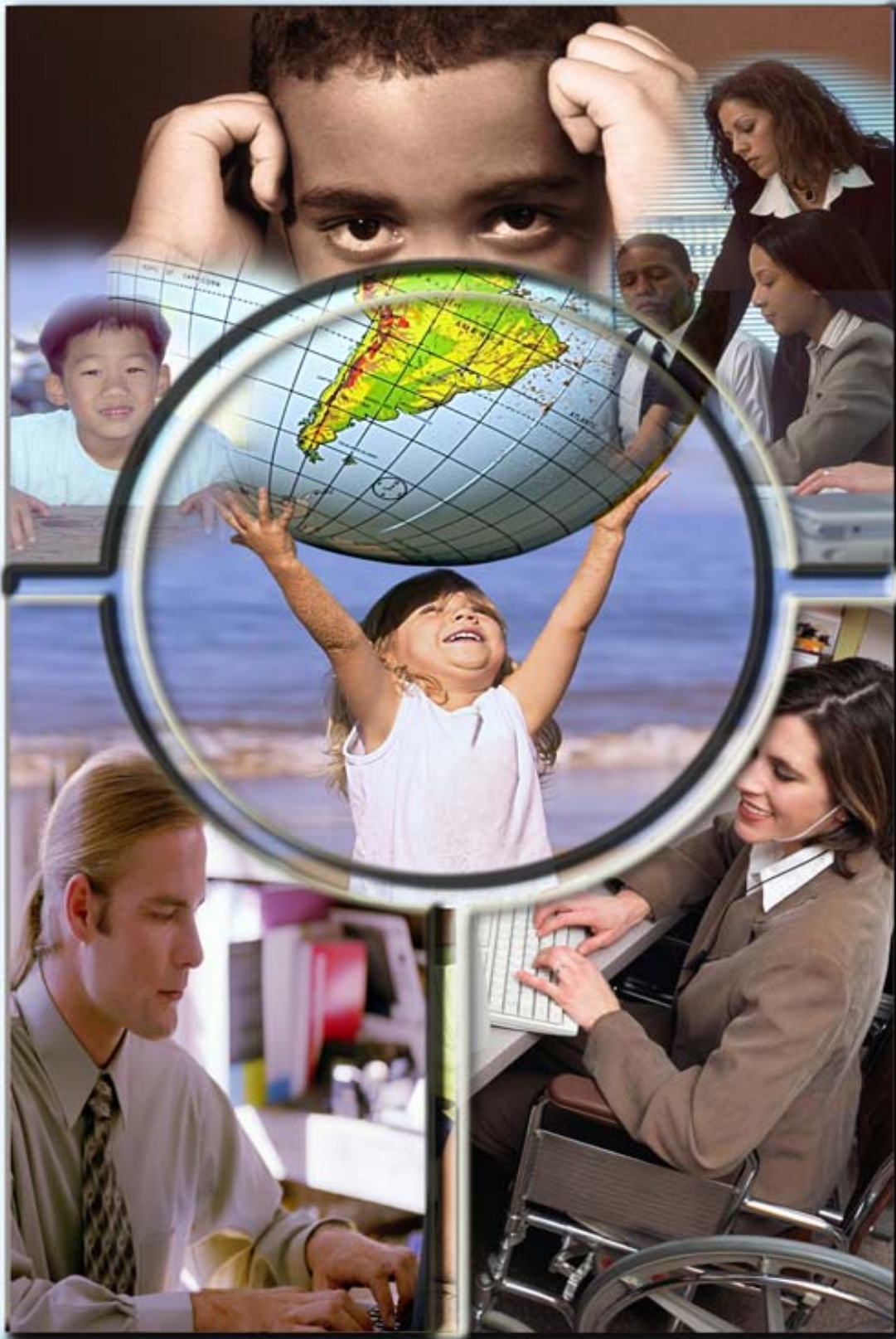


OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY



Duval County Public Schools ★ Jacksonville, Florida

Equity

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SPRING 2005

Sexual Harassment

Our fall (August 2004) newsletter covered School Board policy **GBA** dealing with discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, disability, marital status, religion, and age. Sexual harassment is a form of sex (gender) discrimination and is prohibited by our policies and procedures, and by state and federal laws. The following are the School District's policies concerning discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex. It is important that all employees, students, and anyone associated with the School District, become familiar with them.

School Board Policy. SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION and HARASSMENT - File: GBAA

“The Duval County School Board forbids discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of sex. The Board will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by any of its employees, volunteers or contractors who work on school related activities, subject to the control of school officials. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for reporting and investigating harassment and for imposing sanctions against those who have engaged in sexual harassment.”

