

CSBA Sample Administrative Regulation

Students

AR 5145.7(a)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Note: Pursuant to 34 CFR 106.8, districts that receive federal financial assistance are **mandated** to designate an employee to ensure district compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations, including the investigation of complaints alleging sex discrimination. The following paragraph specifies the position designated as the district's Title IX Coordinator and compliance officer for purposes of complaints alleging sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, filed under AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures. To designate separate district employees to serve these functions, the district should modify the following paragraph accordingly.

The district designates the following individual(s) as the responsible employee(s) to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and California Education Code 234.1, as well as to investigate and resolve sexual harassment complaints under AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures. The coordinator/compliance officer(s) may be contacted at:

Associate Superintendent

(title or position)

375 Reina Del Mar Ave.

(address)

(650) 738-6600

(telephone number)

N/A

(email)

(cf. 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures)

Note: Education Code 212.5 defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone in the educational setting. For purposes of suspension and expulsion, Education Code 48900.2 defines sexual harassment as conduct, when considered from the perspective of a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim, that is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to have a negative impact upon the victim's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment for the victim. See AR 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process.

Under OCRs 2001 Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance interpreting Title IX, sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. A hostile environment is created when the conduct is sufficiently serious that it denies or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's program based on sex. OCR considers the conduct from both the subjective perspective of the individual who was harassed and from the perspective of a reasonable person with the same characteristics as the victim.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, unwanted requests for sexual favors, or other unwanted verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature made against another person of the same or opposite sex in the educational setting, under any of the following conditions: (Education Code 212.5; 5 CCR 4916)

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1. Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of a student's academic status or progress.
2. Submission to or rejection of the conduct by a student is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting the student.
3. The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact on the student's academic performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.
4. Submission to or rejection of the conduct by the student is used as the basis for any decision affecting the student regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through any district program or activity.

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)

(cf. 5131.2 - Bullying)

(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)

(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)

(cf. 6142.1 - Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Instruction)

<p>Note: The following list contains common examples of sexual harassment from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights' (OCR) April 2011 <u>Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Violence</u>, its January 2001 <u>Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance</u>, and definitions specified in 5 CCR 4916.</p>

Examples of types of conduct which are prohibited in the district and which may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

1. Unwelcome leering, sexual flirtations, or propositions
2. Unwelcome sexual slurs, epithets, threats, verbal abuse, derogatory comments, or sexually degrading descriptions
3. Graphic verbal comments about an individual's body or overly personal conversation
4. Sexual jokes, derogatory posters, notes, stories, cartoons, drawings, pictures, obscene gestures, or computer-generated images of a sexual nature
5. Spreading sexual rumors
6. Teasing or sexual remarks about students enrolled in a predominantly single-sex class
7. Massaging, grabbing, fondling, stroking, or brushing the body
8. Touching an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way

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9. Impeding or blocking movements or any physical interference with school activities when directed at an individual on the basis of sex
10. Displaying sexually suggestive objects
11. Sexual assault, sexual battery, or sexual coercion
12. **Electronic communications containing comments, words, or images described above**

Any prohibited conduct that occurs off campus or outside of school-related or school-sponsored programs or activities will be regarded as sexual harassment in violation of district policy if it has a continuing effect on or creates a hostile school environment for the complainant or victim of the conduct.

Reporting Process and Complaint Investigation and Resolution

Note: The following reporting process details site-level steps to be taken by students and others for reporting sexual harassment incidents. In its April 2011 Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Violence and January 2001 Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance, OCR acknowledges that procedures adopted by districts to address student harassment complaints will vary considerably depending on a number of factors, including the size of the district.

