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**POLICY P.009.HR**

**TITLE: RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION**

**Date Authorized: 22 October 2013**  
**Last Revised: 25 February 2025**  
**Last Reviewed: 25 February 2025**

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**COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND EQUITY**

The Board recognizes its responsibility to ensure that OCDSB policies and procedures promote and protect Indigenous, equity, and human rights and to seek to address and eliminate racism and structural and systemic barriers for students, staff, and the community.

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**1.0 RATIONALE**

To ensure a working environment free from Workplace Harassment, Bullying, and Disrespectful Behaviour as stipulated by provincial legislation, including the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *Ontario Human Rights Code*, and *Education Act*.

**2.0 DEFINITIONS**

Please refer to Appendix A for a list of definitions of terms used in this Policy.

**3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- 3.1 The Board is committed to providing a workplace in which Workers are treated with respect and dignity, and where Disrespectful Behaviours and Workplace Harassment towards Workers are not tolerated.
- 3.2 The Board recognizes that all members of the OCDSB Community, including Workers, have a shared responsibility in maintaining a respectful workplace and modelling the character attributes of acceptance, appreciation, cooperation, empathy, fairness, integrity, optimism, perseverance, respect, and responsibility.

## 4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

- 4.1 The District shall not tolerate Disrespectful Behaviour, Workplace Harassment, or conduct that amounts to the creation of a Poisoned Work Environment.
- 4.2 All Workers shall attempt to make every reasonable effort to resolve issues arising as a result of friction, conflict, or disagreement in a respectful and professional manner that contributes to a healthy and productive workplace.
- 4.3 The District shall have a process for Workers to report Disrespectful Behaviour or Workplace Harassment, including an option if the supervisor is the one allegedly engaging in Disrespectful Behaviour or Workplace Harassment.

### Complaints and Investigations

- 4.4 All complaints under this Policy shall be taken seriously. Where an investigation is conducted, the investigation must be appropriate in the circumstances, and in accordance with the accompanying procedure.
  - a) If the complaint alleges Disrespectful Behaviour, the District may conduct an investigation.
  - b) If the complaint alleges Workplace Harassment, the District shall conduct an investigation.
- 4.5 The District shall endeavour to maintain confidentiality as best as possible within the limitations of generally accepted principles of procedural fairness.
- 4.6 Reprisals against any individual making a complaint under this policy is prohibited.

### Addressing Policy Breaches

- 4.7 Where an investigation concludes that a Worker has breached this Policy, the District shall consider appropriate actions to correct the breach. This may include disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and where applicable, reporting the outcome of the investigation to the Worker's governing professional body.
- 4.8 Where an investigation concludes that a member of the OCDSB Community, other than a student or a Worker, has breached this Policy the District shall consider appropriate corrective action to reduce, prevent, or eliminate further harm to Workers.
- 4.9 Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent or discourage an individual from exercising their legal rights, including their rights under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

### Accountability

- 4.10 The District shall ensure that appropriate information and instruction be provided to Workers on the contents of the policy and the accompanying procedures.

- 4.11 Where appropriate, the District shall consult with the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) regarding the effectiveness of this Policy and accompanying procedure:-
- 4.12 The Director of Education, or designate, shall, in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committee, develop and maintain written procedures to implement this policy.

## **5.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Policy Definitions

## **6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

[Accepting Schools Act, Bill 13, 2012](#)

[Education Act, 2000, Section 171](#) and [Part XIII](#)

[Human Rights Code of Ontario](#)

[The Teaching Profession Act](#)

[Board Policy P.147.GOV: Human Rights](#)

Board Policy [P.026.SCO: Student Suspension and Expulsion](#)

Board Policy [P.032.SCO: Safe Schools \(Managing Student Behaviour\)](#)

Board Policy [P.098.CUR: Equity and Inclusive Education](#)

Board Policy [P.103.HR: Alleged Employee Misconduct Towards a Student](#)

Board Policy [P.132.HS: Violence in the Workplace](#)

Board Procedure [PR.515.SCO Student Suspension and Expulsion](#)

Board Procedure [PR.542.HR: Alleged Employee Misconduct toward a Student](#)

Board Procedure [PR.543.HR: Alleged Harassment of a Student](#)

Board Procedure [PR.652.HR: Respectful Workplace](#)

Board Procedure [PR.659.SCO: Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#)

Board Procedure [PR.680.HS: Violence in the Workplace](#)

## APPENDIX A: POLICY DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

**Board** means the Board of Trustees.

**Bullying** means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by an individual where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or to creating a negative environment for another individual. This behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the bully and the victimized individual based on factors such as Protected Grounds, size, strength, intelligence, peer group power, economic, social or employment status, or special needs. Bullying behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

**Cyberbullying** means Bullying specifically by electronic means and may include, but is not limited to, sending or posting harmful or malicious messages or images through email, instant messages, cell phones, websites, and other technology.

