



Policy Section: **Personnel/Employee Matters**

Policy Name: **Workplace Harassment**

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Policy Statement

The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board (KPDSB) is committed to providing a working and learning environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity in accordance with the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Rationale

Every student, employee, Trustee, parent/guardian, and community member has the right to equal treatment and to learn and work in an environment free of harassment.

This Policy is intended to provide a greater awareness of and responsiveness to the damaging effects of harassment. Procedures have been developed to ensure that workplace harassment complaints are dealt with expeditiously using appropriate resources.

Scope

This Policy – Workplace Harassment applies to all KPDSB employees, Trustees, and other users such as members of consultative committees, clients of the KPDSB, parents/guardians/families/caregivers, volunteers, permit holders, contractors, and employees of other organizations not related to the KPDSB but who nevertheless work on or are invited onto KPDSB premises. This Policy also covers harassment by such persons which are proven to have repercussions that adversely affect the KPDSB's learning or working environment.

Cross Reference

Policies

207, Trustee Code of Conduct

321, Safe and Supportive Schools

322, Code of Conduct

329, Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive School Climate

503, Equity and Inclusive Education

706, Employee Code of Conduct

708, Respectful Working and Learning Environment: Conflict Prevention and Resolution

710, Attendance Support

711, Workplace Violence

717, Accountability

Procedures

706, Employee Code of Conduct

709, Workplace Harassment

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Definitions

“**Harassment**” is often, but not always, persistent, ongoing conduct or communication in any form, of attitudes, beliefs, or actions towards an individual or group which might reasonably be known to be unwelcome. A single act or expression can constitute harassment, for example, if it is a serious violation or is from a person in authority. Harassment may be either subtle or blunt.

Harassment can involve unwelcome words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, or demeaning to a worker or group of workers in a workplace. It can also include behaviour that intimidates, isolates, or even discriminates against the targeted individual(s). This may include making remarks, jokes, or innuendos that demean, ridicule, intimidate, or offend, displaying or circulating offensive pictures or materials in print or electronic form, bullying, repeated offensive or intimidating phone calls or emails, or workplace sexual harassment.

Workplace harassment can also include what is often called ‘psychological harassment’ or ‘personal harassment and bullying’, as well as comments and conduct prohibited under the grounds stipulated in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

“**Workplace Sexual Harassment**” means:

- Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome; or
- Making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant, or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker, and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.

Harassment can take the form of intimidation of, or threats, to anyone to whom this Policy applies. Harassment is not the normal exercise of supervisory responsibilities, including training, direction, instruction, counselling, and/or discipline.

The “**Workplace**” is any place where employees, students, and other users perform work or work-related duties or functions. Schools and school-related activities, such as extracurricular activities and excursions, comprise the workplace, as do KPDSB offices and facilities. Conferences and training sessions fall within the scope of this policy.

“**Student(s)**” includes all persons regardless of age who are enrolled in any program offered by the KPDSB.

“**Employee(s)**” includes all persons employed by Keewatin-Patricia District School Board.

“**Other User(s)**” includes all persons who are neither students nor employees while on KPDSB premises or attending KPDSB or school programs or functions at other premises or in a business or social community relationship with KPDSB.

Consequently, this Policy applies to, and covers, all members of consultative committees, clients of the KPDSB, parents/guardians, volunteers, permit holders, contractors, and employees of organizations not related to the KPDSB but who nevertheless work on, or are invited onto, KPDSB premises.

Duties and Responsibilities

A school community is a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility, and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. All persons in its learning and working environment will:

- Respect differences in people, their ideas, and opinions;
- Treat one another with dignity and respect at all times and especially when there is disagreement;
- Respect and treat others fairly regardless of their age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed (faith), disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender, marital status, place of origin, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or gender identity;
- Respect the rights of others;
- Show proper care and regard for KPDSB property and for the property of others;
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity; and
- Respect the need of others to work in an environment of learning and teaching.

The KPDSB has a duty to maintain an environment respectful of human rights and free of harassment for all persons served by it. It must be ever vigilant of anything that might interfere with this duty. The KPDSB expects that all persons in its learning and working environment will:

- Be aware of, and sensitive to, issues of harassment;
- Support individuals who are, or have been, targets of harassment;
- Prevent harassment through training;
- Take reasonable steps to remove any discriminatory barriers in employment policies and practices;
- Take all allegations of harassment seriously and respond promptly;
- Provide positive role models; and
- Not demonstrate, allow, or condone behaviour contrary to this Policy, including reprisal.



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The Human Resources Department of KPDSB has the responsibility to designate resources for ensuring the implementation of, and compliance with, this Policy and these Procedures.

Supervisory and managerial personnel have a specific duty to implement this Policy. This duty includes the prevention of and the response to harassment, and the education of staff, students, and the school community.

Failure to take measures to address harassment in the learning and working environment may have legal implications for the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board.