Pursuant to Education Code 231.5, the district's policy must contain information on where to obtain the specific procedure for reporting incidents of sexual harassment and pursuing available remedies. In addition, 34 CFR 106.8 requires a district to adopt and publish a complaint procedure providing for a "prompt and equitable" resolution of student complaints alleging sexual harassment. To avoid confusion that may arise from having a multiplicity of complaint processes for resolving a variety of student complaints, it is recommended that districts use their uniform complaint procedures (UCP) to investigate and resolve sexual harassment complaints involving students and to track complaints through a districtwide system. See AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures for details of these procedures.

Any student who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual **harassment by another student, an employee, or a third party** or who has witnessed sexual harassment is strongly encouraged to report the incident to his/her teacher, the principal, or any other available school employee. Within one school day of receiving such a report, the school employee shall forward the report to the principal or the district's compliance officer identified in AR 1312.3. In addition, any school employee who observes an incident of sexual harassment involving a student shall, within one school day, report his/her observation to the principal or a district compliance officer. The employee shall take these actions, whether or not the alleged victim files a complaint.

When a report or complaint of sexual harassment involves off-campus conduct, the principal shall assess whether the conduct may create or contribute to the creation of a

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hostile school environment. If he/she determines that a hostile environment may be created, the complaint shall be investigated and resolved in the same manner as if the prohibited conduct occurred at school.

When a **verbal or informal** report of sexual harassment is submitted, the principal or compliance officer shall inform the student or parent/guardian of the right to file a formal written complaint in accordance with the district's uniform complaint procedures. **Regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed, the principal or compliance officer shall take steps to investigate the allegations and, if sexual harassment is found, shall take prompt action to stop it, prevent recurrence, and address any continuing effects.**

If a complaint of sexual harassment is initially submitted to the principal, he/she shall, within two school days, forward the report to the compliance officer to initiate investigation of the complaint. The compliance officer shall contact the complainant and investigate and resolve the complaint in accordance with law and district procedures specified in AR 1312.3.

In investigating a sexual harassment complaint, evidence of past sexual relationships of the victim shall not be considered, except to the extent that such evidence may relate to the victim's prior relationship with the respondent.

In any case of sexual harassment involving the principal, compliance officer, or any other person to whom the incident would ordinarily be reported or filed, the report may instead be submitted **to** the Superintendent or designee who shall determine who will investigate the complaint.

(cf. 5141.4 - Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting)

Confidentiality

Note: Pursuant to 5 CCR 4964, districts are required to keep complaints and allegations of sexual harassment confidential, except when disclosure is necessary to further the investigation, other needed remedial action, or ongoing monitoring.

All complaints and allegations of sexual harassment shall be kept confidential except as necessary to carry out the investigation or take other subsequent necessary action. (5 CCR 4964)

Note: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 USC 1232g; 34 CFR 99.1-99.67) protects student privacy, including student records such as the description of the corrective actions taken in response to a complaint of sexual harassment. Thus, districts are advised to consult legal counsel in determining what information must be included in the final written decision sent to the complainant and what information must not be included.

In determining what information to include and not include in the final written decision for complaints

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regarding sexual harassment, districts should be aware that current law (20 USC 1221) states that nothing in FERPA is to "be construed to affect the applicability of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of Education Amendments of 1972, Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act, or other statutes prohibiting discrimination, to any applicable program." OCR has interpreted these provisions to mean that FERPA permits a district to disclose to a student, who was subjected to sexual harassment, certain information about the sanctions imposed upon the offender when the sanctions directly relate to the student. For instance, if properly remedying the impact of sexual harassment would require disclosing to the alleged victim certain information on how the district disciplined the alleged student offender (e.g., a stay away order), OCR would require the district to disclose that information.

