

Caledonia Community Schools

Title VI, Title VII, Title IX

Handbook

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Policy Statement

Any form of discrimination or harassment can be devastating to an individual's academic progress, social relationship and/or personal sense of self-worth. As such, the Caledonia Community Schools Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, including sexual orientation or transgender identity), disability, age (except as authorized by law), religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes") in its educational programs or activities.

The District also does not discriminate on the basis of Protected Classes in its employment policies and practices as they relate to students, and does not tolerate harassment of any kind.

Equal educational opportunities shall be available to all students, without regard to the Protected Classes, age (unless age is a factor necessary to the normal operation or the achievement of any legitimate objective of the program/activity), place of residence within the boundaries of the District, or social or economic background, to learn through the curriculum offered in this District. Educational programs shall be designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

In continuing Caledonia's effort to seek equity in education and employment, and consistent with Federal and State anti-discrimination legislation, the District has adopted a complaint procedure for the prompt and effective investigation of allegations of discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, military status, genetic information, criminal conviction, domestic violence victim status, and/or marital status. Harassment on the basis of any of the above-protected categories is discriminatory harassment and is a form of discrimination. Caledonia Community Schools shall make reasonable efforts to investigate and address instances of discrimination of which it becomes aware, even in the absence of a complaint or complainant cooperation.

Initiating a complaint, whether formally or informally, will not adversely affect the complaining individual's employment or participation in educational or extra-curricular programs.

District Compliance Officers

Compliance Officers (COs) are responsible for coordinating the District's efforts to comply with applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including the District's duty to address in a prompt and equitable manner any inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination, retaliation or denial of equal access.

The COs will be available during regular school/work hours to discuss concerns related to unlawful discrimination/retaliation. COs shall accept complaints of unlawful discrimination/retaliation directly from any member of the School District community or a visitor to the District, or receive complaints that are initially filed with a school building administrator. Upon receipt of a complaint either directly or through a school building administrator, a CO will begin either an informal or formal process (depending on the request of the person alleging the discrimination/retaliation or the nature of the alleged discrimination/retaliation), or the CO will designate a specific individual to conduct such a process. The CO will provide a copy of district policy to any person who files a complaint. In the case of a formal complaint, the CO will prepare recommendations for the Superintendent or

oversee the preparation of such recommendations by a designee.

Reporting Unlawful Discrimination and Retaliation

Students and all other members of the School District community and third parties are encouraged to promptly report incidents of unlawful discrimination and/or retaliation to a teacher, administrator, supervisor, or other District official so that the Board may address the conduct. Any teacher, administrator, supervisor, or other District employee or official who receives such a complaint shall file it with a district Compliance Officer (CO) within two (2) school days.

Any employee who directly observes unlawful discrimination/retaliation of a student is obligated to report such observations to one of the COs within two (2) business days. Additionally, any employee who observes an act of unlawful discrimination/retaliation is expected to intervene to stop the misconduct, unless circumstances make such an intervention dangerous, in which case the staff member should immediately notify other employees and/or local law enforcement officials, as necessary, to stop the misconduct.

Members of the School District community, which includes students or third parties, who believe they have been unlawfully discriminated/retaliated against are entitled to utilize the complaint process set forth below. While there are no time limits for initiating complaints under this policy, individuals should make every effort to file a complaint as soon as possible after the conduct occurs while the facts are known and potential witnesses are available.

Complaint Timelines

Due to the sensitivity surrounding complaints of unlawful discrimination or retaliation, timelines are flexible for initiating the complaint process; however, individuals should make every effort to file a complaint within thirty (30) calendar days after the conduct occurs. Once the formal complaint process is begun, the investigation will be completed in a timely manner (ordinarily, within fifteen (15) business days of the complaint being received). If additional time is needed, both the Claimant and Respondent will be notified.

External Agencies

The procedures set forth below are not intended to interfere with the rights of an individual to pursue a complaint of unlawful discrimination or retaliation with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights ("OCR"). The Cleveland Office of the OCR can be reached at 1350 Euclid Avenue, Suite 325, Cleveland, Ohio 44115; Telephone: (216) 522-4970; Fax: (216) 522-2573; TDD: (216) 522-4944; E-mail: ocr.cleveland@ed.gov; Web: <http://www.ed.gov/ocr>.

Investigation and Complaint Procedure

This procedure applies to all complaints alleging discrimination, which include sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual violence, against employees, students or third parties. This procedure is intended to balance the rights of those bringing complaints of discrimination (the "Complainant") with those against whom such claims are brought (the "Respondent"). Throughout these procedures, the "parties" shall refer to the Complainant and the Respondent involved in the complaint.

