



Policy Section: **Personnel/Employee Matters**

700

Policy Name: **Workplace Harassment**

709

Policy Statement

The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board is committed to providing a working and learning environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity in accordance with the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Rationale

Every student, employee, trustee, parent and community member has the right to equal treatment and to learn and work in an environment free of harassment.

This Policy is intended to provide a greater awareness of and responsiveness to the damaging effects of harassment. Procedures have been developed to ensure that workplace harassment complaints are dealt with expeditiously, using appropriate resources.

Scope

The Workplace Harassment Policy applies to all Board students, employees, trustees and other users such as members of consultative committees, clients of the Board, parents, volunteers, permit holders, contractors, and employees of other organizations not related to the Board but who nevertheless work on or are invited onto Board premises. This Policy also covers harassment by such persons which is proven to have repercussions that adversely affect the Board’s learning/working environment.

Definitions

1. Harassment

Harassment, is often but not always, persistent, ongoing conduct or communication (in any form), of attitudes, beliefs or actions towards an individual or group which might reasonably be known to be unwelcome. A single act or expression can constitute harassment, for example, if it is a serious violation or it is from a person in authority. Harassment may be either subtle or blunt.

Cross Reference:

Policies:

- 321, Safe and Supportive Schools
- 329, Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
- 503, Equity and Inclusive Education
- 706, Employee Code of Conduct
- 708, Respectful Working & Learning Environment
- 711, Workplace Violence

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Date Approved: November 14, 2006
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Harassment can involve unwelcome words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating or demeaning to a worker or group of workers in a workplace. It can also include behaviour that intimidates, isolates or even discriminates against the targeted individual(s). This may include: making remarks, jokes or innuendo that demean, ridicule, intimidate or offend; displaying or circulating offensive pictures or materials in print or electronic form; bullying; repeated offensive or intimidating phone calls or emails; or workplace sexual harassment.

Workplace harassment can also include what is often called “psychological harassment” or “personal harassment and bullying”, as well as comments and conduct prohibited under the grounds stipulated in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Workplace sexual harassment means;

- Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonable to be known to be unwelcome, or
- Making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonable to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome;

Clarity note: harassment can take the form of intimidation of or threats to anyone for whom the Policy applies.

Harassment is not the normal exercise of supervisory responsibilities, including training, direction, instruction, counselling and discipline.

2. Workplace

The workplace is any place where employees, students and other users perform work or work-related duties or functions. Schools and school-related activities, such as extracurricular activities and excursions, comprise the workplace, as do Board offices and facilities. Conferences and training sessions fall within the scope of this policy.

Cross Reference:

Policies:

321, Safe and Supportive Schools 322, Code of Conduct
 329, Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour
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3. Student

Includes all persons regardless of age who are enrolled in any program offered by the Board.

4. Employee

Includes all persons employed by the Board.

5. Other Users

Includes all persons, who are neither students nor employees while on Board premises or attending Board or school programs/functions at other premises or in a business/social community relationship with the Board.

Consequently, the Policy applies to and covers all members of consultative committees, clients of the Board, parents, volunteers, permit holders, contractors, and employees of organizations not related to the Board but who nevertheless work on or are invited onto Board premises.

Guidelines

1. Duties and Responsibilities

A school community is a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. All persons in its learning/working environment will:

- respect differences in people, their ideas and opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed (faith), disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender, marital status, place of origin, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, gender identity;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for Board property and for property of others;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity; and

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- respect the need of others to work in an environment of learning and teaching.

The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board has a duty to maintain an environment respectful of human rights and free of harassment for all persons served by it. It must be ever vigilant of anything that might interfere with this duty. The Board expects that all persons in its learning/working environment will:

- be aware of and sensitive to issues of harassment;
- support individuals who are, or have been targets of harassment;
- prevent harassment through training;
- take reasonable steps to remove any discriminatory barriers in employment policy and practices;
- take all allegations of harassment seriously and respond promptly;
- provide positive role models; and
- not demonstrate, allow or condone behaviour contrary to the Policy, including reprisal.

The Human Resources Department of the Board has the responsibility to designate resources for ensuring the implementation of and compliance with this Policy and these Procedures.

Supervisory and managerial personnel have a specific duty to implement the Policy. This duty includes the prevention of and the response to harassment, the education of staff, students and the school community.

Failure to take measures to address harassment in the learning and working environment may have legal implications for the Board.

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