OCR's Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance and 2011 Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Violence, as well the FAQs issued in April 2014, indicate that if a complainant in a sexual harassment case requests that his/her name or that of the victim not be revealed to the alleged perpetrator or asks that the complaint not be pursued, the district should first inform the complainant that honoring the request may limit its ability to respond and pursue disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator. However, in all instances, the district must continue to ensure that it provides a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students. If there is a high risk of harm to the complainant or others (e.g., if the district has information that the alleged perpetrator is a repeat offender) and the district cannot respond adequately to the risk without disclosing the complainant's identity, then in such limited circumstances the district may be required to investigate the incident and disclose the complainant's identity. If the district determines that it will respect the confidentiality request, it should nevertheless take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint. Such steps may include limited investigative activities that do not require the district to reveal the complainant's identity; providing services to the complainant, such as counseling services; providing increased monitoring, supervision, or security at locations or activities where the misconduct occurred; providing training and education materials for students and employees; or changing and publicizing the district's policies on sexual violence.

However, when a complainant or victim of sexual harassment notifies the district of the harassment but requests confidentiality, the compliance officer shall inform him/her that the request may limit the district's ability to investigate the harassment or take other necessary action. When honoring a request for confidentiality, the district will nevertheless take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the request.

When a complainant or victim of sexual harassment notifies the district of the harassment but requests that the district not pursue an investigation, the district will determine whether or not it can honor such a request while still providing a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students.

(cf. 4119.23/4219.23/4319.23 - Unauthorized Release of Confidential/Privileged Information)

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

Response Pending Investigation

Note: The following reporting process may be revised to reflect district practice. In its April 2011 Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Violence, OCR cautions that districts may have an obligation to respond to notice of sexual harassment of students which occurs off school grounds or outside school-sponsored or school-related programs or activities, since the sexual harassment may still create a hostile environment at school.

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When an incident of sexual harassment is reported, the principal or designee, in consultation with the compliance officer, shall determine whether interim measures are necessary pending the results of the investigation. The principal/designee or compliance officer shall take immediate measures necessary to stop the harassment and protect students and/or ensure their access to the educational program. **To the extent possible, such interim measures shall not disadvantage the complainant or victim of the alleged harassment. Such—Interim** measures may include placing the individuals involved in separate classes or transferring a student to a class taught by a different teacher, in accordance with law and Board policy. The school should notify the individual who was harassed of his/her options to avoid contact with the alleged harasser and allow the complainant to change academic and extracurricular arrangements as appropriate. The school should also ensure that the complainant is aware of the resources and assistance, such as counseling, that are available to him/her. As appropriate, such actions shall be considered even when a student chooses to not file a formal complaint or the sexual harassment occurs off school grounds or outside school-sponsored or school-related programs or activities.

Notifications

Note: In its January 2001 Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance, OCR states that a procedure for sexual harassment complaints cannot be prompt or equitable unless it is widely disseminated and written in language appropriate to the age of the school's students. Examples include having a copy of the procedures available throughout the school, publishing the procedures in the student handbook, and identifying individuals who can explain the procedure.

A copy of the district's sexual harassment policy and regulation shall:

1. Be included in the notifications that are sent to parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year (Education Code 48980; 5 CCR 4917)

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

Note: In its April 2015 Dear Colleague Letter: Title IX Coordinators, OCR recommends that districts use web posting and social media to disseminate their nondiscrimination notices, policies, and procedures and communicate the contact information for current compliance officer(s) to students, parents/guardians, and employees. Item #2 below may be modified to reflect the means used by the district to disseminate its sexual harassment policy and regulation.

2. Be displayed in a prominent location in the main administrative building or other area where notices of district rules, regulations, procedures, and standards of conduct are posted (Education Code 231.5)

A copy of the district's sexual harassment policy and regulation shall be posted on district and school web sites and, when available, on district-supported social media.

(cf. 1113 - District and School Web Sites)

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(cf. 1114 - District-Sponsored Social Media)

3. Be provided as part of any orientation program conducted for new students at the beginning of each quarter, semester, or summer session (Education Code 231.5)
4. Appear in any school or district publication that sets forth the school's or district's comprehensive rules, regulations, procedures, and standards of conduct (Education Code 231.5)

Note: Items #5 and #6 below are optional .

5. Be included in the student handbook
6. Be provided to employees and employee organizations

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(Attachment E) Use CSBA Sample with added revisions