

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The district shall provide equal and bias-free access for all pupils to all school facilities, courses, programs, activities and services and give them maximum opportunity to achieve their potential regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, marital status, liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States, nationality, place of residence within the district, socioeconomic status, or disability. Enforcement of other district affirmative action/equity policies (2224, 4111.1, 4211.1 and 6121) contribute to this legally required equality of educational opportunity.

Staff members shall maintain professional relationships with pupils at all times and develop wholesome and constructive relationships with them. Staff members shall be expected to regard each pupil as an individual and to accord each pupil the rights and respect that are his/her due.

Staff members shall promote a learning environment that encourages fulfillment of each pupil's potential in regard to his/her program, consistent with district goals and with optimal opportunities for pupils. This goal may be reached by adapting instruction to individual needs, by:

- A. Insisting on reasonable standards of scholastic accomplishment for all pupils;
- B. Creating a positive atmosphere in and out of the classroom;
- C. Extending the same courtesy and respect that is expected of pupils;
- D. Treating all pupils with consistent fairness.

The Norwood Board of Education guarantees all pupils equal access to all academic programs within the learning environment.

Pupils shall respect the rights of other pupils to receive an education in an environment that is conducive to learning and personal growth. No pupil shall have the right to abridge another pupil's right to privacy or right to hold personal beliefs which are different from those of the mainstream.

Harassment

The district's affirmative action program is part of each academic program regarding all pupils. No one-- including pupils, staff members, vendors, volunteers, or visitors -- shall commit an act of harassment or discrimination of any kind against any member of the school community on any of the grounds prohibited by law. Harassment or favoritism on any basis is prohibited.

Harassment is defined as any gesture that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by an actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic; that will have the effect (actual or perceived) of harming a student or damaging the student's property. Harassment also includes any gesture that demeans or insults a student or group of students in such a way to cause substantial disruption in or interference with the orderly operation of the school.

Harassment may be claimed by a third party. That is, individuals who are not directly involved in the behavior may experience a hostile environment. They shall have the same legal rights to act under this policy as those directly victimized.

Sexual Harassment

Particularly, the board of education shall maintain an academic environment that is free from sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment shall consist of unwanted and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate conduct or communication of a sexual nature when made by any staff member to a pupil, by any pupil to another pupil, or by any pupil to a staff member when:

- A. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a pupil's evaluation, promotion, opportunities, privileges, and other benefits of education;
- B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a pupil is used as a basis for decisions affecting the pupil;
- C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a pupil's academic performance or creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment.

The administration will inform all pupils that sexual harassment is prohibited in the educational setting. Specifically, no person employed by the district or by a vendor, or acting in a voluntary capacity, shall threaten or insinuate, either directly or indirectly, that a pupil's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the pupils standing in the school setting. Pupils are forbidden to harass other pupils or staff members or vendors or volunteers through conduct or communications of a sexual nature within the school setting.

Any member of the student body may file a formal grievance related to harassment. The Affirmative Action Officer will receive all complaints and initiate a thorough investigation and will protect the rights of both the pupil making the complaint and the alleged harasser. Filing of a grievance or otherwise reporting harassment of any kind will not reflect upon the pupil's status nor affect future grades or class assignments.

The administration will inform all pupils that sexual harassment is prohibited in the educational setting. Specifically, no person employed by the district or by a vendor, or acting in a voluntary capacity, shall threaten or insinuate, either directly or indirectly, that a pupil's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the pupils standing in the school setting. Pupils are forbidden to harass other pupils or staff members or vendors or volunteers through conduct or communications of a sexual nature within the school setting. Findings of discrimination in the form of harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Equity in School

The Norwood Board of Education shall maintain an academic environment that is free from harassment and provide equal and bias free access for all students to all school facilities, courses, programs activities and services, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or socioeconomic status. The board shall ensure that:

- A. School classrooms and facilities will be barrier free;
- B. The district curriculum will be aligned with the State's Core Curriculum Content Standards and address the elimination of discrimination by narrowing the achievement gap;
- C. All students have access to counseling services;
- D. Physical education program is equitable and co-educational.

Procedures shall be made available for pupils and/or parents/guardians who wish to file a grievance protesting alleged discriminatory or sexually (or other) harassing action. An immediate report of the allegation should be made to the affirmative action officer or Chief School Administrator. Violations of this policy or its related procedures shall be cause for appropriate disciplinary action.

Hate Crimes/Bias Incidents

An employee of the board who becomes aware in the course of his/her employment that a student or other staff person has committed a hate crime or is about to commit one shall immediately inform the building principal and Chief School Administrator. All incidents of hate/bias shall be reported whether they occur during school hours on school grounds or otherwise.

Implementation

The Chief School Administrator shall direct development of procedures regarding the implementation of this policy to include sanctions, protection of individual rights to confidentiality and due process, and notification procedures. This policy shall be posted on the district website and parents/guardians and students notified that the policy is available on the district website. The Chief School Administrator shall ensure that, annually, all staff and all pupils (in means and terms that are age-appropriate) be thoroughly informed of this policy, their right to file grievances under this policy and the law and the procedures relative to filing. Further, all staff and pupils shall be informed annually of the identity of the district's affirmative action officer and how he/she may be contacted.

The Chief School Administrator shall also ensure that staff and pupils participate in educational programs relating to this policy and the maintenance of a safe and nurturing educational environment.

