SEXUAL HARASSMENT RELATED TO STUDENTS

It is the policy of Bethel School District to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is deemed unacceptable conduct in the educational environment and will not be tolerated. It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee or agent of the district to harass a student or for a student to harass any other student or employee or agent of the district through conduct or communications of a sexual nature, as defined below. Sexual harassment of a student by an employee also violates both Federal and Washington State law. It is no defense to a claim of sexual harassment that the alleged harasser did not intend to harass.

1. Staff to Student Harassment
   a. For the purpose of this policy, staff to student “sexual harassment” is defined as any welcomed or unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal, visual, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
   b. Sexually harassing behaviors may include but are not limited to the following actions: verbal harassment or abuse; repeated remarks to a person with a sexual or demeaning implication; suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one’s grades, honors, programs, or activities available at or through school; display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.
   c. To prevent sexual harassment from occurring and because it is the policy of this district to foster healthy teacher-student relationships, amorous relationships between a school district employee or agent and a student are prohibited.
   d. A substantiated charge against an employee or agent of the district shall subject such employee or agent to disciplinary actions consistent with collective bargaining agreements and Washington State law. Such actions may include but are not limited to verbal warnings, letters of reprimand, transfers, suspension with or without pay, and dismissal making a report to the Office of Professional Practices mandatory.

2. Student to Staff Harassment
   a. For the purpose of this policy, student to staff sexual harassment is defined as any conduct or communication of a sexual nature being directed toward an employee of the Bethel School District.
   b. Sexually harassing behaviors may include, but are not limited to, the following actions: remarks to or about a person with a sexual or demeaning implication, spreading sexual rumors, cornering or blocking a person's movement, using the telephone to harass, following, stalking or any other conduct that creates a hostile environment for staff.
c. A substantiated charge against a student for harassing a district employee shall subject the student to disciplinary actions which may include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, suspension, expulsion and could result in the filing of criminal charges against the student by the employee.

3. Student to Student Harassment
   a. For the purpose of this policy, student to student sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted sexual behavior, such as sexually explicit gestures with hands or through body movements, sexual teasing or jokes, pressure for dates, sexually demeaning comments, deliberate touching or pinching, cornering or blocking a student's movement, pulling at clothing, attempts to fondle or kiss, pressure for sex or any other conduct designed to embarrass or to intimidate whenever such harassment occurs on school property or at a school-sponsored event. (Sexual assault and/or rape is also a form of sexual harassment and is a criminal act that will be reported to law enforcement immediately for investigation and possible prosecution.)
   b. A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary actions including verbal warnings, reprimand, counseling, suspension, or expulsion, consistent with the Student Disciplinary Code.

4. Reporting Violations and Filing Complaints
   a. School district employees and agents are responsible for reporting alleged violations of this policy in accordance with procedures to be issued by the superintendent.
   b. Any district employee or student who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment has the right to file a complaint and to receive prompt and appropriate handling of her/his complaint. In all phases of the complaint resolution process, every reasonable effort shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, consistent with the district's responsibility to investigate and address such complaints.
   c. Retaliation against an individual who either orally reports or files a written complaint regarding sexual harassment or who participates in or cooperates with an investigation is prohibited.
   d. Persons who knowingly make a false accusation will be in violation of this policy.

5. Implementation
   a. The superintendent is responsible for implementing this policy. Implementation activities will include, but not be limited to:
      1) Education of all staff and students about this policy and associated federal and state laws prohibiting sexual harassment.
2) Publication and dissemination of information to all district employees and students that will inform them of what sexual harassment is, what the individual can do, and where to go for help.

3) Development of mandatory training seminars and inservice programs for all teachers, support staff, principals, and administrators to ensure the appropriate implementation of this policy. These training programs shall be designed to: inform district employees of their duties, responsibilities and potential liabilities when dealing with incidents involving sexual harassment; and provide clear guidelines and assistance for handling appropriately all incidents of sexual harassment in the district.

b. Education of all students about matters related to sexual harassment in order to develop behaviors and attitudes that mitigate inappropriate sexual overtures and pressures in school, work, and social settings. K-12 curricular modifications that integrate age appropriate activities and skill building to help students understand and overcome sexual harassment problems shall be introduced as soon as possible.

6. Coverage
This policy applies to all students, to all district employees, including administrators, teachers, and support staff, and to all school district contractors and consultants.

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