

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS – STUDENTS

Complaints

A student who believes that he/she is the victim of harassment should report the matter to a teacher, counselor, or administrator who in turn will notify the principal or assistant principal in the school. As an alternative, a student may report directly to the Director of Pupil Services. Notice of each school's complaint managers will be posted in a prominent location in the school.

A student may also file a complaint alleging harassment by contacting:

Director of Pupil Services
Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
16 Charter Road, Acton, MA 01720
978-264-4700

If a student does not wish to discuss the issue with other school staff or feels that the staff is not addressing the problem in an effective manner, the student should contact the Superintendent of Schools at 16 Charter Rd., Acton, MA 01720, telephone 978-264-4700. The Director of Pupil Services as listed above is also available to provide information about this policy and the Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools' complaint process.

Investigation and Closure of a Complaint

The Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools urge all individuals in the school community to bring any complaint of harassment to the attention of school personnel so that they can resolve the issue. The Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools will promptly investigate every complaint, observing all relevant state and federal laws and regulations and school system policies and procedures, as well as applicable contractual requirements. If it is determined that harassment has occurred, the Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools will take appropriate action to end the harassment and to ensure that it is not repeated.

When an investigation has been completed, school personnel will inform the complainant of the results and file a report with the Director of Pupil Services, Coordinator for Title IX/Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act/Chapter 622

Retaliation against any individual who has filed a complaint of harassment or who cooperates in an investigation is unlawful and prohibited.

Penalties

Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation will be subject to termination/expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the School Administration and/or School Committee, subject to applicable school system policies and procedures, as well as applicable contractual requirements.

In certain cases, harassment and, in particular, sexual harassment of a student may constitute child abuse under Massachusetts law. The Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools will comply with all legal requirements governing the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse.

It should be noted that while this policy sets forth the goal of the Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools in promoting a work and educational environment that is free of harassment based upon race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, and disability, the policy is not designed or intended to limit the authority of school officials to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which is deemed unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of harassment.

References

State agencies that enforce laws prohibiting harassment or receive complaints thereunder include the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), which is located at One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108, telephone (617) 727-3990 and the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5023 (telephone (781) 338-3300).

Federal agencies responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting harassment include the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, One Congress Street, Boston, MA 02109, telephone (617) 565-3200, TDD Users (617) 565-3204, and the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), 33 Arch Street, Suite 900, Boston, Massachusetts 02110, telephone (617) 289-0111, fax (617) 289-0150.