

## **HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS**

Harassment of students because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry or national origin, or disability is prohibited. Such conduct is a violation of School Committee policy and may constitute illegal discrimination under state and federal laws.

As defined in Maine Law and for the purpose of this policy, “sexual orientation” means a person’s actual or perceived heterosexuality, bisexuality, homosexuality, or gender identity or expression. “Gender identity” means gender-related identity, appearance, mannerisms, or other gender-related characteristics of an individual, regardless of the individual’s assigned sex at birth.

### **Harassment**

Harassment includes but is not limited to verbal abuse based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry or national origin, or disability. Harassment that rises to the level of physical assault, battery and/or abuse is also addressed in the Lisbon School Committee policy JICIA-Weapons, Violence and School Safety. [Under the Maine Civil Rights Act, violence or threats of violence against a person or their property based on their sexual orientation are also illegal.]

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or pressure to engage in sexual activity, physical contact of a sexual nature, gestures, comments, or other physical, written or verbal conduct that is gender-based that interferes with a student's education. School employees, fellow students, volunteers and visitors to the school, and other persons with whom students may interact in order to pursue school activities are required to refrain from such conduct.

Harassment/sexual harassment of students by school employees is considered grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Harassment/sexual harassment of students by other students is considered grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. The Superintendent will determine appropriate sanctions for harassment of students by persons other than school employees and students.

The Superintendent or the employee designated as the Affirmative Action Officer will investigate complaints of harassment in accordance with the Student Harassment Complaint Procedure. School employees, students, and parents shall be informed of this policy/procedure through handbooks and/or other means selected by the school administration.

Legal Reference: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC § 1681, et seq.)  
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 USC § 2000(d))  
5 MRSA §§ 4602 4681 ET SEQ.  
20 MRSA § 6553

Cross Reference:     ACAA-R-Student Harassment Complaint Procedure  
                          AC-Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action  
                          ACAD-Hazing  
                          JICIA-Weapons, Violence and School Safety.

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