

FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION
OTHER PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

FFDB
(LOCAL)

Note: This policy addresses complaints of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on race, color, national origin, religion, age, or disability targeting students. For legally referenced material relating to this subject matter, see FA(LEGAL). For discrimination, harassment, and retaliation targeting employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, age, or disability, see DIAB.

**Statement of
Nondiscrimination**

The College District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy and is prohibited.

Discrimination

Discrimination against a student is defined as conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age, or on any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the student.

Discrimination based on race, color, or national origin includes discrimination, including harassment, based on an individual's actual or perceived: (i) shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics; or (ii) citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity. This prohibition encompasses, but is not limited to, antisemitism and discrimination based on religion, including but not limited to discrimination against students of any faith, or of other religions when based on shared ancestry, ethnic characteristics, or citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity.

"Antisemitism" has the meaning found in Section 448.001 of the Texas Government Code, which "means a certain perception of Jews that may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. The term includes rhetorical and physical acts of antisemitism directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals or their property or toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." This definition is provided in policy in accordance with Executive Order GA-44 (2024).

**Prohibited
Harassment**

Prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct limits or denies a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the College District's educational program.

Examples

Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or

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practices, accent, skin color, religious attire, or need for accommodation; threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, ethnic, racial, or ancestral slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti, symbols, or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Prohibited Conduct

In this policy, the term “prohibited conduct” includes discrimination, harassment, and retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

**Reporting
Procedures**

Student Report

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another student has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to a responsible employee.

Employee Report

Any College District employee who suspects and any responsible employee who receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct will immediately notify the appropriate College District official listed in this policy and will take any other steps required by this policy.

Exceptions

A person who holds a professional license requiring confidentiality, such as a counselor, or who is supervised by such a person will not be required to disclose a report of prohibited conduct without the student’s consent.

A person who is a nonprofessional counselor or advocate designated in administrative procedures as a confidential source will not be required to disclose information regarding an incident of prohibited conduct that constitutes personally identifiable information about a student or other information that would indicate the student’s identity without the student’s consent, unless the person is disclosing information as required for inclusion in the College District’s annual security report under the Clery Act. [See GCC]

Responsible
Employee

For purposes of this policy, a “responsible employee” is an employee:

1. Who has the authority to remedy prohibited conduct.
2. Who has been given the duty of reporting incidents of prohibited conduct.
3. Whom a student reasonably believes has the authority to remedy prohibited conduct or has been given the duty of reporting incidents of prohibited conduct.

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The College District designates the following persons as responsible employees: any instructor, any administrator, or any College District official defined below.

Definition of College District Officials

For the purposes of this policy, College District officials are the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, Title IX coordinators and Deputy coordinators, designated leadership team members, and the District President.

ADA / Section 504
Coordinator

Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the ADA/Section 504 coordinator. The College District designates the following persons to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, which incorporates and expands the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended:

ADA / Section 504
Coordinator for
Students

Name: Terrence Brennan
Position: District Dean of Students
Address: 3452 Spur 399, McKinney, TX 75069
Telephone: (972) 881-5734

ADA / Section 504
Coordinator for
Employees

Name: Dr. Allison Venuto
Position: Chief Human Resources Officer
Address: 3452 Spur 399, McKinney, TX 75069
Telephone: (972) 881-5826

Other Anti-
discrimination Laws

The District President or a designee will serve as coordinator for purposes of College District compliance with all other antidiscrimination laws, including Title VI.

**Complaints
Involving
Academic
Adjustments or
Accommodations
for Students**

Complaints over the denial of or a decision pertaining to academic adjustments or accommodations for students must be submitted by a student to the College District's ACCESS office within fifteen (15) College District business days of the date of the denial or decision by the ACCESS office.

The executive vice president or designee will adopt procedures for the informal and formal resolution of such complaints. The procedures will be posted on the College District's website.

