

HARASSMENT OF EMPLOYEES

The Gorham School Committee recognizes the right of each employee to work in an atmosphere which is free of intimidation, hostility, and offensiveness. In order to ensure such an atmosphere, employees are not to engage in harassment of other employees or students. Acts of harassment based upon race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation or physical or mental disability are not only a violation of this policy but also constitute illegal discrimination under state and federal laws.

Examples of prohibited harassment:

- A. Unwelcome sexual advances, gestures, comments or contact;
- B. Threats;
- C. Offensive jokes;
- D. Ridicule, slurs, derogatory action or remarks; and
- E. Basing employment decisions on practices of submission to harassment.

Employees should also be advised of the importance of informing the harasser that his/her behavior is unwelcome, offensive, in poor taste, or highly inappropriate. Employees who believe that they are victims of harassment should report such occurrences to the Affirmative Action Coordinator. The Affirmative Action Coordinator shall advise the person who has allegedly been harassed of the various options available to the person; Human Rights Commission complaint, Title IX civil action, or formal request for discipline by the Superintendent and/or School Committee.

Appropriate information regarding harassment and recourse shall be posted in a prominent and accessible location in each workplace in the district. Education and training shall take place as required by law for each new employee.

In the event that an allegation of harassment, physical and/or sexual abuse is made against an employee from any source, internal or external, the following steps will be taken:

- A. Any employee learning of the allegations is to immediately advise his/her supervisor/principal, or the Affirmative Action Coordinator who is to immediately notify the Superintendent;
- B. The Superintendent is to immediately assess the situation and cause an investigation to be made;

- C. If there is reasonable cause to believe the allegation, and the allegation would severely impair the district's reputation or endanger the health and welfare of students and/or fellow employees, the employee will be assigned to another position not having contact with students, or be placed on administrative leave, the School Committee shall be notified as soon as practicable.
- D. The employee will not be returned to his/her primary position until the Superintendent is satisfied that the allegation is false or the charges are dismissed. Every effort will be made to conclude the investigation within a reasonable time from the initial notification to the Superintendent; and
- E. If the Superintendent finds that the allegation is true, the appropriate disciplinary action will be initiated which may include but not necessarily be limited to dismissal.

Legal Reference: Title IX of 1972 Educational Amendments Act
Title VII of 1964 Civil Rights Act
Guidelines of Equal Employment Opportunity Comm.
PL 1991, Chapter 474 (5 MRSA Section 4613.2, 26 MRSA Section
806.807)

Adopted: May 13, 1992
Amended: November 12, 1997
Reviewed: February 13, 2002