



AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

OF ABU DHABI *SINCE 1972*

HARASSMENT FREE POLICY

The American Community School (ACS) is committed to providing a positive learning environment for its students and staff. Acts of harassment can interfere with another individual's ability to learn, teach, administer, work or serve ACS as a volunteer. ACS prohibits harassment because such behavior is inconsistent with the goals, philosophy and mission of ACS. The Board of Trustees and the Superintendent shall take continuous actions to monitor, detect, and implement remedial actions to ensure that the school environment is free from all forms of harassment.

Definition of Harassment:

For purposes of this policy, harassment consists of unwelcome verbal or physical conduct by one person or group against another person or group covered by this policy when:

1. The harassing conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it adversely affects an individual's ability to perform his/her duties or to participate in or benefit from an ACS program or activity;
2. The harassing conduct creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive environment; or
3. The harassing conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in an ACS program or activity.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, the following types of behavior:

1. Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct which offends, denigrates, or belittles any individual based on that person's actual or perceived race, religion, nationality, color of skin, gender, sexual orientation, physical handicaps, or physical appearance.
2. Demeaning personal comments, profanities, slurs, name calling, aggressive physical conduct, intimidation, blackmail, stalking, threats, bullying, extortion
3. Circulating text, images or recordings with the intent of denigrating or demeaning any person covered by this policy, based on that person's actual or perceived race, religion, nationality, color of skin, gender, sexual orientation, physical handicaps, or physical appearance.

For the purpose of this policy, harassment does not include the legitimate exercise of an individual's supervisory, instructional, or advisory authority. Harassment does not include the expression of complaints or grievances, whether orally or in writing, if communicated in a manner consistent with the intent of this policy.

General Provisions

ACS shall enforce this policy on school grounds, school entrance and exit areas, and at all school sponsored functions or events held off campus. Persons covered under this policy include students, school employees, parents, visitors, volunteers, contractors, and anyone entering the school premises. Any ACS student, employee, volunteer, contractor, visitor or parent who observes or becomes aware of harassment should immediately advise the appropriate ACS authority.

No retaliation will be taken against any student, employee, volunteer or Association member because he or she submits a legitimate report concerning acts of harassment. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment. However, a false or frivolous complaint or report of harassment may, in itself, constitute a form of harassment.

Disciplinary Actions

In determining the appropriate response and/or punishment, the Superintendent and/or Board of Trustees shall consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidences or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

Disciplinary action for students will be appropriate for age and maturity, and consistent with disciplinary action for other serious incidents of misconduct up to and including expulsion from school. Each school division has created and adopted a behavior plan that meets the developmental needs of its students. Each behavior plan is published in the Student Handbook and made available to all students and parents. *Please refer to Division Student Handbooks for detailed Student Behavior Expectations and Discipline Policies.*

Employees responsible for acts of harassment will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination depending on the severity of the act or acts. No disciplinary actions involving student expulsion or termination of staff will be made without Board approval. In situations where other Association members are found to be involved in harassment of ACS students, employees, or volunteers, the preferred form of discipline will be to restrict that person from entering ACS premises, with the exception of Board-approved supervised meetings.

Disciplinary actions will be consistent with the severity of the incident(s). More extreme measures, such as expulsion or termination of employment, will be utilized when necessary to prevent further incidents of harassment, but will rarely, if ever, apply in efforts to achieve the secondary objective of restoring mutual respect.