

Countryside Montessori Charter School
Bylaws & Policies
Instructional

CMCS BOD Approved 6/8/21

3362 - ANTI-HARASSMENT

General Policy Statement

It is the policy of Countryside Montessori Charter School (CMCS) to maintain an educational and work environment that is free from discriminatory harassment based on sex/sex-stereotyping, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, marital status, disability, or genetic information that are protected by Federal civil rights laws (hereinafter referred to as unlawful harassment). This commitment applies to all CMCS operations, programs, and activities. All students, administrators, teachers, staff, and all other school personnel share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging, and reporting any form of legally prohibited harassment. This policy applies to legally prohibited conduct occurring on school property, or at another location if such conduct occurs during an activity sponsored by the Board.

For purposes of this policy, "CMCS community" means students, administrators, teachers, staff, as well as Board members, agents, volunteers, contractors, or other persons subject to the control and supervision of the Board.

For purposes of this policy, "third parties" include, but are not limited to, guests and/or visitors on CMCS property (e.g., visiting speakers, participants on opposing athletic teams, parents), vendors doing business with, or seeking to do business with, the Board, and other individuals who come in contact with members of the CMCS community at school-related events/activities (whether on or off CMCS property).

The Board will vigorously enforce its prohibition against all forms of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment, and encourages those within the CMCS community as well as third parties, who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify such problems. The Board will investigate all allegations of unlawful harassment and in those cases where unlawful harassment is substantiated, the Board will take immediate steps to end the harassment, prevent its reoccurrence, and remedy its effects. Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

"Harassment" means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

- A. places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/her property; his/her person or damage to

- B. has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or

- C. has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

Other Violations of the Anti-Harassment Policy

The Board will also take immediate steps to impose disciplinary action on individuals engaging in any of the following prohibited acts:

- A. Retaliating against a person who has made a report or filed a complaint prohibited harassment, or who has participated as a witness in a harassment investigation.
- B. Filing a malicious or knowingly false report or complaint of harassment.
- C. Disregarding, failing to investigate adequately, or delaying investigation of allegations of legally prohibited harassment, when responsibility for reporting and/or investigating legally prohibited harassment charges comprises part of one's supervisory duties.

Sexual Harassment

Pursuant to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, "sexual harassment" is defined as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- A. Submission to such conduct is individual's employment, or status in a class, educational program, or activity; made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an
- B. Submission or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or educational decisions affecting such individual;
- C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work or educational performance;
- D. of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, and/or learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity.

Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of either gender against a person of the same or opposite gender.

Prohibited acts that constitute sexual harassment may take a variety of forms. Examples of the kinds of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- A. Unwelcome sexual propositions, invitations, solicitations, and flirtations.
- B. Physical assault.
- C. Threats or insinuations that a person's employment, wages, academic grade, promotion, classroom work or assignments, academic status, participation in athletics or extra-curricular programs or events, or other conditions of employment or education may be adversely affected by not submitting to sexual advances.

- D. Unwelcome verbal expressions of a sexual nature, including graphic sexual commentaries about a person's body, dress, appearance, or sexual activities; the unwelcome use of degrading language, jokes or innuendoes; unwelcome suggestive or insulting sounds or sexually whistles; obscene telephone calls.
- E. Sexually suggestive objects, pictures, videotapes, audio recordings, or literature, placed in the work or educational environment, which may embarrass or offend individuals.
- F. Unwelcome and inappropriate touching, patting, or pinching; obscene gestures.
- G. A pattern of conduct, which can be subtle in nature, that has sexual overtones and is intended to create or has the effect of creating discomfort and/or humiliation to another.
- H. Remarks speculating about a person's sexual activities or sexual history, or remarks about one's own sexual activities or sexual history.
- I. Consensual sexual relationships where such relationship leads to favoritism of a subordinate employee with whom the superior is sexually involved and where such favoritism adversely affects other employees or otherwise creates a hostile work environment.
- J. Inappropriate boundary invasions into a student's personal space and personal life, by a CMCS employee, or other adult member of the CMCS community.

