

Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation, and Hazing

The Board will strive to provide a positive and productive learning and working environment. Bullying, harassment, intimidation or hazing, by students, staff or third parties is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated.

Bullying is any harassment, intimidation, hazing or threatening, insulting or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal or electronic communication or threat directed against a student that is persistent, severe or repeated and that:

- Causes a student physical harm, damages a student's property or places a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student or the student's property;
- Creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's access to an educational opportunity or benefit; or
- Substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying also includes acts of hazing associated with athletics or school-sponsored organizations or groups. Hazing includes, but is not limited to, any act that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or as a condition or precondition of attaining membership in or affiliation with any District-sponsored activity or grade-level attainment.

Harassment, intimidation and bullying can take many forms - verbal, written, electronic, visual, physical and psychological - and is often, but not always, associated with race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or physical differences.

No person, including a district employee or agent, or student, shall bully, harass, haze or intimidate another based on the provisions of applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination or any other reason. It is the policy of the board to comply with all nondiscrimination laws.

Complaints of bullying, harassment, intimidation and hazing will be handled as described below and as set forth in the applicable grievance procedure. The District shall use reasonable measures to inform staff members and students that the District will not tolerate bullying, harassment or intimidation, by including appropriate language in school handbooks.

Sexual Harassment Prohibited

Sexual harassment of students is prohibited. Any person, including a district employee or agent, or student, engages in sexual harassment whenever he or she makes sexual advances, requests sexual favors and engages in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature, imposed on the basis of sex, that:

- Denies or limits the provision of educational aid, benefits, services or treatment; or that makes such conduct a condition of a student's academic status; or
- Has the purpose or effect of:
 - Substantially interfering with a student's educational environment;
 - Creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment;
 - Depriving a student of educational aid, benefits, services or treatment; or
 - Making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis for academic decision affecting a student.

The terms "intimidating," "hostile" and "offensive" include conduct that has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment or discomfort. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics and spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities. Sexual harassment includes sexual violence, which are physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the use of drugs or alcohol or intellectual or other disability. Sexually violent acts could include rape, sexual assault, sexual battery and sexual coercion.

Reporting

Students, who believe they are victims of bullying, harassment or intimidation, regardless of the reason, or have witnessed bullying, harassment or intimidation, regardless of the reason, are encouraged to discuss the matter with their teacher, counselor, bus driver, coach, principal or any responsible adult who is not involved in the alleged bullying, harassment or intimidation. Students who believe they are victims of sexual harassment or harassment based upon a disability or have witnessed sexual harassment or harassment based upon a disability are encouraged to report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator/Section 504 Coordinator or Principal. Students may choose to report to a person of the student's same sex if alleging a violation of Title IX. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to investigate.

Any adult school employee, adult volunteer, district contractor or agent who witnesses, overhears or receives a report, formal or informal, written or oral, of bullying, harassment or intimidation shall report it in accordance with procedures developed under this policy.

Complaints alleging sex discrimination or harassment shall be addressed through the District's Title IX Grievance Procedures. Complaints alleging disability discrimination or harassment shall be addressed through the District's Section 504 Grievance Procedures. All other complaints alleging bullying, discrimination or harassment shall be addressed through the District's Uniform Grievance Protocol.

The Title IX Coordinator, Section 504 Coordinator and/or administrator are responsible for taking the following actions in conformance with the applicable grievance procedure:

- Taking prompt action to investigate/report complaints of harassment, intimidation and bullying.
- Promptly notifying the alleged victims and alleged perpetrators and their parents/guardians regarding the outcome; and
- Taking disciplinary action as appropriate and any other actions appropriate to address the harassment, intimidation and bullying.

In the event that a staff member or administrator knows or reasonably believes that the alleged behavior constitutes criminal activity or child abuse or neglect, the staff member or administrator shall report such activity to law enforcement and/or the Department of Public Health and Human Services. If it is determined that the alleged harassment, intimidation or bullying did not occur at school or school-related activity or does not materially or substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the District, an administrator shall refer the matter, as appropriate, to other persons or entities with appropriate jurisdiction, including but not limited to law enforcement or the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Consequences

Any District employee who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in bullying, harassment and intimidation of a student, regardless of the reason, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Any student who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in bullying, harassment and intimidation, regardless of the reason, will be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to, suspension and expulsion consistent with the District's discipline policy. Any person making a knowingly false accusation regarding bullying, harassment and intimidation, regardless of the reason, will likewise be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge, with regard to employees, or suspension and expulsion, with regard to students.

Retaliation and reprisal against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying is prohibited. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with district policy.

Cross References:	1700 Administrative Procedures Manual	Uniform Grievance Protocol
Legal References:	House Bill 284 § 49-2-307, MCA § 49-3-201, MCA et seq 20 U.S.C § 1681 et seq 10.55.701, ARM 10.55.719, ARM 10.55.801, ARM	Bully-Free Montana Act Discrimination in education Governmental Code of Fair Practices Title IX Board of Trustees Student Protection Procedures School Climate

Policy History:

Adopted on:

Revised on: 11 July 2016

Poplar School District Administrative Regulation

STUDENTS

AR 3210, 3225, & 5012

Title IX Grievance Procedures

The Poplar School District has adopted internal grievance procedures providing for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 Act (Title IX). Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities operated by public school districts. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. The Poplar School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs and activities.