Any individual who believes that s/he has been subjected to unlawful discrimination or retaliation may seek resolution of his/her complaint through the procedures described below. Complainants may choose from two courses of action in order to remedy the situation: informal complaint procedures or formal complaint procedures. The goal of the informal complaint procedure is to quickly stop inappropriate behavior and facilitate resolution through an informal means, if possible. The formal complaint procedures involve an investigation of the individual's claims and a process for rendering a decision regarding whether the charges are substantiated.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The School District will employ all reasonable efforts to protect the rights of the Complainant, the Respondent(s), and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the District's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under the terms of this policy shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law. Confidentiality, however, cannot be guaranteed. All Complainants proceeding through the formal investigation process will be advised that their identities may be disclosed to the Respondent(s).

During the course of a formal investigation, the CO or designee will instruct each person who is interviewed about the importance of maintaining confidentiality. Any individual who is interviewed as part of an investigation is expected not to disclose to third parties any information that s/he learns.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who makes a report or files a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination, or participates as a witness in an investigation is prohibited. Specifically, the Board will not retaliate against, coerce, intimidate, threaten or interfere with any individual because the person opposed any act or practice made unlawful by any Federal or State civil rights law, or because that individual made a charge, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under those laws, or because that individual exercised, enjoyed, aided or encouraged any other person in the exercise or enjoyment of any right granted or protected by those laws.

1. Informal Complaint Procedure

The goal of the informal complaint procedure is to quickly stop inappropriate behavior and facilitate resolution through an informal means, if possible. The informal complaint procedure is provided as a less formal option for individuals who believes s/he has been unlawfully discriminated or retaliated against. This informal procedure is not required as a precursor to the

filing of a formal complaint.

The informal process is only available in those circumstances where the parties (the alleged target of the discrimination and individual(s) alleged to have engaged in the discrimination) agree to participate in it. Individuals who believe that they have been unlawfully discriminated/retaliated against may proceed immediately to the formal complaint process and individuals who seek resolution through the informal procedure may request that the informal process be terminated at any time to move to the formal complaint process.

All complaints involving a District employee or any other adult member of the School District community against a student will be formally investigated.

As an initial course of action, if an individual feels that s/he is being unlawfully discriminated/retaliated against and s/he is able and feels safe doing so, the individual should tell or otherwise inform the person who engaged in the allegedly discriminatory/retaliatory conduct that it is inappropriate and must stop. The complaining individual should address the alleged misconduct as soon after it occurs as possible.

The COs are available to support and counsel individuals when taking this initial step or to intervene on behalf of the individual if requested to do so. An individual who is uncomfortable or unwilling to inform the person who allegedly engaged in the unlawful conduct of his/her concerns is not prohibited from otherwise filing an informal or a formal complaint. In addition, with regard to certain types of unlawful discrimination, such as sexual discrimination, the CO may advise against the use of the informal complaint process.

A student who believes s/he has been unlawfully discriminated/retaliated against may make an informal complaint, either orally or in writing: (1) to a teacher, other employee, or building administrator in the school the student attends; (2) to the Superintendent or other District-level employee; and/or (3) directly to one of the COs.

All informal complaints must be reported to one of the COs who will either facilitate an informal resolution as described below, or appoint another individual to facilitate an informal resolution. The School District's informal complaint procedure is designed to provide individuals who believe they are being unlawfully discriminated/retaliated against with a range of options aimed at bringing about a prompt resolution of their concerns. Depending upon the nature of the complaint and the wishes of the individual claiming unlawful discrimination/retaliation, informal resolution may involve, but not be limited to, one or more of the following:

1. Advising the individual about how to communicate his/her concerns to the person who allegedly engaged in the discriminatory/retaliatory behavior.
2. Distributing a copy of Policy **2260** – Non-Discrimination as a reminder to the individuals in the school building or office where the individual whose behavior is being questioned works or attends.
3. If both parties agree, the CO may arrange and facilitate a meeting between the person

claiming discrimination/retaliation and the individual accused of engaging in the misconduct to work out a mutual resolution.

Parties who are dissatisfied with the results of the informal complaint process may proceed to file a formal complaint. And, as stated above, parties may request that the informal process be terminated at any time to move to the formal complaint process.

2. Formal Complaint Procedure

If a complaint is not resolved through the informal complaint process, if one (1) of the parties requested that the informal complaint process be terminated to move to the formal complaint process, or if the individual elects to file a formal complaint initially, the formal complaint process shall be implemented.

An individual who believes s/he has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation may file a formal complaint, either orally or in writing, with a teacher, Principal, or other District employee at the student's school, the CO, Superintendent, or another District employee who works at another school or at the District level. Employees

Throughout the course of the process, the CO should keep the parties informed of the status of the investigation and the decision-making process.

