

# “Treat Others with Dignity and Respect”

## *Student Guide to Understanding and Avoiding*

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# **HARASSMENT**

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POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
2011-2012

## **"Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones..."**

Remember the old saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me?"

Many people believe this old saying is only partly true. Being called rude or nasty names may not break bones, but it can damage attitudes about school or how students feel about themselves. This guide is designed to remind everyone that "harassment" of any kind is against school rules. Sticks and stones, and names that hurt are not welcome at any school in the Poway Unified School District.

We believe that every student has the right to learn...

- Without being called names;
- Without being threatened, harassed, intimidated, or bullied for any reason.

### **EVERYONE DESERVES RESPECT!**

#### **Harassment - a definition:**

Harassment is unwanted and unwelcome behavior from other students or staff members that interferes with another individual's life. When it is sexual in nature, it is "sexual harassment." It's against the rules for students to make nasty remarks that embarrass others or make them feel uncomfortable with actions or statements that are sexual in nature. No one can claim that a student's grade or position in any school activity or any school award depends on a willingness or an unwillingness to submit to sexual activity.

When harassment is motivated by prejudice against another person's race, immigrant status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability or gender, it is "hate-motivated behavior" or sometimes a "hate crime."

Negative or unfair treatment toward an individual based on these same attributes can also be called discrimination.

#### **These actions are prohibited for both students and staff:**

- Negative comments, behavior, vulgar letters, notes, posters, symbols or other writings based on a student's protected status of race, immigrant status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or gender,
- Comments, gestures, or touches of a sexual nature that are deliberate and unwelcome.
- Any forced action such as pulling clothes down, blocking or cornering someone in a sexual way.
- Vandalism to personal or school property.
- Force, or threat of force, or bullying through action or intimidation, or hazing activities of any kind,

## What's the difference between sexual harassment and flirting?

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

You feel bad ..... You feel good  
 You feel unattractive ..... You feel attractive  
 You feel insulted ..... You feel complimented  
 You feel hurt or angry ..... You feel happy  
 You feel powerless ..... You feel in control  
 It's one-sided ..... You flirt back  
 It's unwanted ..... It's OK  
 It's illegal ..... It's legal

### FLIRTING

#### Some advice:

- Don't ignore it. Harassment does not necessarily just go away.
- Though it may be hard to do, tell your harasser to stop.  
 (You might write a letter that describes the behavior in detail, keep a copy for yourself, and have a supportive adult deliver the letter to the harasser.)
- Don't blame yourself and try not to feel helpless or trapped.
- Seek help from someone you trust.
- Keep a written record of every incident.
- Report incidents that you have witnessed happening to others to an adult on campus.

#### What to do if it happens to you:

There are several important things you should know if you feel you are being harassed or are a victim of discrimination.

**First:** Tell someone you trust such as a parent, friend, teacher, counselor, principal, or any other school employee.

**Second:** When you decide to make a complaint to the school office, you may take a friend or your parents with you. A written statement will be helpful. Remember to be specific about the details. Any report you make will be confidential within legal limitations. Unless you talk about it yourself, no one from the school or District will make it public unless required to by law. Witnesses will be directed to keep the information about the situation to themselves.

**Third:** Don't worry about someone "getting even" with you for telling. The school will support you and will investigate your concern quickly. School administrators will not tolerate retaliation of any kind.

**Fourth:** Tell the truth. Any student who falsely accuses another student or staff member of sexual harassment or hate behavior is subject to disciplinary action.

**Fifth:** Harassment complaints can sometimes be settled at the school and sometimes will be heard at the Administration Center. An investigator will be assigned and will talk to people who can help to sort out the facts. The investigator will determine whether harassment has occurred, prepare a report about the situation, and suggest a solution or remedy.

**Finally:** If things are still not settled, you have the right to discuss your concern with the Title IX Coordinator of the District. If it is not resolved there, you may go to the District Superintendent, School Board, Child Protective Services, and/or law enforcement agencies.

The policy governing sexual harassment is Article 5.24 of Board Policy, adopted March 11, 2002. The legal references for this policy are found in the Education Code, in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and in Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. You can get a copy of the complete policy in the school office.

Harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or gender is a violation of both federal and state employment discrimination laws as well as District Policy and Administrative Procedures: (Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1991 Civil Rights Act, the Educational Amendments of 1972, Education Code Section 212.5 and Board Policy). The District is committed to providing students with an academic environment that is free from harassment and discrimination.

This publication is prepared and disseminated in compliance with Board Policy regarding student rights and required notifications. It is designed for students and paraphrases the details of actual Board Policy and Administrative Procedures. For additional information or the complete District policy governing sexual harassment or discrimination, contact Student Support Services at **(858) 521-2843**.

*You may also contact your site administrator.*

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