All references to sex discrimination throughout these procedures include gender-based harassment and sexual harassment. Gender-based harassment may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping, even if those acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can occur whenever an individual makes sexual advances, requests sexual favors, and engages in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature, imposed on the basis of sex, that:

In the case of a student, denies or limits the provision of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment; or that makes such conduct a condition of a student's academic status; or in the case of an employee denies or limits the employment, recruitment, consideration, or selection or treatment, or that makes such conduct a condition of the employee's employment status; OR

Has the purpose or effect of:

- substantially interfering with a student's educational environment or employee's work environment.;
- creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment;
- depriving a student of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment; or depriving an employee of the benefits of or deprives that employee of employment opportunities; or
- making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis for academic decisions affecting a student or employment decisions affecting an employee.

Sexual harassment includes sexual violence. Sexual violence refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the victim's use of drugs or alcohol or is unable to give consent due to an intellectual or other disability. Sexually violent acts include rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion.

Title IX Coordinator

Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator:

Dr. Keith Erickson

Asst. Superintendent

406.768.6636

keith.erickson@poplarschools.com

Inquiries may also be referred to the Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Education.

Filing a Complaint

An individual believing that he or she has been the victim of sex discrimination should file a complaint with the Title IX Coordinator within 30 days of the incident(s) giving rise to the allegations. If the individual wishes to invoke the formal complaint procedures (see formal complaint procedures section), the complaint should be made in writing. An individual wishing to invoke the informal resolution process may make a complaint in writing or verbally.

An individual wishing to make a complaint will be provided with a copy of these procedures.

Informal Resolution

An individual alleging sex discrimination by an employee, student, or third party may access an informal mechanism to attempt to resolve the situation. The individual making the complaint is not required to invoke any informal mechanisms to resolve the situation. The decision to invoke the informal resolution process is voluntary.

If the individual wishes to attempt to work out the problem directly with the alleged perpetrator, a school representative will be available to assist. The individual may also request mediation with a designated mediator present to assist the individual and alleged perpetrator reach a resolution.

The individual has the right to end the informal resolution process at any time. If the individual wishes to end the informal process prior to reaching a resolution or is not satisfied with the resolution reached, the individual has the right to commence a formal complaint at any time.

The informal process, including mediation, will not be available to individuals alleging sexual assault.

Formal Complaints

AN individual may make a formal complaint of sex discrimination in accordance with the procedures described above. The complaint should be in writing and should specify the

allegations which the individual believes constitute sex discrimination. The individual has the right to contact law enforcement to determine if criminal activity occurred.

Investigation

The District shall conduct an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation into the allegations. Even if no formal complaint has been filed, the District may still conduct an investigation to determine whether sex discrimination has occurred when it has knowledge of allegations of sex discrimination. Any investigation by the District shall be in addition to any criminal investigation that may occur. Determinations resulting from the investigation shall be made on a preponderance of the evidence standard (i.e., it is more likely than not that sex discrimination occurred).

Parties (the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator(s)) will have an equal opportunity to present relevant witnesses and other evidence. The investigation shall allow for both the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator to provide information separately. If written statements are provided, each party shall have the opportunity to review such statements, subject to the disclosure of such information under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and Montana law.

Either party may have a representative or lawyer present during the investigations; however, the representative or lawyer is not allowed to speak or ask questions during any investigatory interviews. The representative or lawyer may request clarification of any questions, but may not answer, advise his or her client how to answer, or ask any substantive questions.

Notice of Outcome

Both the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator shall be notified in writing regarding the outcome of the investigation. Subject to FERPA and Montana law, an alleged victim may be notified about sanctions imposed on another individual found to have engaged in harassment when that sanction directly relates to the individual. This may include an order that the harasser stay away from the victim.

Time Frames

The District shall complete its investigation within 60 days of receipt of the complaint or knowledge of allegations of sex discrimination. With the consent of the parties and the Superintendent, the investigation may be extended for an additional 15 days in extenuating circumstances. The investigator shall contact both parties once it appears that the investigation will require a longer period of time. The Notice of the Outcome of the investigation will be sent within that 60-day period, unless extended as described herein.

Appeals

Any party who is not satisfied with the findings from the investigation may appeal to the Superintendent. The appeal should be made within ten (10) days of receipt of the Notice of Outcome. Within three (3) days of receipt of any appeal by either party, the Superintendent shall notify the nonappealing party regarding the appeal. Within five (5) days of receipt of notice of

any appeal, the nonappealing party may present argument opposing the appeal in writing. Within twenty (20) days of receipt of the initial appeal, regardless of whether the nonappealing party has submitted any opposition to the appeal, the Superintendent shall issue a written decision to both parties affirming or rejecting the investigation findings.

If either party is not satisfied with the Superintendent's written decision, that party may submit a written appeal to the Board of Trustees within ten (10) days of receipt of the Superintendent's decision. The Board shall hold a hearing to determine whether the Superintendent's decision shall be affirmed or rejected. Depending on the unique circumstances of the complaint, the Board may arrange for alternative means of participation for one of the parties. The Board shall issue a written decision within thirty (30) days of the hearing affirming or rejecting the Superintendent's decision.

Remedies

The District shall take all reasonable and necessary steps to prevent the recurrence of any harassment and to correct its discriminatory effects on the individual and others. Any individual participating in a sex discrimination investigation shall notify the Title IX Coordinator if he or she believes that he or she is being retaliated against for participating in the investigation. The District prohibits retaliation against individuals making complaints under these procedures and participating in any investigation that may ensue.