

**RACIAL, SEXUAL, RELIGIOUS/ETHNIC  
HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE POLICY**

**1.0 Scope.**

Monroe County Board of Education has set the firm expectation that all schools shall be harassment and violence free.

- 1.1 Authority. W.Va. Constitution, Article XII, §2, and W.Va. Code §§18-2-5, 18-2-5a, and 18-2-7b, WVDE Policy 2421.

**2.0 Purpose.**

- 2.1. The purpose of these regulations is to prevent racial, sexual or religious/ethnic harassment or violence, toward students and staff, to protect the academic environment, and to assure that our educational community responds to harassment and/or violence incidents when they occur in a manner that effectively deters future incidents and affirms respect for individuals. Attached are the procedures that ensure Monroe County Board of Education shall implement appropriate prevention and response programs, outlines investigatory and reporting procedures and delineates penalties for violations of this policy. To the extent possible, Monroe County Schools will collaborate with other state and local agencies in carrying out the purpose of this rule. It is the intent of the Monroe County Board of Education to ensure that the learning and working environments are free from any type of harassment or violence.

**3.0 Application.**

- 3.1. These regulations apply to any student, staff member or member of the public during any school related activity or during any education sponsored event whether in a building or other property used or operated by a county board of education, RESA or state department of education or in another facility being used by any of those agencies. The term “staff members,” as used in these regulations, shall encompass all employees of the county board of education or other applicable local agency or facility.
- 3.2. No student, staff member or member of the public, during any school related activity or during any education sponsored event, whether in a building or other property used or operated by Monroe County Board of Education, or in another facility being used by any of this agency, shall engage in sexual, racial or ethnic/religious harassment or violence. Persons found to have violated this

prohibition shall be subject to the penalties in Section 8.1.

- 3.3. Amorous relationships between staff members and students are prohibited, and staff members found to have violated this prohibition shall be subject to the penalties outlined in Section 8.1.

#### **4.0 Definitions.**

- 4.1. Sexual Harassment - Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- 4.1.1. submission to the conduct or communication is made a term or condition either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining or retaining employment or of obtaining an education;

- 4.1.2. submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment or education; or

- 4.1.3. that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or education; or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive employment or educational environment.

- 4.1.4. Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to:

- a. unwelcome verbal harassment of a sexual nature or abuse;

- b. unwelcome pressure for sexual activity;

- c. unwelcome, sexually motivated or inappropriate patting, pinching or physical contact;

- d. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment or educational status;

- e. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment or educational status; or

- f. unwelcome behavior, verbal or written words or symbols directed at an individual because of gender;
  - g. the use of authority to emphasize the sexuality of a student in a manner that prevents or impairs that student's full enjoyment of educational benefits, climate or opportunities.
- 4.2. Racial Harassment - Racial harassment consists of physical, verbal or written conduct relating to an individual's race when the conduct:
- 4.2.1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment;
  - 4.2.2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or
  - 4.2.3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.
- 4.3. Religious/Ethnic Harassment - Religious/ethnic harassment consists of physical, verbal or written conduct which is related to an individual's religion or ethnic background when the conduct:
- 4.3.1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment;
  - 4.3.2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or
  - 4.3.3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.
- 4.4. Sexual Violence - Sexual violence is a physical act of aggression or force or the threat thereof which involves the touching of another's intimate parts, or forcing a person to touch any person's intimate parts. Intimate parts include the primary genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks or breast, as well as the clothing covering these areas:
- 4.4.1. sexual violence may include, but is not limited to:
    - a. touching, patting, grabbing or pinching another person's intimate parts, whether that person is of the same sex or the opposite sex;

- b. coercing, forcing or attempting to coerce or force the touching of anyone's intimate parts;
  - c. coercing, forcing or attempting to coerce or force sexual intercourse or a sexual act on another; or
  - d. threatening to force or coerce sexual acts, including the touching of intimate parts or intercourse, on another; or
  - e. threatening or forcing exposure of intimate apparel or body parts by removal of clothing.
- 4.5. Racial Violence - Racial violence is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another because of, or in a manner reasonably related to, race.
- 4.6. Religious/Ethnic Violence - Religious/ethnic violence is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another because of, or in a manner reasonably related to, religion or ethnicity.
- 4.7. Assault - Assault is:
- 4.7.1. an act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death;
  - 4.7.2. the threat to do bodily harm to another with present ability to carry out the threat.