Not all behavior with sexual connotations constitutes legally prohibited sexual harassment. Conduct must be sufficiently severe, pervasive, and persistent such that it adversely affects an individual's employment or education, or such that it creates a hostile or abusive employment or educational environment.

NOTE: Any member of the CMCS community who engages in sexual conduct with a student may also be guilty of a crime.

Other Unlawful Harassment

Other prohibited unlawful harassment occurs when unwelcome physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct is based upon an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, etc., and when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work or educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, and/or learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity. Such harassment may occur where conduct is directed at the characteristics of a person's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, etc., such as slurs, nicknames implying stereotypes, epithets, and/or negative references relative to a legally protected class.

Reports and Complaints of Harassing Conduct

Members of the CMCS community, which includes all staff and third parties are encouraged to promptly report incidents of unlawfully harassing conduct to an administrator, supervisor or other CMCS official so that the Board may address the conduct before it becomes severe, pervasive, or persistent. Any administrator, supervisor, or other CMCS official who receives such a complaint shall file it with CMCS's Compliance Officer or designee within two business days.

Members of the CMCS community or third parties who believe they have been unlawfully harassed by another member of the CMCS community or a third party are entitled to utilize the Board's complaint process that is set forth below. Initiating a complaint, whether formally or informally, will not adversely affect the complainant's employment or participation in educational or extra-curricular programs unless the complainant makes the complaint maliciously or with knowledge that it is false. 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.

If, during an investigation of reported act of bullying and/or harassment in accordance with Policy [5517.01](#) – Bullying and Harassment, the principal or his/her designee believes that the reported misconduct may have created a hostile work environment and may have constituted unlawful discriminatory harassment based on sex, race, color, national origin, religion, or disability, the principal or his/her designee will report the act of bullying and/or harassment to the Compliance Officer who shall investigate the allegation in accordance with this policy.

Anti-Harassment Compliance Officer

The following individual serves as the "Anti-Harassment Compliance Officer" for the District and CMCS and is hereinafter referred to as the "Compliance Officer".

Title: Equity Manager
Name: Michael Picone

Address: 5852 Ehren Cut-Off
Land O'Lakes, FL 34639

Phone: (813) 996-0991

Fax: (813) 996-0993

E-mail: michael.picone@cmcsmontessori.com

The name, title, and contact information of this individual will be published annually in the parent and staff handbooks and on the CMCS website.

The name, title, and/or contact information of the person presently serving as Compliance Officer may change from time to time, and such changes shall be deemed technical corrections within the meaning of Bylaw 0131.1 and shall be made pursuant to that bylaw.

The formal and informal processes for making a charge of harassment, a process for investigating claims of harassment, and a process for rendering a decision regarding whether the claim of unlawful harassment was substantiated are set forth in Policy [3122.04](#) – Complaint Procedures Related to Alleged Discrimination in Employment (Employees) and Policy [5517](#) – Anti-Harassment (Students).

This procedure will be readily available to all members of the CMCS community and posted in appropriate places throughout the CMCS.

Members of the CMCS community or third parties who feel they have been legally prohibited harassed should file a formal written complaint with the worksite supervisor or the CMCS Equity Officer identified in the anti-harassment complaint procedure. Oral complaints of harassment will be reduced to writing by the individual receiving the complaint and the complainant will be asked to verify the accuracy of the reported charge by signing the document. Complaints received by a worksite supervisor will be immediately reported to the appropriate compliance officer identified in the anti-harassment complaint procedure and the worksite supervisor will not conduct an investigation unless directed to do so by the CMCS Equity Officer.

The complaint process set forth in the policies listed above is not intended to interfere with the rights of a member of the CMCS community or a third party to pursue a complaint of legally prohibited harassment with the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, the Florida Civil Rights Commission, or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The Board reserves the right to investigate and resolve a complaint or report of legally prohibited harassment regardless of whether the member of the CMCS community or third party alleging the legally prohibited harassment pursues the complaint. The Board also reserves the right to have the formal complaint investigation conducted by an external person or in such other manner as deemed appropriate by the Board or its designee.

