

VII-A-1 School Fund Raising Activities

It is recognized that schools frequently supplement budgeted allocations through fund raising to support a variety of student activities. Fund raising activities are permitted to supplement the approved instructional program as follows:

- A. School sponsored fund raising activities or events will be conducted under the supervision of the school principal. Funds will be maintained in accordance with established bookkeeping procedures.
- B. Parent or community groups that wish to raise funds for any kind of school activity, function or purpose must follow certain procedures in order to conduct such an activity.

The principal of the school must be actively involved with the parent or community group during the planning of the proposed fund raising project. The principal shall approve the intent of the project, the methods to be used, the amount of funds to be raised and the method of the disposition of funds raised, to insure that all activities are consistent with established policies and procedures.

After approval by the principal, the parent or community group shall forward to the Superintendent of Schools detailed plans for the project for approval with Board of Education consent.

VII-A-2 Lotteries and Games of Chance

Activities in the nature of lotteries or games of chance may be conducted on school property by parent or community groups if the activity is part of a fund-raising project that has the approval of the Superintendent with consent of the Board of Education and is for the benefit of students attending the school concerned. Students participating in such activities must have their parents' approval. Such activities must comply with all federal, state and local laws.

VII-A-3 Advertising and Sales on Board Property

- A. Cooperation between school and community can enrich educational objectives far beyond the limit of the resources of the system and is consistent with the philosophy of the Worcester County Public Schools. Business and community organizations make available valuable educational information and materials which often are not available through other sources. The Board, however, has a duty to protect students and their families and employees from unauthorized advertising and sales by private interests.
- B. This policy is intended to provide guidelines for those situations in which limited advertising in the school is appropriate acknowledgement of the contribution of business and community interests to the school system, such as the use of information, materials, and human resources that strengthen the curriculum or benefit students, and cooperation with community-based non-profit organizations that promote programs beneficial to students.
- C. The names of pupils and employees shall not be released by the Board or school staff for any commercial purpose.
- D. After approval by the principal, proposals for advertising shall be forwarded to the Superintendent for approval with Board of Education consent.

VII-A-4 Closing Schools Due to Inclement Weather or Other Emergencies

The closing of schools, delayed school openings and/or early dismissals of students as a result of inclement weather or other emergencies shall be ordered by the Superintendent after receiving and evaluating reports and recommendations from the Supervisor of Transportation or other appropriate administrative personnel.

The Superintendent of Schools or designee shall notify parents, students, school staffs and bus contractors and drivers of the action taken by causing the appropriate announcements to be made over local radio and television stations and use of other methods of communications as appropriate.

VII-A-5 Trespass Warning Authority

- A. The Superintendent of Schools shall designate in each of the public schools of Worcester County, an individual as acting principal, which individual shall be vested with all of the powers and authorities of the principal relative to the issuance of trespass warnings at such times as the duly appointed principal of said public school is physically absent from the public school premises; which said individual, in the absence of the principal, shall be designated as "the highest official" of said public school at such times.
- B. In such instances where, in the sole opinion of the Superintendent of Schools the designation of one acting principal is insufficient, the Superintendent of Schools shall designate an additional individual or individuals who may serve in such substitute capacity upon the occasion that the principal and the first designated acting principal are physically absent from the public school premises.

VII-A-6 Title IX Grievance Procedure Policy

A. General Principles

The Worcester County Board of Education recognizes its responsibility for the prompt and orderly disposition of grievances which may arise out of the interpretation, application or alleged breach of any of the provisions of the Title IX regulation of the Education Amendments of 1972. To this end, the Board of Education agrees that the provisions of this policy shall provide the means of resolution of all such grievances, provided however that nothing herein will be construed as limiting the right of any student or employee to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C.

B. Procedures

Any grievance that a student or employee has not been able to resolve informally shall be presented in the following steps:

- Step 1. Within twenty (20) school days from the date of occurrence, or the date when the student or employee knew or should have known of the occurrence, the student or employee may file a written grievance. A grievance submitted by a student, or designated representative of a student, shall be submitted to the school principal or designee. A grievance submitted by an employee, or a designated representative of an employee, shall be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor or designee. The principal, immediate supervisor or designee shall provide a written decision within ten (10) school days after receipt of the grievance.
- Step 2. If the matter is not resolved at Step 1, the grievant may move the matter to Step 2, by giving written notice to the Title IX Coordinator within ten (10) days after receipt of the Step 1 decision. The Title IX Coordinator shall render a written decision within ten (10) school days after receipt of the grievance.
- Step 3. If the matter is not resolved at Step 2, the grievant may move the matter to Step 3, by giving written notice to the Superintendent or designee within ten (10) school days after receipt of the Step 2 decision. The Superintendent or designee shall render a written decision within ten (10) school days after receipt of the grievance.

