

## **TITLE VII EMPLOYEE SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of the Grant Parish School Board to provide an employment environment that is free from unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct or communications deemed to constitute sexual harassment under federal and state laws, regulations, and guidelines. The Grant Parish School Board shall not tolerate sexual harassment by any student, employee, non-employee volunteer, or School Board member toward any individual.

Because Grant Parish School Board takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, the School Board shall respond promptly to complaints of sexual harassment and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, the School Board will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

All managerial and supervisory personnel shall be responsible for enforcing the Grant Parish School Board's sexual harassment policy. Failure to enforce this policy in a prompt and strict manner may subject such personnel to disciplinary action.

It should be noted that while this policy sets forth the goals of promoting a workplace that is free of sexual harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit the School Board's authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace conduct which is deemed unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment.

### DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

*Sexual harassment* is a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, and religion.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment,
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual, or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Under this definition, direct or implied request by a supervisor for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised job benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, or continued employment constitutes sexual harassment.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work place environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to male or female workers may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, following are examples of conduct which if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- unwelcome sexual advances - whether they involve physical touching or not;
- sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body; sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and
- discussion of one's sexual activities.

Harassment may depend not only upon the perpetrator's intention, but also upon how the person who is the target perceives the behavior or is affected by it.

All employees should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment, and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Grant Parish School Board.

#### REPORTING PROCEDURE

Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment by an employee or non-employee volunteer of the Grant Parish School Board, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment should report the alleged acts immediately to the employee's immediate supervisor who, in turn, shall submit it to the Superintendent or his/her designee. If the alleged acts were committed by the employee's immediate supervisor, the complaint should be directed to the Superintendent or his/her designee. If criminal activity is involved, the victim should also report the incident to local law enforcement. The person to whom the complaint is given shall promptly prepare a written report and forward it to the Superintendent or his/her designee.

#### INVESTIGATION AND RECOMMENDATION

The School Board shall respect the confidentiality of the complainant and the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed as much as possible, consistent with the School Board's legal obligations and the necessity to investigate allegations of harassment, and take corrective or disciplinary action when the conduct has occurred.

Upon receipt of a report or complaint alleging sexual harassment by an employee or nonemployee volunteer, such a complaint shall be immediately investigated by personnel designated by the Superintendent to conduct such investigation utilizing the procedures outlined in policy [GAMC, Investigations](#). In addition, the investigation shall include personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint, as well as a review of related charges, if any, personnel files, work records and other pertinent information.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the Superintendent or designee should consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the sexual advances, relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

A report shall be made to the Superintendent upon completion of the investigation involving an employee or non-employee volunteer. The report may include a finding that the complaint was unfounded, informally resolved, or recommended to the Superintendent for disciplinary action. No record of an unfounded or unsubstantiated complaint shall be filed in an employee's personnel file.

## RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

Upon receipt of a recommendation that a complaint is valid, the Superintendent shall take such action as appropriate based on the results of the investigation, which may include, but not be limited to, suspension with or without pay, demotion, or termination.

If, based on the results of the investigation, the claim of sexual harassment is found to be intentionally false, the Superintendent shall take such action as appropriate, which may include, but not be limited to, suspension with or without pay, demotion, or termination.

Any employee shall have the right to pursue a claim of sexual harassment under state or federal law, regardless of the outcome of the School Board's investigation.

## RETALIATION PROHIBITED

The Superintendent shall discipline any individual who retaliates against any person who reports alleged sexual harassment or who retaliates against any person who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing relating to a sexual harassment complaint. *Retaliation* shall include, but not be limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment at the time of a report or any time after a report.

## NON-HARASSMENT

The School Board recognizes that not every advance or conduct of a sexual nature constitutes harassment. Whether a particular action or incident is a personal, social relationship without a discriminatory employment effect requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances. Deliberate false accusations of sexual harassment can have a serious detrimental effect on innocent parties and subject the accuser to disciplinary actions.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT AS SEXUAL ABUSE OR CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Under certain circumstances, sexual harassment of a student may constitute sexual abuse under the Louisiana Children's Code. In such situations, School Board personnel become *mandatory reporters* and shall comply with [Article 609\(A\)](#) of the Louisiana Children's Code and directly report the sexual abuse to the Child Protection Unit of the Louisiana Department of Social Services. Also, activity of a criminal nature should be reported by the victim to local law enforcement.

## NOTIFICATION/TRAINING

Copies of this policy shall be circulated to all schools and departments of the Grant Parish School Board and placed on the School Board's website. Training sessions on the provisions of this policy and the prevention of sexual harassment shall be held in all schools on an annual basis. Training sessions for new non-teaching employees shall be conducted annually. Supervisors and other persons designated to accept or investigate complaints of sexual harassment in the workplace shall receive additional education and training.

Employees shall be apprised of applicable federal and state law on sexual harassment, including the right of the complainant to pursue a claim under state or federal law, regardless of the outcome of the investigation.

Revised: December, 2018

Revised: February 4, 2020

Revised: August 4, 2020

Ref: [42 USC Chapter 21](#) (*Civil Rights*)

FILE: GAEAA

Cf: [GAAA](#), [GAE](#), [GAMC](#)

Cf: [GBK](#), [GBRA](#), [JAAA](#), [JCED](#)

[42 USC 2000e](#) (*Civil Rights - Definitions*)

[29 CFR 1604.11](#) (*Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Sex - Sexual Harassment*)

La. Rev. Stat. Ann.

§§[14:41](#), [14:42](#), [14:42.1](#), [14:43](#), [14:81.4](#), [17:81](#), [23:301](#), [23:302](#), [23:303](#), [23:332](#), [23:967](#), [42:341](#), [42:342](#), [42:343](#), [42:344](#), [42:345](#)

La. Civil Code, [Art. 2315](#)

Board minutes 7-23-98, [2-4-20](#), [8-4-20](#)

Grant Parish School Board