Any Board employee who directly observes unlawful harassment of a student is obligated, in accordance with this policy, to report such observations to the CMCS Equity Officer. Thereafter, the Equity Officer must contact the student, if over age eighteen (18) or the student's parents if under age eighteen (18), to advise of the Board's intent to investigate the alleged misconduct, including the obligation of the compliance officer or designee to conduct an investigation following all the procedures outlined for a formal complaint.

Confidentiality

The CMCS will make reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality of the parties involved in an investigation of unlawful harassment. Confidentiality, however, cannot be guaranteed. All complainants proceeding through the formal investigation process should be advised that their identities may be disclosed to the respondent.

During the course of a formal investigation, the Compliance Officer or his/her designee will instruct all members of the CMCS community and third parties who are interviewed about the importance of maintaining confidentiality. Any individual who is interviewed as part of a harassment investigation is expected not to disclose any information that s/he learns or that s/he provides during the course of the investigation.

All public records created as a part of an investigation of a complaint of harassment will be maintained by the Compliance Officer in accordance with the Board's records retention policy. Any records which are considered student records in accordance with the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* will be maintained in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Federal law.

Sanctions and Monitoring

The Board shall vigorously enforce its prohibitions against unlawful harassment by taking appropriate action reasonably calculated to stop the harassment and prevent further such harassment. While observing the principles of due process, a violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including the discharge of an employee or the suspension/expulsion of a student. All disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with applicable State law and the terms of the relevant collective bargaining agreement(s). When imposing discipline, the Principal shall consider the totality of the circumstances involved in the matter, including the ages and maturity levels of those involved. In those cases where legally prohibited harassment is not substantiated, the Board may consider whether the alleged conduct nevertheless warrants discipline in accordance with other Board policies, consistent with the terms of the relevant collective bargaining agreement(s).

Where the Board becomes aware that a prior remedial action has been taken against a member of the CMCS community, all subsequent sanctions imposed by the Board and/or Principal shall be reasonably calculated to end such conduct, prevent its reoccurrence, and remedy its effects.

Retaliation

Any act of retaliation against a person who has made a report or filed a complaint alleging unlawful harassment, or who has participated as a witness in a harassment investigation is prohibited.

Mandatory Reporting of Misconduct by Certificated Employees

The Principal is required by State law and Board Policy 8141 to report alleged misconduct by certificated employees of CMCS that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. In accordance with Board policy and State law, the Principal shall investigate each allegation of such conduct and, if confirmed, shall report such misconduct pursuant to Policy 8141.

Education and Training

In support of this policy, the Board promotes preventative educational measures to create greater awareness of legally prohibited discriminatory practices. The Principal shall provide appropriate information to all members of the school community related to the implementation of this policy and shall provide training to CMCS students and staff when appropriate. All training, as well as all information provided regarding this policy and harassment in general, will be age and content appropriate.

F.S. 110.1221, 760.01, 760.10, 1000.05, 1006.07

20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq., The Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004, as amended (commonly known as The Individuals with Disabilities Act) 42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.

42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.

29 U.S.C. 621 et seq., Age Discrimination on Employment Act of 1967

29 U.S.C. 794, Rehabilitation Act of 1973

29 C.F.R. Part 1635

29 U.S.C. 6101, The Age Discrimination Act of 1975

42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq., Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended 20

U.S.C. 1681 et seq.

42 U.S.C. 1983

42 U.S.C. 2000ff et seq., The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act

National School Boards Association Inquiry and Analysis - May 2008

Revised 3/1/11

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CMCS Staff will be required to complete District training on anti-bullying/harassment, investigation, and reporting process annually.

3470 - INSTRUCTIONAL COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The Board encourages the prompt and fair handling of problems before they become formal grievances. The grievance procedure shall be followed objectively so that no individual should fear retribution for seeking full satisfaction of the problem. Instructional staff are included in a collective bargaining unit and are subject to the provisions of the grievance procedures contained in the applicable bargaining agreement.