The Chief School Administrator shall use all customary methods of information dissemination to ensure that the community is informed of its policies on educational equity.

Date: January 10, 1983
Revised: May 16, 1994
Revised: January 19, 2009
Revised: June 29, 2009

Legal References:

<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 2C:16-1	Bias Intimidation
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 10:5-1 <u>et seq.</u>	Law Against Discrimination
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-20	Discrimination; prohibition
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-5.1	No child to be excluded from school because of race, etc.
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:7-1.1 <u>et seq.</u>	Managing for Equality and Equity in Education
<u>See particularly:</u>	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:7-1.4,-1.7
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:16-6.3(e)	Reporting students or staff members to law enforcement Authorities
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:17-1.1 <u>et seq.</u>	Students At-Risk of Not Receiving a Public Education
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:30-1.1 <u>et seq.</u>	Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:32-12.1	Reporting requirements
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:32-14.1	Review of mandated programs and services

Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, 526 U.S. 629 (1999)

State v. Mortimer, 135 N.J. 517 (1994)

20 U.S.C.A. 1681 - Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

20 U.S.C.A. 794 et seq. - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

20 U.S.C.A. 1400 et seq. - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (formerly Education for All Handicapped Children Act)--Part B

42 U.S.C.A. 12101 et seq. - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297)

Saxe v. State College Area School Dist., 240 F. 3d 200 (3d Cir. 2001)

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-110, 20 U.S.C.A. 6301 et seq.

L.W. v. Toms River Regional Schools Board of Education, N.J., No. A-111-05 (Feb. 22, 2007), 2007 N.J. LEXIS 184. The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that a school district may be held liable under the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 to -49, when students harass another student because of his perceived sexual orientation. A district school will be liable for such harassment if it knew or should have known of the harassment but failed to take reasonable remedial actions. The matter was remanded to the Director of the Division of Civil Rights.

Manual for the Evaluation of Local School Districts

Comprehensive Equity Plan, New Jersey State Department of Education

Cross References:

2224	Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
4111.1	Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
4211.1	Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
5134	Married/pregnant pupils
6121	Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
6141	Curriculum design/development
6145	Extracurricular activities
6161.1	Guidelines for evaluation and selection of instructional materials
6171.4	Special education

NONDISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

(Sexual and Other Harassment Relating to Students)

Prevention of Student to Student Harassment

When at all possible and feasible, teachers are to include methods and strategies for the promotion of positive relationships between children of diverse gender, race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, nonapplicable handicap, and other groupings. Elements of fair play, proper conduct, manners, and respect for diversity are to be

Any student infringing, implying, inferring, or stating any discriminatory comments shall receive a parental telephone call by the supervising teacher. Repeated instances shall receive additional telephone contacts by the teacher as well as a referral to the Guidance Counselor. Physical harassment or unresolved verbal patterns shall trigger sanctions noted below and may involve a referral to the Child Study Team.

Reporting

Any student who alleges sexual or other harassment by a staff member or by another student in the school district may complain directly to any district staff member. The staff member shall have the responsibility to bring the complaint to the attention of the District Affirmative Action officer, or the Chief School Administrator within the day the report is

The Affirmative Action Officer, and the Chief School Administrator shall have appropriate training in complaint investigations and the implementation of follow-up procedures. The due process rights and rights to confidentiality of all parties shall be respected during the investigation. Information shall only be imparted on a "need to know" basis.

The parents of affected students shall be informed by the Affirmative Action Officer or Chief School Administrator as soon as possible. The police and any other appropriate agency (e.g., the State Division of Youth and Family Services) shall be informed if the accusation meets their criteria for reporting. The District shall meet its legal obligations as well as its responsibilities toward the treatment of affected parties.

Sanctions

1. A substantiated charge against a tenured member in the school district shall subject that staff member to disciplinary action, up to and including certification of charges for dismissal with the commissioner of Education

Discipline shall be consistent with the seriousness of the offense and/or whether there is a pattern of substantiated offenses. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, recommendation for counseling, a written reprimand, withholding of increment, or other forms of discipline appropriate to the offensive behavior and consistent with law and any applicable contract. The Board also reserves the right to require a psychiatric examination in a manner consistent with law.

2. A substantiated charge against a non-tenured staff member or other employee in the school district shall subject that staff member or employee to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or non-renewal of employment.

Discipline shall be consistent with the seriousness of the offense and/or whether there is a pattern of substantiated offenses. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, recommendation for counseling a written reprimand, withholding of increment, or other forms of discipline appropriate to the offensive behavior and consistent with law and any applicable contract. The Board also reserves the right to require a psychiatric examination in a manner consistent with law.

3. A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion, consistent with policies #5114, 5131 and 5144.

Notification

Notice of this policy and Procedures shall be circulated to all staff and incorporated into staff handbooks. All students shall be informed of the policy and procedures in age appropriate terms. It shall also be printed in parent and student handbooks annually. All new staff shall be briefed and provided a copy of the policy and procedures as part of their orientation program.

District Level Prevention of Harassment

The Chief School Administrator shall ensure that appropriate educational programs shall be conducted annually for the faculty and as required by law for staff regarding the nature of sexual and other harassment and their prevention. Educational programs shall also be conducted for students, with consideration of age and maturity.

Date: May 16, 1994
Revised: January 19, 2009
Revised: June 29, 2009