**Disrespectful Behaviour** means vexatious behaviour that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be disrespectful and/or unwelcome to an individual, or group, which diminishes the dignity of any person(s). Examples of Disrespectful Behaviour include:

- a) written or verbal comments, actions, gestures, behaviours or 'jokes' which would reasonably be perceived as unwelcome, humiliating, offensive, hurtful, or belittling;
- b) bullying, cyber-bullying, or intimidating behaviour;
- c) microaggressions;
- d) abuse of authority;
- e) yelling, shouting, screaming, or swearing;
- f) deliberately excluding or isolating a person from relevant work activities or decision-making;
- g) stereotyping or making inappropriate assumptions about an individual based on an individual's personal qualities, characteristics, or role or Protected Grounds; and
- h) devaluing or trivializing a person's successes, contributions or concerns.

Disrespectful Behaviour does not include the reasonable and appropriate exercise of supervisory responsibilities, including training, direction, instruction, performance appraisal, and discipline. It also does not include commonly socially acceptable and good-natured humour in the workplace.

**District** means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

**Harassment** means a pattern of Disrespectful Behaviour. In some circumstances, a singular incident may be recognized as Harassment, depending on the nature of the comment or conduct. Code-based Harassment is Harassment based on a Protected Ground. If a person does not explicitly object to harassing behaviour, or appears to be going along with it, this does not mean that the behaviour is okay. The behaviour could still be considered Harassment. Examples of Harassment include:

- a) epithets, remarks, jokes, or innuendos related to a person who identified with a Protected Ground;
- b) posting or circulating offensive pictures, graffiti, or materials, whether in print form or via e-mail or other electronic means related to a Protected Ground;
- c) singling out a person for humiliating, demeaning “teasing”, or jokes because of a Protected Ground;
- d) comments ridiculing a person because of characteristics that are related to a Protected Ground. For example, this could include comments about a person’s dress, speech or other practices that may be related to their sex, race, gender identity or creed.

**Microaggressions** means verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership or a Protected Ground. A series of Microaggressions may amount to Harassment.

**OCDSB Community** means trustees, committee members, council members, staff members, students, parents/guardians/caregivers, permit holders, vendors, service providers, contractors, volunteers, visitors, and all other persons learning, working, or accessing services in the OCDSB environment.

**People in Positions of Authority** means members of the senior team, managers, supervisors, principals, and vice principals. It also means any other employee while they are working directly with students.

**Protected Ground** means the attributes or characteristics upon which discrimination, which includes harassment, is prohibited under the Code or by the OCDSB. The Code-Protected Grounds are age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed (religion), disability (including mental, physical, developmental or learning disabilities), ethnic origin, family status (such as being in a parent-child relationship), gender expression, gender identity, marital status (including married, single, widowed, divorced, separated or living in a conjugal relationship outside of marriage, whether in a same-sex or opposite-sex relationship), place of origin, race, record of offences (criminal conviction for a provincial offence, or

for an offence for which a pardon has been received), sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), and sexual orientation.

An additional ground protected from discrimination by the OCDSB is socio-economic disadvantage.

**Poisoned Work Environment** means a work environment in which employee productivity and well-being are undermined by repeated, ongoing, and unresolved conflict such as harassment, discrimination, or disrespectful behaviour. It is typically marked by employees feeling stressed, anxious, and demoralized over an extended period. Other markers might include low morale, high turnover, and diminished performance.

**Worker** means any of the following,

- a) a person, other than a trustee, who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation;
- b) a secondary school student who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled;
- c) a person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college of applied arts and technology, university or other post-secondary institution;
- d) a person who receives training from the OCDSB, but who, under the *Employment Standards Act*, 2000, is not a Worker for the purposes of that Act because the conditions set out in subsection 1 (2) of that Act have been met; and
- e) such other persons as may be prescribed who perform work or supply services to the OCDSB for no monetary compensation.

**Workplace** means the site where the individuals are customarily employed and includes all other places which result from employment responsibilities or employment relationships, including OCDSB or committee meetings, locations at work-related social functions, work assignments outside the site, field trips, work-related conferences or training sessions, and work-related travel.

**Workplace Harassment** means Harassment that is directed toward a Worker in the Workplace.

**Workplace Sexual or Gender-Based Harassment** means Sexual or Gender-Based Harassment that is directed toward a Worker in the Workplace.