C. Guidelines

1. A written grievance shall contain at least the following:
 - a. Name of the grievant.
 - b. A statement of the grievance and the facts involved, including relevant dates.
 - c. A reference to the Title IX regulation and/or requirements in question.
 - d. The corrective action requested.
 - e. Signature of the grievant.
2. "Days" shall mean working school days.
3. Unless a grievance is appealed to the next step within ten (10) school days after receipt of the administrative decision, it shall be deemed settled.
4. Failure at any step of this procedure to provide the written decision on a grievance within the specified time limits shall permit the aggrieved party to proceed to the next step.
5. To avoid any dispute in determining compliance with the specified time limits, the day on which a written grievance, appeal, or notice of hearing is received shall not be included in determining the limitation period. All written grievances, notices, or appeals are deemed to have been received on the day after the date of postmark, if mailed, or on date stamped or recorded thereon by a school or Board of Education official, who shall initial the same, if hand delivered.
6. The time limits in any step of this procedure may be extended or reduced in any specific instance by mutual agreement between the aggrieved party and the Board of Education official at the next succeeding step.
7. Administrative decisions on grievances received when school is not in session shall be decided within twenty (20) calendar days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and federal holidays.

VII-A-7 Animals in Worcester County Public Schools

The Worcester County Board of Education believes that children learn about themselves by studying other living things; therefore, animals play an essential role in the curriculum of our schools.

- A. Animals that are kept in school should be provided with proper feeding, sanitary quarters, and gentle handling. Their proper care should not be neglected over long holidays, or during the summer vacation.

- B. Poisonous snakes, or dangerous animals shall not be kept in school, but may be exhibited under certain conditions approved by the school's principal.

- C. Experimentation with animals must be conducted with a respect for life and an appreciation of humane consideration that must be afforded all animals.

VII-A-8 Policy to Govern School Closings and/or Consolidations

A. Factors to be considered in decisions to close or consolidate a school or schools are as follows:

1. The quality of the educational program of students
2. Student enrollment trends
3. Age or condition of the school facilities
4. Transportation of students
5. Racial composition of student body
6. Financial considerations
7. Impact on the community in the geographic area the school proposed to be closed and the school or schools to which students will be relocating.
8. Student relocation

B. Notification & Procedural Steps

1. The Superintendent will advise the Board of Education that a review of the operational status of a school or schools may be necessary if, in his/her opinion, one or both of the following conditions exist:
 - a. the population of a given school attendance area produces enrollments well below or above capacity, or racially disproportionate.
 - b. the physical plant of a school fails to meet educational program or safety standards.
2. The Board of Education, based on the information brought to it by the staff, then determines whether a review of the operational status of a school or schools will be conducted.
3. When a school or schools will be reviewed the community and school staff shall be notified. Other affected schools and their communities shall be notified of this review.
4. School Board representatives shall be available to meet with members of the affected communities and school staffs to explain why the review was recommended and approved.
5. After the prior meetings, the Board will take no action in regard to any particular school until the community and the school system's staff have had opportunities to explore available options and make recommendations.
6. After notification and opportunity for such meetings, the Superintendent shall make a recommendation to the Board.

7. The Board shall provide for a public hearing prior to any final decision to close or consolidate a school or schools in accordance with code of Maryland Regulations 12A.02.09.01.
8. Except in emergency circumstances, the decision to close or consolidate a school must be announced at least 90 days prior to the effective date but no later than April 30 of any school year.

C. Appeal to State Board of Education

1. An appeal to the State Board shall be submitted in writing within 30 days after the decision of the local Board of Education.

VII-A-9 Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

The Worcester County Board of Education is committed to serving the citizens of Worcester County equally without prejudice or discrimination.

Consequently, the Worcester County Board of Education believes in and will practice an equal employment opportunity program through which equal employment opportunity for all persons is truly made a reality.