The procedures will include an ACCESS Appeals Board and a method for which faculty may challenge an academic adjustment or accommodation decision if they believe the adjustment or accommodation could result in a fundamental alteration. For purposes of this policy, a fundamental alteration is a change to a program, service, or activity that significantly changes the essential

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	nature of the program, service, or activity (i.e. course design or degree requirements). Faculty will consult directly with the associate dean of counseling and ACCESS or through applicable procedures for complaints involving a fundamental alteration. The procedures will also include multiple levels of appeals up to the vice president of student and enrollment services or designee. The decision of the vice president of student and enrollment services or designee is final and non-appealable for all complaints involving the denial of or a decision pertaining to academic adjustments or accommodations for students.
Alternative Reporting Procedures	A student will not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the ADA/Section 504 coordinators, may be directed to the District President. A report against the District President may be made directly to the Board. If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board will appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.
Timely Reporting	Reports of prohibited conduct will be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the College District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.
Investigation of the Report	The College District may request, but will not require, a written report. If a report is made orally, the College District official will reduce the report to written form.
Initial Assessment	Upon receipt or notice of a report, the College District official will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the College District official will immediately authorize or undertake an investigation, except as provided below at Criminal Investigation. If the College District official determines that the allegations, if proven, would not constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy but may constitute a violation of other College District rules or regulations, the College District official will refer the complaint for consideration under the appropriate policy.
Interim Action	If appropriate and regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the alleged conduct is pending, the College District will promptly take interim action calculated to address prohibited conduct prior to the completion of the College District's investigation.

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College District Investigation	The investigation may be conducted by the College District official or a designee or by a third party designated by the College District, such as an attorney. The investigator will have received appropriate training regarding the issues related to the complaint and the relevant College District's policy and procedures. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.
Criminal Investigation	If a law enforcement or regulatory agency notifies the College District that a criminal or regulatory investigation has been initiated, the College District will confer with the agency to determine if the College District's investigation would impede the criminal or regulatory investigation. The College District will proceed with its investigation only to the extent that it does not impede the ongoing criminal or regulatory investigation. After the law enforcement or regulatory agency has completed gathering its evidence, the College District will promptly resume its investigation.
Concluding the Investigation	Absent extenuating circumstances, such as a request by a law enforcement or regulatory agency for the College District to delay its investigation, the investigation should be completed within 60 College District business days from the date of the report; however, the investigator will take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The investigator will prepare a written report of the investigation. The report will be filed with the College District official overseeing the investigation.
<i>Notification of the Outcome</i>	The College District will provide written notice of the outcome, within the extent permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or other law, to the victim and the person against whom the complaint is filed.
College District Action	If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the College District will promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct, in accordance with College District policy and procedures [see FM and FMA].
Prohibited Conduct	
<i>Corrective Action</i>	Examples of corrective action may include a training program for those involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the College District community, counseling for the victim and the student who engaged in prohibited conduct, follow-up in-

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quiries to determine if any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving students in efforts to identify problems and improve the College District climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where prohibited conduct has occurred, and reaffirming the College District's policy against discrimination and harassment.

Improper Conduct

If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct, the College District may take disciplinary action in accordance with College District policy and procedures or other corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

Confidentiality

To the greatest extent possible, the College District will respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

Retaliation

The College District prohibits retaliation by a student or College District employee against a student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct or another student or an employee who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation or proceeding under this policy. This prohibition does not apply to discipline of a person who perpetrated or assists in the perpetration of the prohibited conduct.

A person who is alleged to have experienced retaliation may pursue a claim under this policy or policy DIAB, as appropriate.

Examples

Examples of retaliation may include threats, intimidation, coercion, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

Failure to Report and False Claims

An employee who fails to make a required report or a student or employee who intentionally makes a false claim or offers a false statement regarding prohibited conduct shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with law.

Appeal

A party who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the applicable grievance policy beginning at the appropriate level. [See DGBA(LOCAL) for employees, FLD(LOCAL) for students, and GB(LOCAL) for community members] A party will be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

Records Retention

Retention of records will be in accordance with the College District's records retention procedures. [See CIA]

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**Access to Policy,
Procedures, and
Related Materials**

Information regarding this policy and any accompanying procedures, as well as relevant educational and resource materials concerning the topics discussed in this policy, will be distributed annually to College District employees and students in compliance with law and in a manner calculated to provide easy access and wide distribution, such as through electronic distribution and inclusion in the employee and student handbooks and other major College District publications. Information regarding the policy, procedures, and related materials will also be prominently published on the College District's website, taking into account applicable legal requirements. Copies of the policy and procedures will be readily available at the College District's administrative offices and will be distributed to a student who makes a report.