

Policy 5145.7: Sexual Harassment

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 03/01/2012 | Last Revised Date: 06/01/2025 | Last Reviewed Date: 06/01/2025

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 231.5 and 34 CFR 106.8 mandate the district to have written policies on sexual harassment. The following policy addresses sexual harassment against students in the school setting. As part of this mandate, the district should also adopt a sexual harassment policy related to employees; see BP/AR 4119.11/4219.11/4319.11 - Sexual Harassment and AR 4119.12/4219.12/4319.12 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC 1681-1688) prohibits discrimination based on sex in district programs and activities. Although the Title IX regulations were amended by 89 Fed.Reg. 33474, effective August 1, 2024, these amendments were vacated nationwide by the United States District Court in Tennessee v. Cardona on January 9, 2025. Following this decision, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) February 4, 2025 Dear Colleague Letter clarified that OCR will enforce Title IX based on the regulations as they existed prior to August 1, 2024. Therefore, references in this Board policy to Title IX and its implementing regulations are to the Title IX regulations as they existed prior to August 1, 2024.

Both federal law (Title IX) and state law (Education Code 220, 231.5) prohibit sexual harassment and require districts to establish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of sexual harassment complaints. Whether a complaint is investigated and resolved through the federal Title IX complaint procedures in accordance with AR 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures, or the uniform complaint procedures in accordance with BP/AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures, is dependent on whether the alleged conduct meets the more stringent federal definition or the state definition of sexual harassment. In order to meet the applicable timelines, in some instances it may be necessary to review a complaint under both procedures concurrently. See the accompanying administrative regulation, BP/AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures, and AR 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.

A district can be held liable for civil damages for the sexual harassment of students pursuant to Title IX if the district is found to have been "deliberately indifferent" in its response to known sexual harassment. Pursuant to 34 CFR 106.44, a district is "deliberately indifferent" if its response to Title IX sexual harassment is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

In addition to filing a private civil lawsuit, an alleged victim of sexual harassment may file a complaint with OCR.

Education Code 200 and 210.2, as amended by SB 1137 (Ch. 779, Statutes of 2024), provide that prohibited discrimination or harassment includes discrimination or harassment not just because of one protected class under state law, but also because of the combination of two or more protected bases.

The district does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its programs or activities and complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations.

The Governing Board is committed to maintaining a welcoming, safe, and supportive school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. The Board prohibits at district or at district-sponsored or district-related activities, sexual harassment, as defined in the accompanying administrative regulation, targeted at any student.

CSBA NOTE: Districts are required to prohibit retaliation when a right or privilege secured by state or federal law is interfered with. Education Code 221.8 prohibits retaliation when a person files a discrimination complaint. Additionally, Title IX prohibits retaliation when a person reports possible sex discrimination including sexual harassment, made a sex discrimination or sexual harassment complaint, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing. Pursuant to 34 CFR 106.71, complaints alleging retaliation may be filed in accordance with grievance procedures used for other forms of sexual harassment as specified in 34 CFR 106.44 and 106.45; see AR/E(1) 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.

Additionally, the Board prohibits retaliatory behavior or action against any person who reports, files a complaint, testifies about, assists with, or otherwise supports a complainant in alleging sexual harassment, or otherwise participates or refuses to participate in the complaint process established for the purpose of this policy. (Education Code 220.1, 221.8; 34 CFR 106.71)

CSBA NOTE: The following two paragraphs relate to reporting by students and employees of sexual harassment. It is important to note that reporting to law enforcement and/or child protective services does not relieve a school district with actual knowledge of sexual harassment of its responsibility to investigate a complaint of sexual

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The Governing Board is committed to maintaining a safe school environment that is free from harassment and discrimination. The Board prohibits, at school or at school-sponsored or school-related activities, sexual harassment targeted at any student by anyone. The Board also prohibits retaliatory behavior or action against any person who reports, files a complaint or testifies about, or otherwise supports a complainant in alleging sexual harassment.

The district strongly encourages students who feel that they are being or have been sexually harassed on school grounds or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity by another student or an adult, or who have experienced off-campus sexual harassment that has a continuing effect on campus, to immediately contact their teacher, the principal, the district's Title IX Coordinator, or any other available school employee. Any employee who receives a report or observes an incident of sexual harassment shall notify the Title IX Coordinator.