Therefore, all matters pertaining to personnel appointment, assignment, compensation, promotion, transfer, discipline and dismissal shall be carried out without discrimination on the basis of age, race, religion, color, national origin, disability, or sex (except where employment of a person of a specified sex may be necessary by reason of the nature and/or requirement of the assignment under consideration).

- A. The sale of the following categories of food is not authorized from the beginning of the school day until the end of the school day:
1. Soda water or artificially flavored drinks that contain no pure juices.
 2. Water ices except those that contain fruit or fruit juices.
 3. Chewing Gum - Flavored products from natural or synthetic gums and other ingredients which form an insoluble mass for chewing.
 4. Certain Candies - Processed foods made predominantly from sweeteners or artificial sweeteners with a variety of minor ingredients which characterize the following types:
 - a. Hard Candy - A product made predominantly from sugar (sucrose) and corn syrup which may be flavored and colored, is characterized by a hard, brittle texture, and includes such items as sour balls, fruit balls, candy sticks, lollipops, starlight mints, after dinner mints, sugar wafers, rock candy, cinnamon candies, breath mints, jaw breakers and cough drops.
 - b. Jellies and Gums - A mixture of carbohydrates which are combined to form a stable gelatinous system of jelly-like character, and are generally flavored and colored, and include gum drops, jelly beans, jellied and fruit-flavored slices.
 - c. Marshmallow Candies - An aerated confection composed of sugar, corn syrup, invert sugar, 20% water and gelatin or egg white to which flavors and colors may be added.
 - d. Fondant - A product consisting of microscopic-sized sugar crystals which are separated by a thin film of sugar and/or invert sugar in solution such as candy corn, soft mints.
 - e. Licorice - A product made predominantly from sugar and corn syrup which is flavored with an extract made from the licorice root.
 - f. Spun Candy - A product that is made from sugar that has been boiled at high temperature and spun at a high speed in a special machine.
 - g. Candy Coated Popcorn - Popcorn which is coated with a mixture made predominantly from sugar and corn syrup.
 5. Other foods as designated by U.S.D.A.
- B. The sale of any food items by student groups, PTA's or any other nonprofit organization is not authorized until the end of the last lunch period.
- C. The sale of food items by students groups, PTA's or nonprofit organizations during the school day must meet USDA and Maryland State Department of Education nutritional guidelines.
- D. In addition, the preparation and/or sale of food items by any profit making organization is not authorized.

VII-A-11 Use and Reproduction of Videorecordings and Computer Software

- A. The Worcester County Board of Education affirms its compliance with federal copyright laws and pledges fair use of copyrighted work for the purposes of criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research only.
- B. The following regulations apply to the taping of off-air broadcasts and simultaneous cable retransmissions. Broadcast programs are defined as television programs transmitted for reception by the general public without charge. These guidelines do not apply to pay/premium broadcast or cable channels such as Home Box Office and Disney Channel, recordings from which shall not be used in WCPS instructional programs.
1. Recordings must be used for instruction, not entertainment.
 2. Recordings may be used by teachers for "face-to-face" instruction once for each class and repeated once if reinforcement is necessary. All such use must take place within ten school days after the original taping and then the tape must be erased.
 3. Recordings may be kept for forty-five calendar days after the original taping for evaluation purposes only. Then, the tape must be erased.
 4. Recordings can be made by a person other than the teacher only after the teacher has made a request, not in anticipation of the request.
 5. No program can be recorded more than once at the request of the same teacher regardless of the number of times it is broadcast.
 6. A limited number of copies may be reproduced to meet the legitimate needs of teachers if requested before the original taping is done. Each additional copy shall be subject to all provisions which govern the original recording.
 7. All copies of a recording must include the copyright notice on the broadcast program as recorded.
 8. Recordings need not be used in their entirety, but they may not be altered from their original content. Recordings may not be physically or electronically combined or merged to constitute teaching anthologies or compilations.
- C. Rented Video Programs
1. Such programs may not be used in schools for entertainment.
 2. They may be used for "face-to-face" instructional purposes if:
 - a. the content fits the curriculum in a direct sense
 - b. they are previewed by the teacher for content and intended audience
- D. The following regulations apply to the use of computer software. Federal law prohibits the copying of any computer program, software, or courseware without permission.
1. Written permission must be obtained from the copyright holder.
 2. Only one computer may be loaded from a disk unless the school has a site license for that disk.

