

## **Anti- Discrimination and Harassment**

We believe that each of us should be able to work in an environment free from any form of discrimination or harassment because of race, color, sex, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, genetic information, political affiliation, personal appearance, marital status, family responsibilities, matriculation, amnesty or status as a protected veteran, or any other status protected by applicable federal and D.C. law. To ensure that all of us enjoy a discrimination and harassment-free workplace, we prohibit any discrimination against or harassment of any employee. Anyone engaging in illegal discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Additionally, any member of management who has knowledge of such behavior, yet takes no action to end it, is also subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Retaliation against anyone who has reported discrimination or harassment is strictly prohibited.

Our anti-discrimination and harassment policy applies to all person involved in the operations of the School, and prohibits discrimination and harassment by any employee of the School, including managers, supervisors, and coworkers. This policy also protects employees from discrimination and harassment by fellow employees and others conducting business with the School. If harassment or discrimination occurs on the job by someone not employed by the School, such as a volunteer, the procedures in this policy should be followed as if the individual were an employee of Bridges.

Harassment, both overt and subtle, is a form of employee misconduct which is demeaning to another person and it undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. Harassment can take many forms, such as making fun of someone's religious beliefs, using racially-biased epithets, using derogatory stereotypes, engaging in threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts based on an legally protected characteristic, such as an individual's religion or race, or showing hostility or aversion toward an individual or group based on a legally protected characteristic, such as religion or race, in an offensive manner.

Sexual harassment is also illegal and contrary to our policy. We strive to foster a work environment free of sexual discrimination, intimidation, exploitation, and insult. We prohibit any employee from making unwelcome and unsolicited sexual advances, or engaging in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or gender-biased nature, when an individual's submission to that conduct is a condition or term of that individual's employment, or when this creates a hostile work environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions
- Touching a coworker inappropriately
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures in the workplace
- Engaging in derogatory stereotypes in regards to gender
- Telling obscene jokes or making sexually suggestive gestures or comments
- Discussing sexual activities
- Making sexually derogatory remarks or graphic verbal comments about people

- Using school equipment to access pornographic internet websites or to store or transmit pornographic or sexually suggestive materials
- Offering job advantages in return for sexual favors

The very nature of harassment makes it difficult to detect unless the problem is reported. Employees experiencing harassment, therefore, are strongly encouraged to file complaints. Complaints should be directed to the employee's manager, immediate supervisor, Human Resources, or any other member of the administration with whom the employee feels comfortable. Supervisory employees who are aware of discrimination or harassment, or to whom a complaint has been made to, must report it to Human Resources or the Principal immediately.

### **Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Procedure**

Any person who believes that he or she is the victim of any type of discriminatory conduct, including sexual or other forms of harassment, or that another School employee has been the subject of discrimination, should promptly advise his or her immediate supervisor of that fact. If the employee feels uncomfortable discussing the issue with his or her supervisor, the employee should contact Human Resources, the Principal, Assistant Principal, Founder/Director, or Chief Operating Officer. Employees who report discrimination or harassment, in good faith, or who assist in the investigation of a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or who engage in any other legally protected conduct will not be subject to retaliation of any kind.

Supervisory employees who are aware of discriminatory or harassing conduct or to whom a complaint of discrimination or harassment has been made must report it to Human Resources or the Principal immediately. Supervisors who fail to do so will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Complaints will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible in light of the School's need to fully investigate the matter and take appropriate disciplinary action. In all cases, great care will be taken to preserve the dignity and privacy of all persons involved.

Depending on the nature of the alleged discrimination or harassment, interim measures may be taken. These measures might include temporary reassignments or separating the alleged discriminator or harasser and the employee alleging the discrimination or harassment. If the investigation reveals that an employee has engaged in discrimination or sexual or other harassment, that employee will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If the investigation reveals that the employee, who submitted the complaint, knows it to be false or it's not based on good faith or reasonable belief in the report's truth and accuracy, disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including termination.

All managers and supervisors are responsible for the implementation of this policy and for ensuring that employees know and understand this policy. All employees will be held responsible and accountable for eliminating prohibited conduct. However, if it is determined after an investigation that an employee willfully and intentionally provided false information regarding the complaint, that individual will be subject to disciplinary action, up to an including termination.

### **Anti-Retaliation**

The School strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against any employee for filing a good faith complaint concerning discrimination, harassment, or for truthful, good faith assistance in a complaint investigation. The

School also prohibits any form of retaliation against any employee for exercising any other legal right. Retaliatory acts include any materially adverse action taken because an individual has made a complaint under this policy, assisted another in making such a complaint, participated in an investigation of a complaint, or engaged in other protected activity, if such action would be likely to dissuade a reasonable employee from making such a complaint. Employees should promptly bring any concerns about potential retaliation or illegal conduct to the Principal, Chief Operating Officer, or the Human Resources Department.

The School treats all claims of retaliation seriously. Complaints of retaliation will be investigated promptly, and as appropriate, actions will be taken to resolve such complaints. Any employee who, after appropriate investigation, is found to have violated any of the School's policies, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The School provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, sex, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, genetic information, political affiliation, personal appearance, marital status, family responsibilities, matriculation, amnesty or status as a protected veteran, or any other protected status as established by applicable federal or D.C. law. The School complies with applicable federal and D.C. laws governing nondiscrimination in employment. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leave of absence, compensation and training.