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“If there were no problems, there would be no opportunities.”

– Author Unknown

DOING MORE THAN IS REQUIRED

This section of *EQUITY* is devoted to information concerning the actions of individuals, groups, organizations, or resources that help to develop and foster a philosophy of understanding of, inclusion, and equality for all members of our diverse communities. Send your contributions to us at jacksonj4@educationcentral.org, and we'll add it here.

“About Face: Turning Away From Hate” - is a CD-Rom created by the Florida Regional Community Policing Institute at St. Petersburg College. It is an interactive program that focuses on the anatomy of hate crimes and how bias and prejudice left unchecked can lead to more serious criminal activity. The CD-Rom presents a scenario of a hate crime that occurs at a high school. After watching the scenario, students have an opportunity to “interview” each of the main characters in the scene to get a better understanding of their motives and perspectives about the event. The program is geared toward middle and high school students and strives to educate students about hate crime laws. It also helps students develop problem-solving skills in dealing with prejudice and bias, and to create a climate of respect in our schools.

This CD-Rom is being distributed at no cost to Florida schools and youth organizations. The CD-Rom is currently being reviewed for possible use in selected **Duval County Public Schools** as part of the curriculum in their social studies, law studies and psychology classes.

School Board Policy: HARASSMENT - FILE: GBA

The Duval County School Board prohibits harassment of any employee on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, marital status, disability, creed or national origin. Harassment is any conduct or speech that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment, interferes with the individual's work performance, or leads to adverse work-related consequences.

The Duval County School Board also prohibits retaliation against any employee for asserting her or his rights under this section.

Employees are encouraged to report harassment and should follow the Employee Complaint Procedure as outlined in the Policy, "Staff Concerns/Complaints/Grievances" (FILE: GBM-ap).

What is meant by "Sexual Harassment?" Sexual Harassment is defined as any unwelcome, unwanted, unsolicited sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submitting to or rejecting the conduct affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with her or his work performance or learning environment, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Physical or verbal conduct may be considered sexual harassment if the individual alleging harassment has indicated that the conduct is unwelcome. Even when an individual initially welcomed the conduct by actively participating in it, if notice is given that the conduct is

What type of verbal and/or physical conduct is prohibited? Sexual harassment can occur in many different situations. The following are just a few examples, but are not all-inclusive:

- neck massages
- hugging, kissing, patting, or stroking
- sexual comments
- referring to an adult as a girl, hunk, doll, babe, or honey.

- sexual comments about a person's clothing, anatomy or looks.
- unwanted letters, calls, or materials of a sexual nature.
- touching or rubbing oneself sexually around another person.
- actual or attempted rape or sexual assault.



SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!

Duval County Public Schools forbids discrimination against any employee, student, or applicant for employment on the basis of sex. It will not tolerate sexual harassment of any kind by any of its employees, school volunteers, students, or contractors who are involved in school-related activities – anyone subject to the control of school authorities.

It is the intention of DCPS to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct in the workplace or school environment and will not be tolerated!

It is not a defense that the alleged harasser did not intend to harass.

When in doubt... DON'T!

WHAT YOU CAN DO

(if you or someone you know is being harassed)

Nearly 10 percent of K-12 students in public schools are subjected to sexual misconduct by a school employee sometime during their school careers (report released June 30 by the U.S. Department of Education).

Tell someone in authority IMMEDIATELY!

If you are a student, tell your teacher, the Principal or some other adult who has authority to take action. If you are an adult, tell the Principal or other individual in authority so that they can take immediate action.

Sexual harassment is serious and can be a traumatic. It can have a severe emotional effect on anyone subjected to it. Counseling may be helpful and should be offered.

If you are able to, tell the offending party that their speech or conduct is inappropriate, that it is not welcome, and should stop immediately. Please be aware that this is not a mandatory requirement. However, a complaint may be strengthened by the fact that an individual was put on notice regarding their offensive speech or behavior, but continued to behave inappropriately.

Contact the Office of Equal Opportunity/Equal Access

You may wish to file a complaint with this office. If a complaint is filed, an investigation will be commenced. It should be noted that, when possible and appropriate, informal steps may be taken to address complaints. This allows students and employees to voice their concerns and receive suggestions about ways to proceed without the commencement of a formal investigation. It may also give the offending party an opportunity to be educated and trained about the school district's expectations regarding behavior and speech. There are occasions when concerns about speech and conduct can be resolved by a meeting between or among the parties involved. However, under some circumstances, this is not possible or advisable. Confidential discussions with the individual bringing a complaint will be necessary to determine the best options and way to proceed.