3. While the law allows the legal owner to make one archival backup copy, that backup copy may not be used in the classroom as a second copy. Keep archival backup copies in a safe, restricted-access storage area. Use archival backup copies only in the event of destruction/failure of the original copy.

E. Persons found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary procedures and/or dismissal.

Definition: An illness due to a specific infectious agent or its toxic products which arises through transmission of that agent or its products from an infected person, animal, or inanimate reservoir to a susceptible host, either directly or indirectly through an intermediate plant or animal host, vector, or the inanimate environment.

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to insure that necessary regulations and procedures are established to:

1. Identify students and employees having a communicable disease.
2. Make decisions about the placement of students and the assignment of employees identified as having a communicable disease.
3. Provide employees, students, and parents with accurate information about communicable diseases and modes of transmission.

B. Procedures

1. Students - If there is reason to believe that a student may have a communicable disease, he/she shall be isolated in the health room and the following steps will occur:
 - a. The principal or the principal's designee will notify parent or guardian of a suspected communicable disease and to arrange for the parent to transport the student to home or doctor.
 - b. The principal will report all suspected or diagnosed cases of reportable communicable diseases* to the Supervisor of Student Services who in turn will notify the local health department.
 - c. In the case of a suspected reportable disease, parents will be required to have students seen by a physician for diagnosis. A written diagnosis and recommendation regarding school attendance should be presented to the principal in a timely fashion.
 - d. In the case of a suspected nonreportable disease, parents will be advised to seek physician care. Students returning to class will be screened by the school nurse before admission to determine if there is a fever and if the disease is in a communicable state. Should either condition exist, the principal, in consultation with the school nurse, parents and physician (if deemed necessary), will decide whether or not to readmit the student.

*Refer to the list at the end of this policy.

- e. Decisions regarding the type of educational setting for students with communicable diseases will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Superintendent of Schools based on available medical knowledge and the behavior, neurologic development, and physical condition of the student. The age, physical condition and mental development of other students with whom the child might come in contact will also be taken into consideration. Decisions will be made using the advice of a team consisting of the student's physician (diagnosis required in 1.c. above), the student's parent or guardian, a designee of the local health officer, the school principal, the student's primary teacher or a guidance counselor, the school nurse, and the Supervisor of Student Services. The designee of the local health officer will prepare and forward the team's recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools, who will make the final placement decision.
 - f. Parents of students who are known carriers of a communicable disease, shall be informed about the control measures for minimizing the transmission of the specific disease. All parents and students will be informed about appropriate hygiene measures to prevent the spread of communicable disease.
2. Employees - If there is reason to believe that an employee may have a communicable disease, the following steps shall be taken:
- a. The principal or designee will request the employee to leave the premises and consult a physician. The use of sick leave will be authorized up to the limit of leave available.
 - b. In the case of a suspected reportable disease, the employee will be required to provide the principal with a written diagnosis and recommendations from a physician. If the disease is nonreportable, the employee may return to work if a physician so recommends.
 - c. The principal will report all suspected cases or diagnosed cases of reportable communicable diseases to the Supervisor of Student Services who in turn will notify the local health department.

- d. Decisions regarding the type of assignment, i.e., whether an infected employee should be assigned in a capacity that involves contact with students or other school employees, will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Superintendent of Schools. Decisions will be made using the advice of a team consisting of the employee, the employee's representative as determined by the employee, the employee's physician, a designee of the local health officer, the principal, the Supervisor of Student Services, and the Supervisor of Human Resources. The designee of the local health officer will prepare and forward the team's recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools, who will make the final assignment decision. In making a decision the following shall be considered: (1) available medical knowledge; (2) the physical condition of the employee; (3) the expected type of interaction with others in the school setting; and (4) the impact on both the infected school employee and others in that setting.

3. Education Programs About Communicable Diseases

- a. Information about communicable diseases will be included in the health education curriculum for students.
- b. Information and/or inservice training will be provided for all central office and school-based personnel concerning communicable diseases and the modes of transmission as appropriate.
- c. Principals will arrange for information sharing with parents about communicable diseases as is deemed appropriate by the Superintendent and principal.
- d. Right to Privacy

Persons involved with the education of a student or the supervision of an employee with a communicable disease shall respect that person's right to privacy. The number of people aware of the person's condition should be limited to those people who need to know in order to take necessary precautions in working with the infected person. This would include the student's teachers and the employee's immediate supervisor(s).

