

Harassment Policy

Position

It is the policy of the Southeastern Regional School District to maintain a learning environment free from harassment because of an individual's race, color, sex, national origin, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. The Southeastern Regional School District prohibits any and all forms of harassment because of race, color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Any person who attends this school or any of its functions has the same rights as all other citizens. Harassment creates a climate of fear and hostility that will not be tolerated. Any person, or group of persons, who denies or attempts to prevent a person or persons from availing themselves of the freedom to enjoy these rights will be dealt with as severely as the law permits.

Definition

Racial, sexual, religious/ethnic harassment and violence refers to unwelcome and unwanted behavior related to gender, race, religion, ethnic or disability group that makes the recipient feel afraid, embarrassed, helpless, angry or unsafe, or upsets the recipient to the point that he/she cannot learn, cannot teach, or be effective at school or at his/her job.

Harassment and violence is prohibited between staff members, between staff members and students, between students, and from members of the public directed at students or staff on school property or at school-sponsored events. Some examples of harassment and violence may include, but are not limited to: unwelcome patting, pinching, or physical contact; obscene gesturing or calling someone gay; ethnic or racial slurs; or threats, insults, or assaults against someone due to their gender, race, religion, ethnic group or disability.

Legal Aspects

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. Educational Institutions are responsible for preventing racial discrimination against employees and students. Racial harassment is considered a form of discrimination under this law and a violation of civil rights.

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. In accordance with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Southeastern Regional School District hereby makes notice that it does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment therein. In brief, Section 504 states, "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, educational institutions are responsible for preventing sexual discrimination against their students and employees. Sexual harassment is considered to be a form of sex discrimination. If sexual harassment involves a minor student in a school setting, it can be considered a criminal offense under laws relating to child abuse.

A student or a group of students who have been harassed have three options.

1. Complaints through the grievance procedure at their school.
2. Complaints through the Office of Civil Rights or equivalent state agency.
3. Civil suits.

If you are the victim of harassment of any kind please report it immediately!

1. Harassment complaints will be referred to the Director of Student Life who will interview the complainant within two days from the time the report is made.
2. If the problem cannot be resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction at the Director of Student Life’s level, the incident will be referred to the Principal.
3. If the problem cannot be resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction at the Principal’s level, the incident will be referred to the Superintendent.
4. If the problem cannot be resolved at that level or at any time, a complaint can be made to the:
Office for Civil Rights
United States Department of Education
John McCormack Building
Room 701
Boston, MA 02109
5. Upon completion of the investigation, all incident reports will be kept on file in the Office of the Superintendent.

Retaliation: Retaliation in any form against any person who files complaints relating to harassment is forbidden. If it occurs it will be considered grounds for dismissal or removal from the educational setting.

Confidentiality: Those involved with harassment investigations will protect the confidentiality of all information relating to the case.

From the Office of the Superintendent

The Director of Student Life is designated as the employee responsible for coordinating the Southeastern Regional School District’s efforts to implement our nondiscriminatory policies. Any inquiries concerning the application of Section 504, Title II, Title VI, or Title IX to the practices and policies of the Southeastern Regional School District may be addressed to the Director of Student Life at the Southeastern Regional Technical School, 250 Foundry Street, South Easton, MA 02375, (508) 230-1200 or to the Office for Civil Rights, United States Department of Education, John McCormack Building, Room 701, Boston, MA 02109.

Anti-Harassment Discipline Code

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual Harassment in school is unwanted sexual attention from teachers, other adults, students or anyone else the victim may deal with in school or at school-related activities. The range of behaviors including: leering, pinching, grabbing, suggestive verbal comments, and pressure for sexual activity. Attempted rape and rape are the most physically violent forms of Sexual Harassment. Sexual Harassment also carries the message that if the victim does not comply with harasser’s demands, there may be retaliation. Incidents of Sexual Harassment may occur only once, sometimes they are repeated; often the situation gets worse if it is not stopped.

The following behaviors are examples of sexual harassment which are not allowed:

- Staring or leering with sexual overtones
- Spreading sexual gossip
- Unwanted sexual comments
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Any unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature

What is Harassment?

Harassment is unwelcome behavior of a physical, written, or verbal nature, which is either repeated or severe, and which creates a hostile, humiliating, intimidating and offensive educational environment. Harassment is a form of discrimination. Harassment can occur staff to student, student to staff, staff to staff.

The following behaviors are examples of harassment which are not allowed:

- Racial slurs/name calling
- Anti-gay comments
- Religious jokes and insults

What are Hate Crimes?

Hate crimes are crimes in which the perpetrator's conduct is motivated, in whole or in part, by hatred, bias, or prejudice against an individual's or group's actual perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or gender.

The following behaviors are examples of hate crimes which are not allowed:

- Defacing school property with racist markings
- A threat of bodily injury
- Intimidation

What should I do if I'm a victim of sexual harassment, harassment, or hate crimes?

If you are a victim of any type of harassment, talk to an adult in the school as soon as possible. Begin with a person of authority who is closest to the problem. For instance, if a student is harassing you in a classroom, approach the teacher in charge. Explain the incident and ask for help. Avoid solving the problem alone. Remember that you are the one who decides what unwanted sexual attention is and that the purpose of any discipline is to prevent further incidents. All hate crimes should be reported immediately to the principal or closest staff member. Police notification will immediately follow any hate crimes.

How will the school handle the problem?

Because dealing with forms of harassment and hate crimes is a new issue for schools and for our society, any discipline will include an educational component. Sometimes the harasser may not be aware of the effects of harassment on the victim, or there may be some confusion about the difference between flirting and sexual harassment or fooling around and harassment. A little "consciousness-raising" may go a long way. Because this is such a delicate matter, each incident will be handled individually and as confidentially as possible. The purpose of this discipline will be to prevent further incidents. Although there are no set punishments, when they do occur, they may be quite serious. Due to the criminal nature of hate crimes, police notification will be mandatory.

If the STI Director and the advocate determine that harassment has actually taken place, the accused will participate in a discussion on the nature of harassment and hate crimes in schools and the workplace. Further disciplinary action may occur, depending on whether or not this is a first incident and how serious the harassment is.

What are the punishments for sexual harassment, harassment, and hate crimes?

The range of discipline includes:

- Participation in a session(s) on the problem of Sexual Harassment in our culture and in our school.
- Research of other academic work on the topic of Sexual Harassment.
- Apology to the victim.
- Further counseling.
- Suspension.
- Police notification/expulsion.

If the accused harasser is a staff member, the STI Director will establish a hearing similar to one for a student, respecting due process. The range of discipline in this case may include discussions with the STI Director and/or Superintendent; or further disciplinary actions, possibly dismissal, depending on the seriousness and frequency of incidents.

Valor Act

The Valor Act is in accordance with the General Laws of Massachusetts [M.G.L. c. 15A §43(a)]. The VALOR Act II protects students enrolled of the Southeastern Technical Institute from incurring academic or financial penalties as a result of performing military service. A student called to or enlisting in active duty is allowed the option of completing the course(s) at a later date without penalty, or withdrawing from the course(s) and will receive a full refund of fees and tuition paid. If a student chooses to complete the course(s) at a later date and the course(s) is no longer available upon the student's return, the student will be allowed to complete a replacement course for equivalent credit (clock hours) without penalty. If a student chooses to withdraw from the course(s), the student's academic record (transcript) will reflect that the withdrawal was due to active duty military service.