## **5.0 Complaint Procedures.**

- 5.1. Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of religious/ethnic, racial or sexual harassment or violence by a pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel of the Monroe County Board of Education, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute religious/ethnic; racial or sexual harassment or violence toward a pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel is encouraged to report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school official. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting harassment or violence directly to the county superintendent, RESA executive director or the state superintendent, as appropriate, or to the West Virginia Human Rights Commission, or to a law enforcement agency.
- 5.2. The Monroe County Board of Education has adopted appropriate procedures for investigating, reporting, and responding to violations of this policy in a manner

that promotes understanding and respect. Copies of these procedures are located and are readily accessible at the Monroe County Board of Education building, and at each school building. A synopsis of this policy will be publicly published annually.

- 5.3. All alleged incidents of harassment or violence observed by faculty or staff must be report to the designated investigator and appropriate action should be taken as specified in part 6 and 7 of this policy.
- 5.4. Under certain circumstances, sexual harassment may constitute child and/or sexual abuse under Chapter 49 of the West Virginia Code. In such situations, the Monroe County Board of Education shall comply with the provisions of law for reporting such abuse.

## **6.0 Investigation.**

- 6.1. The individual(s) designated by the policy to investigate, shall upon receipt of a report or complaint alleging religious/ethnic, racial or sexual harassment or violence, immediately undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by Monroe County School officials or by a third party designed by the superintendent, in accordance with this policy.
- 6.2. The investigation will consist of 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. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and review of circumstances deemed pertinent by the investigator.
- 6.3. The Superintendent or designee (ex: Principal, Title IX Director) shall determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy.
- 6.4. In determining the appropriate response and/or punishment, the Superintendent or designee will, if appropriate, consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of the policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.
- 6.5. The superintendent or designee may take immediate steps, at his/her discretion, to protect the complainant, pupils, teachers, administrators or other personnel

pending completion of an investigation of alleged religious/ethnic, racial or sexual harassment or violence.

- 6.7. The result of the investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant or his/her legal guardian by the superintendent or designee; or, if the superintendent is the subject of the complaint, by the Monroe County Board of Education President.
- 6.8. Confidentiality of the filing of complaints, the identity of subjects and witnesses of any complaint and of any action taken as a result of such complaint is essential to the effectiveness of this policy. Only those individuals necessary for the investigation and resolution of the complaint shall be given information about it. Therefore, the right of confidentiality of complainants, subjects, witnesses, and investigators will be vigorously protected and violation of such confidentiality may itself be grounds for disciplinary action.

## **7.0 Agency Action and Reporting.**

- 7.1. Upon receipt of a report substantiated by the investigation, the superintendent and/or the Monroe County Board of Education will take appropriate action against those found to have violated this policy. Such action may include, but is not limited to warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, termination and revocation of licensure.
- 7.2. The superintendent and/or the Monroe County Board of Education shall also initiate such other action as is appropriate to ease tensions and to affirm the values of respect and understanding, in accordance with the agency's plans developed pursuant to part 4 of this policy.
- 7.3. The superintendent or designee shall immediately file a report with the West Virginia Department of Education of all reports of harassment or violence when investigation shows that harassment or violence did occur and all action taken in response to the incident.

## **8.0 Reprisal.**

- 8.1 Monroe County Board of Education has developed discipline procedures to take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports alleged religious/ethnic, racial or sexual harassment or violence or any person who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation, or who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment or violence. Retaliation

includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment. Monroe County Schools has also developed a discipline process to take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, or administrator or other school personnel who falsely reports religious/ethnic, racial, or sexual harassment.

#### **9.0 Right to Alternative Complaint Procedures.**

- 9.1. These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse which may include filing charges with the West Virginia Human Rights Commission, initiating civil action or seeking redress under the state criminal statutes and/or federal law.

#### **10.0 Prevention Programs.**

- 10.1. Monroe County Board of Education implements an education program for each programmatic level, K-4, 5-8, and 9-12, as well as a program for all faculty and staff. These programs raise awareness of the different types of harassment, how it manifests itself, its devastating emotional and educational consequences, and its legal consequences. In addition, multicultural education programs must be developed and implemented for faculty, staff and students to foster an attitude of understanding and acceptance of individuals from a variety of cultural, ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds.

#### **11.0 Dissemination of Policy and Training.**

- 11.1. This policy or a summary shall be conspicuously posted throughout each Monroe County School's facilities in areas accessible to pupils and staff members.
- 11.2. This policy shall appear in the student and staff handbooks and if no handbook is available, a copy will be distributed to all students, faculty, and staff.
- 11.3. Monroe County Schools provides training for students and staff on these regulations and on means for effectively promoting the goals of this policy.
- 11.4. This policy shall be reviewed at least bi-annually for compliance with state and federal law and state board of education policy.

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Reviewed and adopted by Board Action: August 15, 2006  
Upon adoption, this policy replaces JG-1/GBEA; JG-3/GBEA-2; JG-4/GBEA-3