Reportable Communicable Diseases and Conditions

AIDS	Meningitis (Specific Etiology)
Animal Bites	Mumps (Parotitis)
Anthrax	Occupational Diseases
Botulism	Pertussis
Brucellosis	Plague
Chancroid	Poliomyelitis
Cholera	Psittacosis
CMV	Rabies
Diphtheria	Post-Exposure
Encephalitis (Specify Etiology)	Prophylaxis
Food Poisoning Outbreak	Relapsing Fever
Gonococcal Infection	Reye's Syndrome
Granuloma Inguinale	Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever
Guillain-Barre Syndrome	Rubella (German Measles)
Hepatitis, Viral: A (Infectious)	Rubella Syndrome, Congenital
B (Serum)	Rubeola (Measles)
Non-A, Non-B	Salmonellosis
Unspecified	Shigellosis
Staphylococcal and other infections in newborn	Small Pox
Kawasaki Disease	Syphilis
Legionellosis (Legionnaires' Disease)	Tetanus
Leprosy	Trichinosis
Leptospirosis	Tuberculosis
Lymphogranuloma Venereum	Tularemia Typhoid Fever
Malaria	Typhus
	Yellow Fever

Other Communicable Diseases of Concern - Not Reportable

Chicken Pox
Chlamydia
Diarrheal
Fifth Disease (Erythema Infectiosum)
Herpes - Simplex Virus - HSV
Impetigo
Pediculosis (Head Lice)
Scabies

VII-A-13 Persons Who Have AIDS or Who Are Carrying the AIDS Virus

The Worcester County Board of Education considers AIDS a communicable disease and the procedures established in Policy VII-A-12, Communicable Diseases - Students and Employees, should be followed. Due to the uniqueness of AIDS, the following will be observed when a case of AIDS is identified:

1. The educational placement of a student or the job placement of an employee will be made by a team including the person's physician, public health personnel, parents or guardians, and school officials.
2. The decision to exclude persons infected with the AIDS virus from school will be made by the Public Health Officer after receiving input from the team used to determine placement.
3. Only those persons with a need to know; for example, persons who could be exposed to an infected person's body fluids, will be informed of an individual case.
4. Any public announcements regarding the existence of an AIDS case will be made jointly by the Superintendent and the County Health Officer.

A. Purpose

1. To enrich the educational experiences of all students by enabling them to have contact with adults from many backgrounds, thereby providing students with a wide variety of role models that reflect the pluralistic nature of the community.
2. To reaffirm and strengthen the Board's commitment to equal employment opportunities for all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, veteran status, or disability in conformity with existing law.
3. To assure the recruitment, employment, training, promotion and retention of qualified staff without discrimination, while making efforts to address significant racial, ethnic and gender imbalances in job categories.
4. To assure that all policies, procedures, state and federal by-laws and statutes are administered and adhered to in the true spirit and intent of the laws regulating Equal Employment/Educational Opportunity.

B. Process

1. The Board of Education forbids any discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, veteran status or disability in any Worcester County Public Schools policy or practice, including:
 - a. the recruitment, employment, training, promotion and retention of employees.
 - b. the administration of any Worcester County Public School program or activity, including employee compensation, benefits, reduction-in-force, training, education, or tuition assistance.
2. The Superintendent will develop annual goals for recruitment, hiring, placement and promotion in schools and other work locations to address significant racial, ethnic and gender imbalances.
3. The Superintendent will give the Board of Education an annual report regarding progress in achieving the intent of this policy and in attaining goals to address racial, ethnic and gender imbalances.

- A. The Board of Education is sensitive to those issues which are likely to create controversy in the school community.
- B. The Board will manage issues of relevance to the school system as a whole by the following method:
 - 1. Individual Board members or the Superintendent will advise the Board of matters that should be considered under this policy.
 - 2. Upon successful motion of the Board, the Superintendent will form a broad-based committee to study the issue and make recommendations to the Board.
 - 3. After receipt of the committee recommendations, the Board will schedule a public hearing to receive input from the school community at large.
 - 4. The Board will meet and formally take action on the issue as appropriate.

