



## Recognizing and Dealing with Workplace Harassment *An informational guide for staff members*

The Niskayuna Board of Education and administration are committed to providing an educational environment free from harassment for all students and staff members. This document provides a brief overview of the district's policy on workplace harassment. All staff members should take the time to review this important information.

The district's Harassment Prevention Liaison Group, which is comprised of staff members from all of our employee groups, has recently revised and rewritten the policy in light of changes to the laws regarding harassment in the workplace.

We encourage you to discuss the policy and direct any questions you may have to your Harassment Prevention Liaison Group representatives. They are listed on the back of this brochure.

If you would like a copy of the complete district policy on student harassment, contact Niskayuna's Title VII/Title IX Officer Ron Grastorf at 377-4666, ext. 50740 or alternate Title VII/Title IX Officer Dr. Deborah Shea at 377-4666, ext. 50714.

### **Employees are encouraged to...**

*- Report incidents of harassing behavior to a supervisor or the district's Title VII/Title IX Officer*

### **The District will...**

- Act promptly to investigate all complaints.*
- Take immediate and appropriate corrective action when it find harassment did occur.*
- Protect the confidentiality of harassments complaints to the extent possible under the law.*

### **What is workplace harassment?**

Workplace harassment involves offensive behavior at work that is motivated by an individual's attitudes and/or impermissible stereotypes based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, military status, veteran status, disability, or domestic violence victim status, or any other status protected by law. This offensive behavior is a form of employment discrimination which is a violation of state and federal laws.

There are two types of such conduct: 1) tangible employment action discrimination, which can only be committed by an employee's supervisor(s) and 2) hostile environment harassment, which can be committed by supervisors, coworkers and non-employees.

### ***Tangible Employment Action Discrimination***

A tangible employment action is any employment-related decision made by a supervisor that results in a significant change in a particular employee's employment status. This can include such actions as: hiring and firing; promotion or failure to promote; demotion; compensation decisions; and undesirable work assignments. If such an action is based upon an employee's sex, race, religion, age, disability, etc., it would constitute tangible employment action discrimination. Some examples of tangible employment action discrimination might include: 1) a male supervisor fires a female employee because she refused his sexual advances; 2) a Caucasian supervisor gives an African-American employee a bad performance review because of his prejudice against African-Americans; or 3) a supervisor refuses to promote an employee who uses a wheelchair because of the employee's disability.

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What is workplace harassment?**

**Hostile Work Environment Harassment**

Hostile work environment harassment involves conduct which has the purpose or effect of interfering with an employee’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. The following are some illustrative examples of “harassing conduct” which could result in hostile work environment harassment: 1) unwanted physical contact or conduct of any kind, including sexual flirtations, touching, advances, or propositions; 2) verbal harassment, threats and hostile comments regarding an individual’s race, color, creed, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, military status, veteran status, disability, or domestic violence victim status, or any other status protected by law, including lewd comments, jokes or references, and offensive personal references; 3) the display in the workplace of demeaning, insulting, intimidating, or sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or photographs; and 4) demeaning, insulting, intimidating, or sexually suggestive written, recorded, or electronically transmitted messages. Hostile work environment harassment also includes sexual violence, which is defined as physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person’s will or where a person is incapable of giving consent.

**Sexual harassment takes many forms...**

...And can occur in a variety of situations, such as those in which one person is subjected to:

- Unwanted sexual, abusive, or lewd language or suggestive jokes;
- Demands for sexual favors in exchange for other considerations;
- Unwanted physical or verbal pursuit with a sexual theme;
- Leering, suggestive, or insulting sounds or gestures;

**What can I do if I am being harassed?**

Employees of the Niskayuna Central School District who feel they have been harassed are encouraged to report the incident immediately to any supervisor with which they feel comfortable or the Title VII/Title IX Officer Ron Grastorf at 377-4666, ext. 50740.

Additionally, individuals who are aware of and/or witness possible incidences of harassing conduct are encouraged to report the alleged conduct.

The school district will act promptly to investigate reports of harassing conduct and take appropriate action to protect individuals from further harassment.

Employees may seek information from a member of the Harassment Prevention Liaison Group or their supervisor.

Filing of a complaint will not reflect upon the status, work assignments or employment of the complaining party. It is a further violation of district policy for any person to retaliate, intimidate, harass or interfere with an employee or student who has filed a complaint regarding workplace harassment or any individual who has assisted with an investigation.

It is also a violation of district policy to intentionally file a false complaint regarding harassment. Appropriate action will be taken against any person filing a false complaint.

All reports of workplace harassment will be held in confidence, subject to all applicable laws.

**Harassment Prevention Liaison Group**

<b>Birchwood</b> Debra Berndt Laura Henniger Maggie Williams	<b>Rosendale</b> Lauren Gemmill Mary Cloutier Stacey Murphy	<b>Buildings and Grounds</b> Ron Grastorf
<b>Craig</b> Bill Anders Maggie Riehl	<b>Iroquois</b> Victoria Wyld Christine Gravelle	<b>Transportation</b> Thomas O'Donnell
<b>Glenciff</b> Shelley Baldwin-Nye Holly Britton Jagell Timmany	<b>Van Antwerp</b> Luke Rakoczy Carol Werblin	<b>Districtwide</b> Matthew Cremisio Lynne Rutnik Larry Gillooley William Wales Eva Jones
<b>Hillside</b> Shireen Fasciglione Katrina Cutting	<b>High School</b> John Rickert Mark Treanor Nancy Hammond	Edward Alston Jackie Carrese Alfred Sive Scott Walroth Jean Winkler Anita Andersen