Information Gathering

A. All formal complaints must include the following information to the extent it is available:

1. The identity of the individual believed to have engaged in, or be engaging in; the discriminatory/retaliatory conduct
2. A detailed description of the facts upon which the complaint is based
3. A list of potential witnesses
4. The resolution sought by the Complainant.

B. If the Complainant is unwilling or unable to provide a written statement including the information set forth above, the CO shall ask for such details in an oral interview. Thereafter, the CO will prepare a written summary of the oral interview, and the Complainant will be asked to verify the accuracy of the reported charge by signing the document.

C. Upon receiving a formal complaint, the CO will consider whether any action should be taken in the investigatory phase to protect the Complainant from further discrimination or retaliation, including, but not limited to, a change of work assignment or schedule for the Complainant and/or the person alleged to have engaged in the misconduct. In making such a determination, the CO should consult the Complainant to assess his/her agreement to the proposed action. If the Complainant is unwilling to consent to the proposed change, the CO may still take whatever actions s/he deems appropriate in consultation with the Superintendent.

D. Within two (2) business days of receiving the complaint, the CO or designee will initiate a formal investigation to determine whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation.

E. Simultaneously, the CO will inform the individual alleged to have engaged in the discriminatory or retaliatory conduct that a complaint has been received. The Respondent will be informed about the nature of the allegations and provided with a copy of any relevant policies and/or administrative guidelines. The Respondent must also be informed of the opportunity to submit a written response to the complaint within five (5) business days.

F. Although certain cases may require additional time, the CO or designee will attempt to complete an investigation into the allegations of discrimination/retaliation within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the formal complaint.

The investigation will include:

1. Interview with the Complainant
2. Interview with the Respondent
3. Interviews with any other witnesses who may reasonably be expected to have any information relevant to the allegations
4. Consideration of any document or other information presented by the Complainant, Respondent, or any other witness that is reasonably believed to be relevant to the allegations.
5. At the conclusion of the investigation, the CO or designee shall prepare and deliver a written report to the Superintendent.

Written Report

The written report summarizes the evidence gathered during the investigation and provides recommendations based on the evidence and the definition of unlawful discrimination/retaliation as provided in Board policy and State and Federal law as to whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation.

The CO's recommendations must be based upon the totality of the circumstances, including the ages and maturity levels of those involved. In determining if unlawful discrimination or retaliation occurred, a preponderance of evidence standard will be used. The CO may consult with the Board's legal counsel before finalizing the report to the Superintendent.

Final Decision

Absent extenuating circumstances, within five (5) business days of receiving the report of the CO or designee, the Superintendent must either issue a final decision regarding whether the charges have been substantiated or request further investigation. A copy of the Superintendent's final decision will be delivered to both the Complainant and the Respondent.

If the Superintendent requests additional investigation, the Superintendent must specify the additional information that is to be gathered, and such additional investigation must be completed within five (5) days. At the conclusion of the additional investigation, the Superintendent shall issue a final written decision as described above.

Substantiated Complaints

If the Superintendent determines the Complainant was subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation, s/he must identify what corrective action will be taken to stop, remedy, and prevent the recurrence of the discrimination/retaliation. The corrective action should be reasonable, timely, age-appropriate and effective, and tailored to the specific situation.

Appeal Process

A Complainant or Respondent who is dissatisfied with the final decision of the Superintendent may appeal through a signed written statement to the Board within five (5) business days of his/her receipt of the Superintendent's final decision.

In an attempt to resolve the complaint, the Board shall meet with the concerned parties and their representatives within twenty (20) business days of the receipt of such an appeal. The Complainant may be represented, at his/her own cost, at any of the above described meetings/hearings.

A copy of the Board's disposition of the appeal shall be sent to each concerned party within ten (10) business days of this meeting. The decision of the Board will be final.

The Board reserves the right to investigate and resolve a complaint or report of unlawful discrimination/retaliation regardless of whether the individual alleging the unlawful discrimination/retaliation pursues the complaint. The Board also reserves the right to have the formal complaint investigation conducted by an external person.

The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of a Complaint with the Office for Civil Rights or the filing of a court case. Use of this internal complaint procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.

TITLE VI / VII / IX INTERNAL COMPLAINT FORM

NAME OF COMPLAINANT _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

ADDRESS _____

RELATIONSHIP TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT:

____ STUDENT

____ EMPLOYEE

____ TEACHER

____ OTHER _____ (POSITION)

____ OTHER _____ (DESCRIBE)

STATEMENT/NATURE OF COMPLAINT (INCLUDING DATE OF ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION):

WHAT ACTION ARE YOU REQUESTING? (I.e. RELIEF SOUGHT):

COMPLAINANT

DATE

Internal Office Use Only

DATE RECEIVED BY DISTRICT'S CIVIL RIGHTS COORDINATOR: _____

NAME of PE

5/4/10

3/26/13

6/26/14

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