Once notified, the Title IX Coordinator shall ensure the complaint or allegation is addressed through AR 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures or BP/AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures, as applicable. Because a complaint or allegation that is dismissed or denied under the Title IX complaint procedure may still be subject to consideration under state law, the Title IX Coordinator shall ensure that any implementation of AR 5145.71 concurrently meets the requirements of BP/AR 1312.3.

The Title IX Coordinator shall offer supportive measures to the complainant and respondent, as deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform students and parents/guardians of the district's sexual harassment policy by disseminating it through parent/guardian notifications, publishing it on the district's web site, and including it in student and staff handbooks. All district staff shall be trained regarding the policy.

Instruction/Information

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all district students receive age-appropriate information on sexual harassment. Such instruction and information shall include:

1. What acts and behavior constitute sexual harassment, including the fact that sexual harassment could occur between people of the same sex and could involve sexual violence
2. A clear message that students do not have to endure sexual harassment under any circumstance
3. Encouragement to report observed incidents of sexual harassment even when the alleged victim of the harassment has not complained
4. A clear message that student safety is the district's primary concern, and that any separate rule violation involving an alleged victim or any other person reporting a sexual harassment incident will be addressed separately and will not affect the manner in which the sexual harassment complaint will be received, investigated, or resolved
5. A clear message that, regardless of a complainant's noncompliance with the writing, timeline, or other formal filing requirements, every sexual harassment allegation that involves a student, whether as the complainant, respondent, or victim of the harassment, shall be investigated and action shall be taken to respond to harassment, prevent recurrence, and address any continuing effect on students
6. Information about the district's procedures for investigating complaints and the person(s) to whom a report of sexual harassment should be made
7. Information about the rights of students and parents/guardians to file a civil or criminal complaint, as applicable, including the right to file a civil or criminal complaint while the district investigation of a sexual harassment complaint continues
8. A clear message that, when needed, the district will implement supportive measures to ensure a safe school environment for a student who is the complainant or victim of sexual harassment and/or other students during an investigation

harassment.

The district strongly encourages students who feel that they are being or have experienced sexual harassment on district grounds or at a district-sponsored or district-related activity, or off-campus when the conduct has a continuing effect on campus, to immediately contact their teacher, the principal, the district's Title IX Coordinator, or any other available school employee.

CSBA NOTE: 34 CFR 106.44 requires the district, when there is actual knowledge of sexual harassment in an education program of activity, to respond promptly in a manner that is not unreasonable in light of known circumstances. 34 CFR 106.30 defines "actual knowledge" as notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment being submitted to the district's Title IX Coordinator, any official of the district who has authority to institute corrective measures, or any employee of an elementary or secondary school.

The following paragraph should be revised to reflect the district's timeline.

Any employee who receives a report or observes an incident of sexual harassment by or against a student in a district education program or activity shall report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator within one workday.

Once notified, the Title IX Coordinator shall ensure that the complaint alleging sexual harassment is addressed through Administrative Regulation 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures or Board Policy/Administrative Regulation 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures, as applicable. Additionally, the Title IX Coordinator shall ensure that any implementation of Administrative Regulation 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures concurrently meets the requirements of Board Policy/Administrative Regulation 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures.

The Title IX Coordinator shall offer and coordinate supportive measures to the complainant and respondent, as deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform students and parents/guardians of this policy in the manner specified in the accompanying administrative regulation.

CSBA NOTE: Government Code 12950.1 requires that districts provide once every two years at least two hours of classroom or other effective interactive training and education regarding sexual harassment to all supervisory employees and at least one hour of such training to all nonsupervisory employees. 34 CFR 106.45 requires that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, receive training on the definition of sexual harassment specified in 34 CFR 106.30, the scope of the district's education program or activity, how to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable, and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias. 34 CFR 106.45 requires additional training for investigators and decisionmakers.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all district staff are trained regarding this policy, and that employees required to receive training related to their duties under Title IX receive training as specified in Administrative Regulation 4119.11/4219.11/4319.11 - Sexual Harassment. (Government Code 12950.1; 2 CCR 11023, 11024; 34 CFR 106.45)