The School expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee discrimination or harassment based on race, color, sex, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, genetic information, political affiliation, personal appearance, marital status, family responsibilities, matriculation, amnesty or status as a protected veteran, or any other protected status as established by applicable federal or D.C. law.. Improper interference with the ability of School employees to perform their expected job duties is absolutely prohibited.

## Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace

As part of the School's ongoing commitment to a safe and healthy work environment, we maintain a drug-free workplace policy. Any employee who reports to work while under the influence of drugs or alcohol runs the risks of endangering his or her safety and the safety of others, destruction of or damage to personal or School property, and a loss of productivity and workplace morale.

All employees are required to understand and comply with the School's drug-free workplace policy. Any failure to comply with the guidelines of this policy can result in immediate termination of employment.

Employees are prohibited from all of the following:

- Unauthorized use, possession, purchase, sale, manufacture, distribution, transportation, or dispensation of any controlled substance.
- Reporting to work while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance. Controlled substances include, but are not limited to, narcotics (such as heroin and morphine), cannabis (marijuana, hashish), stimulants (such as cocaine and amphetamines), and depressants (tranquilizers) except by doctor's prescription, and hallucinogens (such as PCP, LSD, and "designer drugs").
- Use, possession, purchase, sale, manufacture, distribution, transportation, or dispensation of any legal prescription drug in an illegal manner.

## **Complaint/Concern Procedure**

The employee should provide a written or verbal complaint to the Founder/Director, Principal, the Chief Operating Officer, Human Resources or his/her immediate supervisor as soon as possible. The complaint should include details of the incident(s), names of individuals involved, and the names of any witnesses. This information will be conveyed to the Founder/Director, Principal, or Chief Operating Officer or Human Resources if it initially is provided to another supervisor. The Principal or Assistant Principal will conduct a preliminary investigation of the matter.

Based on a preliminary investigation, the Human Resources Department may request that the parties meet with either the Principal or the Assistant Principal to discuss the incident, or if the parties prefer, with a designated member of the Bridges Board (the board Chairperson). If both staff persons agree, this meeting will be arranged, and the parties will be encouraged to mediate their differences.

Whether the parties do or do not meet and mediate the dispute, the Human Resources Department will determine the appropriate action based on the investigation. If either of the involved parties disagrees with the determination of the Principal, the party may request that the Board review the Principal's determination, by notifying in writing the designated Board member (the board Chairperson) of this request. If this occurs, the Board will review the incident and the response of the Principal and provide the school's response in a timely manner.

To the extent that an employee's complaint concerns the Principal, the employee may provide her or his initial notice directly to the Founder/Director or Chief Operating Officer. The complaint should include details of the incident(s), names of individuals involved, and the names of any witnesses.

The Founder/Director or Chief Operating Officer will engage the board in a review of the incident, and based on that review, provide the School's response in a timely manner.

Nothing in this policy is intended to mitigate the School's belief in and offer to provide mediation between staff, either before or at any time during the complaint process. Further, that an employee complaint process exists does NOT suggest that any complaint process must or should take place prior to or in lieu of any termination of employment. The complaint process is unrelated and in no way mitigates the right of Bridges Public Charter School to terminate employees.

This process is not intended to mitigate or supersede the procedures described below in the section on Harassment/Discrimination. Employees are required, pursuant to the Anti-Discrimination and Harassment policy set forth in this Handbook, to inform their supervisor, the Principal, Assistant Principal, or Human Resources of any complaints of inappropriate or discriminatory conduct, including sexual or other forms of harassment.

### ***Grievance Procedure***

In the course of normal school operations, communication breakdowns often lead to work related problems. It is important that all work related problems be promptly discussed and resolved. The School will make every effort to evaluate employee grievances fairly. The following grievance procedure applies to all employees.

The employee discusses the problem with her or his immediate supervisor in a calm and unhurried atmosphere, in the absence of students. If after two weeks the employee remains unsatisfied, the grievance will be documented on a grievance form from both the supervisor and employee and submitted to the Assistant Principal, Principal, Chief Operating Officer, Human Resources and/or Founder/Director, based on who serves as the next in line supervisor. The Principal, Assistant Principal, Chief Operating Officer, or Founder/Director will meet individually with the supervisor and the aggrieved employee to discuss and make an effort to resolve the grievance.

If the matter is not resolved after four weeks and the employee is still dissatisfied, the aggrieved, may appeal in writing to the Board of Trustees, which acts as a final arbiter in grievance situations. The Board will reply to the grievance in a timely fashion, but not to exceed 30 days.

## **Whistleblower**

This policy is intended to encourage and enable all employees, and others, to raise serious concerns within BPCS prior to seeking resolution outside of the School. No director, officer, or employee who, in good faith, reports a violation shall experience harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequences. An employee who retaliates against someone who reports a violation in good faith, is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

If you are uncomfortable speaking with an immediate supervisor, or are not satisfied with the supervisor/manager's response, please speak with someone in the Administration or Human Resources with whom you feel comfortable speaking with. Supervisors are required to report suspected violations of the Code of Conduct to the Founder/Director who has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all reported violations. For suspected fraud, or when employees are not satisfied or uncomfortable with speaking with any employee of the School, he/she should contact the Chair of the Board.

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a suspected violation, or a violation of the Code, must be acting in good faith and must have reasonable grounds for believing the disclosed information designates a violation of the Code. Any allegations which are not substantiated, and which prove to have been made with malicious intent or made knowing the accusation is false, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Violations, or suspected violations, may be confidentially submitted by the employee or may be submitted anonymously. These reports will be kept confidential to the extent possible consistent with the need to investigate the report.