The Board of Education affirms its total support of athletic programs in the Worcester County Public Schools. Student athletes and coaches shall abide by the rules and regulations set forth in:

- A. Handbook of the Maryland Public Secondary School Athletics Association
- B. Bayside Athletic Conference Constitution, Bylaws and Policies
- C. Worcester County Procedures Manual

In accordance with COMAR 13A.03.04, it shall be the policy of the Worcester County Public Schools that adequate provisions be made for the security of state mandated testing materials and the testing process itself and for the accuracy of its data reporting. Specifically to be included are:

1. the norm-referenced test in use by the state;
2. all Maryland High School Assessment program tests;
3. the Maryland School Assessment Program tests;
4. the High School Equivalency Program Test (GED);
5. Teacher Certification Tests; and
6. other test instruments required by the Maryland State Board of Education.

This policy shall be incorporated in student handbooks. Each certificated employee shall receive a copy of this policy at the time of hire and it will be incorporated in the school handbooks with staff periodically reminded of this policy.

The local accountability coordinator will be designated by the Superintendent and the coordinator's name provided to the Maryland State Department of Education. The coordinator shall be charged with implementing appropriate provisions for the security of materials and the storage of all secure tests, and test materials including answer keys, audio tapes, and examinee answer documents before, during and after testing. These procedures shall provide for storage of all materials under lock and key at a central location.

Provisions shall be made by the Local Accountability Coordinator to ensure that individuals administering the tests shall adhere to all procedures specified in the Maryland Accountability Coordinators' Handbook and all administrator manuals for mandated testing programs. In addition, with the distribution of test materials, all test administrators will be informed that it is a violation of state regulations for anyone to knowingly and willfully:

1. give examinees access to secure test items or materials before testing;
2. copy, reproduce, or use in any manner inconsistent with test security regulations, all or any portion of a secure test booklet or a secure administrator's manual, or both;
3. provide answer keys or answers verbally, in writing, or by any other means, to examinees;
4. coach examinees during testing or alter or interfere with examinees' responses in any way;
5. fail to follow security regulations for distribution and return of secure test materials as directed, or fail to account for all secure test materials before, during, and after testing;
6. participate in, direct, aid, counsel, assist in, encourage, or fail to report any of the prohibited acts listed above or fail to follow procedures published in test administration manuals; or
7. refuse to disclose information regarding test security violations.

It is also a violation for any person or school to knowingly and willfully:

1. fail to report test scores, numbers of students tested, other indicators of test performance and participation for all participating students on mandatory tests administered by or through the Maryland State Board of Education, as well as all other data elements reported to the Maryland State Department of Education as part of its Maryland School Performance Program initiative;

2. report incorrect or otherwise inaccurate test scores, numbers of students tested, other indicators of test performance and participation on mandatory tests administered by or through the Maryland State Board of Education, as well as all other data elements reported to the Maryland State Department of Education as part of its Maryland School Performance Program initiatives;
3. exclude a student or students from participation in mandatory tests administered by or through the Maryland State Board of Education except as provided for in MSPAP and/or MSDE assessment guidelines.

A student who knowingly causes, allows, or is otherwise involved in the presentation of forged, counterfeit, or altered identification for the purpose of obtaining admission to a test administration site for any of the tests listed above shall have the test results invalidated, and shall be ineligible to retake the test until the next official testing opportunity. A student who knowingly engages in any activities during testing which result in invalidation of scores shall be ineligible to retake the test until the next official testing opportunity.

The Worcester County school system shall report to the State Superintendent any violations of test security or data reporting. Violations may result in the suspension or revocation of an individual's teaching certificate, invalidation of test results, or the withholding of funds by the Maryland State Department of Education.

VII-A-18 Harassment of Employees

All employees of the Worcester County Board of Education shall conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from all forms of harassment. Harassing behavior directed toward other Board of Education employees is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

I. Definitions

A. Harassment exists when there is a sufficiently severe action or persistent, pervasive pattern of actions or statements, directed at an identifiable individual or group, that are intended to be, or which a reasonable person would perceive as ridiculing, demeaning or threatening. Harassment is defined as unwelcome and inappropriate verbal, written or physical conduct directed toward other persons based upon sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, race, national origin, physical characteristics or disability that takes place under any of the following circumstances:

1. when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment; or
2. when submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
3. when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

B. Forms of harassment may include but are not limited to the following:

1. verbal harassment, such as derogatory comments, jokes, slurs; and
2. physical harassment, such as offensive touching, impeding or blocking movement; and
3. visual harassment, such as derogatory or offensive writing, posters, cards, cartoons, graffiti, drawings, gestures, or prolonged staring/leering.