Schedule a Policy Review With All Staff

In addition to taking immediate action to stop inappropriate conduct, staff and students should be educated about school district policies and standards of behavior. The Office of Equal Opportunity/Equal Access is available to conduct policy reviews on the topics of discrimination and harassment. Contact us at 390-2181 to schedule a review at your convenience.



Resources

Resources for parents, teachers, students and administrators are available to ensure that we reach our goal of excellence in education and provide equal opportunity and access to everyone. Our school district also has its own internal resources to assist employees. Take advantage of them!

www.jan.wvu.edu

The Job Accommodation Network helps businesses and services comply with the ADA and other disability-related legislation. Dialing 1-800-ADA-WORK (Voice/TTY) connects you to a JAN consultant who knows employment issues, public access issues, and ways to modify facilities and equipment to provide access for persons with disabilities.

www.usdoj.gov/crs

The Community Relations Service (CRS), a component of the U.S. Department of Justice, is the Federal government's "peacemaker" for community conflicts and tensions arising from differences of race, color, and national origin. CRS has several racial/ethnic conflict prevention and management programs for schools or school districts, including among others, Student Problem Identifying and Resolving Issues Together (SPIRIT) Program and Conflict Management and Cultural Awareness Training For Staff.

Wellness/EAP

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is an important component of the Wellness Program of the Duval County School Board. This program encourages employees to seek counseling as a pro-active approach to healthy lifestyle changes. Counselors assist with alcohol, drug, emotional, marital and psychological problems, as well as financial issues, grief/loss issues and stress. The service is free and confidential. Call 396-4286 to make an appointment.

► HELPFUL HINTS ◀

DO'S

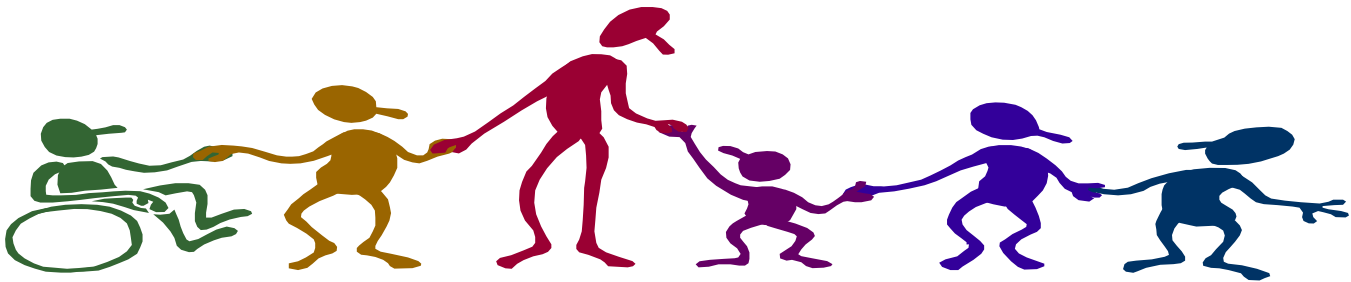
- Know the sexual harassment policy of DCPS.
- Always behave and speak as you would if your spouse, spiritual advisor, and/or child were present.
- Keep your relationships professional at work, and know that the only appropriate touching in the workplace is a polite handshake.

DON'TS

- Joke, kid, tell stories, ask questions or in any way verbally or otherwise, denigrate or hold in ridicule another's race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, disability, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation or veteran status.
- Assume everyone is "one of the family" and accepts dirty jokes, vulgar language, and physical horseplay.
- Hug, kiss, pat, touch, or asked to be hugged, kissed, patted, or touched in the workplace.

► GENERAL GUIDELINES ◀

1. **THINK!** Choose your words carefully and act accordingly. Ask yourself: "How would I feel if my words or actions were heard or seen on the local news?"
2. Be consistent in your treatment of colleagues, employees and students. Definition of "consistent": treating people who are in similar circumstances the same way.
3. **NO RETALIATION.** Everyone has the right to voice their concerns and to be heard without fear of adverse repercussions.
4. Keep fair and accurate records. Document meetings, conversations, etc. Record facts only, not opinions.
5. Bring concerns to the attention of your supervisor or person in authority immediately. Address concerns quickly and appropriately.



"All meaningful and lasting change begins on the inside."

– Martin Luther King, Jr.