Instruction/Information

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 231.7, the California Department of Education is required to make available on its website (1) resources on abuse, including sexual, emotional, and physical abuse, and teen dating violence prevention for professional learning purposes, (2) information about local and national hotlines and services for youth experiencing teen dating violence, and (3) other relevant materials for parents/guardians, and other caretakers of students.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all district students receive age-appropriate information on sexual harassment. Such instruction and information shall include:

1. What acts and behavior constitute sexual harassment, including the fact that sexual harassment could occur between people of the same sex and could involve sexual violence
 2. A clear message that students do not have to endure sexual harassment under any circumstance
 3. Encouragement to report observed incidents of sexual harassment even when the alleged victim of the harassment has not complained
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CSBA NOTE: Where sexual harassment or violence occurs in the context of other possible rule violations, students may be reluctant to report such conduct. For example, a student who experiences sexual harassment while away from school without permission may be reluctant to file a complaint if the student believes discipline will be imposed for the violation. As such, Item #4 below clarifies that any other rule violation will be addressed separately from the sexual harassment complaint in order to encourage students to report the harassment.

4. A clear message that student safety is the district's primary concern, and that any separate rule violation involving an alleged victim or any other person reporting a sexual harassment incident will be addressed separately and will not affect the manner in which the sexual harassment complaint will be received, investigated, or resolved
5. A clear message that, regardless of a complainant's noncompliance with the writing, timeline, or other formal filing requirements, every sexual harassment allegation that involves a student, whether as the complainant, respondent, or victim of the harassment, shall be investigated and action shall be taken to respond to the harassment, prevent recurrence, and address any continuing effect on students
6. Information about the district's procedures for investigating complaints and the person(s) to whom a report of sexual harassment should be made
7. Information about the rights of students and parents/guardians to file a civil or criminal complaint, as applicable, including the right to file a civil or criminal complaint while the district investigation of a sexual harassment complaint continues
8. A clear message that, when needed, the district will implement supportive measures to ensure a safe school environment for a student who is the complainant or victim of sexual harassment and/or other students during an investigation

Disciplinary Actions

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 48900.2, a student in grades 4-12 may be suspended and/or expelled from school for sexual harassment. Education Code 48915(c) requires the Superintendent or designee to recommend expulsion for any student, irrespective of grade, who commits sexual assault or battery as defined in the Penal Code. For more information regarding suspension and expulsion, see AR 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process and AR 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process (Students with Disabilities).

Pursuant to 34 CFR 106.44 and 106.45, when there is a complaint alleging Title IX sexual harassment, the district is prohibited from imposing any disciplinary sanctions against a respondent for the allegedly discriminatory behavior until the grievance procedures are completed.

Upon completion of an investigation of sexual harassment, any student found to have engaged in sexual harassment or sexual violence in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action. For students in grades 4-12, disciplinary action may include suspension and/or expulsion, provided that, in imposing such discipline, the entire circumstances of the incident(s) shall be taken into account.

Upon completion of an investigation of sexual harassment, any employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment or sexual violence toward any student shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, in accordance with law and the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Record-Keeping

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to 34 CFR 106.45, the district is required to keep for at least seven years (1) each sexual harassment investigation, (2) any disciplinary sanctions imposed on a respondent, (3) any remedies provided to the complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to the district's education program or activity, (4), any appeal and result of the appeal, (5) any informal resolution and result of the informal resolution, and (6) all materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decisionmakers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process.

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain records in accordance with law, including in accordance with Administrative Regulation 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures, and district policies and regulations, of all reported cases of sexual harassment to enable the district to monitor, address, and prevent repetitive harassing behavior in district schools.

Disciplinary Actions

Upon completion of an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint, any student found to have engaged in sexual harassment or sexual violence in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action. For students in grades 4-12, disciplinary action may include suspension and/or expulsion, provided that, in imposing such discipline, the entire circumstances of the incident(s) shall be taken into account.

Upon investigation of a sexual harassment complaint, any employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment or sexual violence toward any student shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, in accordance with law and the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Record-Keeping

In accordance with law and district policies and regulations, the Superintendent or designee shall maintain a record of all reported cases of sexual harassment to enable the district to monitor, address, and prevent repetitive harassing behavior in district schools.
