal grievance procedure.

3. REPORTING A COMPLAINT:

While Coventry Public Schools encourages individuals who believe they are being harassed to firmly and promptly notify the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome, the employer also recognizes that power and status disparities between an alleged harasser and a target may make such a confrontation impossible. In the event that such informal, direct communication between individuals is either ineffective or impossible, the following steps should be followed in reporting a sexual harassment complaint.

Individuals who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment should report the incident to his/her building administrator/director. If the administrator/director successfully resolves the complaint in an informal manner to the complainants' satisfaction, the administrator/director must file a confidential report to the Human Resources Director about the complaint and resolution so that the employer will be aware of any pattern of harassment by a particular individual and will also be aware of all complaints of sexual harassment on an employer-wide basis. If the administrator/director does not successfully resolve the complaint informally, a written report must be made to the Human Resources Director within one workday.

4. INVESTIGATIVE/CORRECTIVE PROCEDURE:

- a. Administrators shall immediately report any evidence of sexual harassment or complaints regarding same made to them, to the Human Resources Director.
- b. Administrators shall, within three (3) working days, investigate any incident of alleged sexual harassment reported to them and shall immediately report, in writing, the results of any investigation emanating therefrom, including corrective or disciplinary action taken, to the Human Resources Director and to the complainant employee.
- c. Administrators shall immediately report to the Human Resources Director any instances of sexual harassment which they have directly observed, whether or not reported by the employee or a student who is the object of the harassment.
- d. Administrators shall, at minimum, issue a written reprimand to any employee observed sexually harassing a student or any other employee. The Administrator shall take any other disciplinary action that he/she determines is warranted and falls within school policy or contractual constraints governing the employee.
- e. Under no circumstances shall an employee of the District, who believes that she/he has been the victim of sexual harassment, be required to first report the harassment of a supervisor to their supervisor, if the superior is the individual who has done the harassing. An employee who has a claim of sexual harassment to file against an immediate supervisor shall contact the HR Director.

- f. Administrators are required to maintain confidentiality in investigating any claims of alleged harassment to the extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances.
- g. Any administrator who belatedly learns that a condition of employment has already been withheld or denied, as a consequence of sexual harassment, shall recommend appropriate steps to rectify any harm suffered by the victim to the Superintendent of Schools for further consideration.
- h. Administrators shall follow up within one (1) month and three (3) months of any reported incident of sexual harassment to determine whether the victim has been subject to any further forbidden conduct.

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (EEOC – 180 days; RI – 300 days)

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

RI Human Rights Commission
180 Westminster Street, 3rd Floor
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 222-2662

5. PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

Retaliation against an individual who makes a complaint of sexual harassment or against any participant in the investigation is strictly prohibited. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately. Any person found to have retaliated against another individual for reporting sexual harassment will be subject to the same disciplinary action provided for sexual harassment offender.

6. POLICY VIOLATION:

Any employee who violates this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

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