II. Complaint/Reporting Procedure

Employees with a complaint of harassment must bring the complaint in writing to their immediate supervisor or to the Superintendent. Complaints reported to immediate supervisors should be forwarded to the Superintendent promptly. If the Superintendent is the subject of a harassment complaint, the written complaint shall be forwarded to the President of the School Board. All complaints will be expeditiously investigated by the Superintendent or designee, and a report made to the employee. Retaliation against an employee making a complaint in good faith is prohibited.

III. Investigation

The Superintendent or designee shall conduct an investigation of an alleged incident of harassment. The investigation shall be completed in a timely manner to determine whether the allegations have been substantiated. The Superintendent shall take whatever actions the Superintendent deems appropriate to protect the victim of the alleged harassment during the investigation.

IV. Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible. The identity of the complainant, the subject, and witnesses will be protected to the extent possible.

V. Disciplinary Action

Any employee who is found to have violated this policy (VII-A-18) will be subject to disciplinary action.

VI. Notification

Notice of the policy prohibiting harassment will be provided to all current employees. Notice of the policy prohibiting harassment will be included in the orientation of new employees.

VII-A-19 Tobacco-Free School Environment

The Worcester County Board of Education is committed to maintaining a tobacco-free school environment in accordance with Maryland State Board of Education Bylaw.

I. Definitions

- A. "Official school day" means the regular school day from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
- B. "School buildings" means school system owned or leased buildings.
- C. "School grounds" means school system owned or leased land that surrounds a school building.
- D. "Tobacco" means products derived from the tobacco plant that are smoked, chewed, sniffed, or otherwise consumed. This shall not include nicotine replacement therapy.

II. Tobacco Use

- A. The sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited in school buildings at all times effective August 16, 1993.
- B. The sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on school grounds.
- C. Employees are prohibited from using tobacco at any time while supervising students in school sponsored activities not occurring on school grounds.

III. Notification

Each principal or person in charge of a building or grounds shall post notification to students, staff, and the general public that school buildings and grounds are tobacco-free.

IV. Sanctions

School system employees who are in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action. Other persons in violation will be warned and, as appropriate, be asked to leave school property.

VII-A-20 Public Relations

The Worcester County Board of Education believes the primary mission of the schools is the education of the students. Our ability to fulfill that responsibility effectively and efficiently is dependent upon public understanding and support. Therefore, it is in the interest of the school system to provide our communities with accurate and timely information about the school system's goals, programs, practices, achievements, critical issues, and future plans.

- A. The Board of Education recognizes the important role of the news media informing the public about the schools and welcomes the active participation of the news media in reporting school activities. The Board will seek to establish and maintain an effective working relationship by:
 - 1. notifying the news media of all public meetings of the Board,
 - 2. recognizing the right of the news media to research and report information about the school system,
 - 3. authorizing the superintendent or other designated persons to issue information on all official activities of the Board and school system, and
 - 4. providing accurate and timely information on the school system upon request or by its own initiative.
- B. There are certain situations when the school system has an obligation to protect the privacy, security, as well as the due process rights of students and staff. Therefore, there are times when media representatives may be denied information and access to the school facility.
- C. The intent of this policy is to provide our communities with accurate and current information about the school system. All information will be consistent with the principles of confidentiality requirements.

VII-A-21 Political Campaigns

- A. Distribution of political campaign literature or other materials on Board property is prohibited.
- B. The names of pupils and employees shall not be released by the Board or school staff for any political purpose.

VII-A-22 Canvassing in the Schools

Marketing and/or sale of materials or services and other solicitation on Board property are prohibited, except for authorized vending machine, cafeteria, book store, and sports concession stand operations.

VII-A-23 Distribution of Written Material

No person shall distribute any written material on school property during the school day or at a school event or activity without the prior approval of the Superintendent or designated representative.

It is the policy of the Worcester County Public Schools that uniform procedures shall be used by the Central office and local schools for managing complaints in the administration of state and federal programs.

It is also the policy of the Worcester County Public Schools that the complaint procedures shall be implemented whenever a complaint is received alleging that the Worcester County Public Schools or one of its subgrantees has violated a state or federal statute or regulation.