

Book	Policy Manual
Section	502 - Personnel Policies: Employment
Title	Productive Work Environment/Harassment Prohibited
Code	502.13
Status	Active
Legal	Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §4-108, <b>State Government</b> Article <b>§§20-601 through 20-602</b> of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and §§2-302 and 2-305 of the State Personnel and Pensions Article.
Adopted	June 11, 2003
Last Reviewed	<del>March 19, 2020</del> <b>November 17, 2022</b>
Last Revised	<del>March 19, 2020</del> <b>November 17, 2022</b>

It is the policy of the Dorchester County Board of Education (the Board) to promote a productive work environment and not to tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee, which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.

1. Employees are expected to act in a positive manner and contribute to a productive work environment that is free from harassing or disruptive activity. Special attention is called to the prohibition of sexual harassment and harassment based on race, color, **ethnicity**, age, sex, religion, national origin, ~~protected activity~~, **gender identity**, **sexual orientation**, **marital status**, disability, or other basis prohibited by law.

2. The Board expects that staff members, students, and others conducting business on Board of Education property will not be subject to any form of harassment. Harassment violates federal and state laws and is completely inappropriate in the workplace and the learning environment.

3. Sexual harassment can be evident in two different forms: sexual conduct

related to a tangible employment action (such as hiring, firing, promotion, demotion, work assignments, etc.) or conduct that creates a hostile environment. Sexual harassment can include conduct by employees or non-employees, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or otherwise offensive nature, such as propositions, repeated requests for dates, dirty jokes, sexually provocative pictures, unnecessary touching or graphic or verbal comments about an individual's body, or use of sexually degrading names, or the display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, including nude photographs.

4. Any person who believes he or she is or has been subjected to prohibited harassment should report the incident to a school administrator, department head, or ~~guidance~~ school counselor. If a complaint is against the immediate Supervisor, the complaint should be reported to the next level Supervisor.

5. Any Supervisor who witnesses or learns about conduct that might violate this policy shall report it to their Supervisor, even if no complaint is made.

6. All discussions will be considered confidential as much as reasonably possible to the extent permitted by law and consistent with the school system's obligation to investigate and deal with complaints. Investigation of an incident or complaint shall begin immediately. Investigations shall be prompt, thorough, and impartial. Prompt and appropriate corrective action will be taken in all instances where harassment is found.

7. The Board prohibits any form of retaliatory action against any person who files a complaint of harassment or who provides information regarding a complaint.

8. Each Principal has a responsibility to maintain the school free of any form of sexual harassment. No employee shall threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's refusal or willingness to submit to sexual advances will affect the employee's terms or conditions of employment.

9. Any employee who believes that a member of the Board, Principal's, another employee's, a nonemployee's, a visitor's, or vendor's actions or words constitute unwelcome harassment has a responsibility to report or complain about the situation as soon as possible. Such report or complaint should be made to the Superintendent or to the Supervisor of Human Resources if the complaint involves the Superintendent.

10. Employees are required to cooperate in any investigation. A timely

resolution of each complaint is to be reached and communicated to the parties involved. Retaliation against any employee for filing a complaint or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

11. Any employee, Principal, or Supervisor who is found to have engaged in harassment of another employee will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances, up to and including termination.

12. Supervisors shall receive special training in recognizing and dealing with prohibited harassment, and their performance evaluations shall include evaluation of their participation in and their effective use of such training.

13. Use of the harassment complaint process by employees is strongly encouraged. Employees also may have rights within certain time limitations to pursue complaints of unlawful harassment under state or federal law. Further information about employees' legal rights can be obtained from the Maryland Commission on Human Relations or the United States Equal Opportunity Commission.