

Wood County Board of Developmental Disabilities

PROCEDURE

Procedure #:	02-WLS-ALL-0898 (HR)	Subject: Title IX: Sexual Harassment for Wood Lane Schools
Effective Date:	01-25-2021	Last Revision:
Person Responsible:	Director of Children's Services	
Approvals/Date:	<u>Brent Urban</u> 2-4-21 Superintendent, WCBDD	<u>Jouaine Flick</u> 02-04-21 Date Department Director

This Procedure adopts certain terms as defined by Title IX. Where a word is not defined by this Policy, Ohio law requires that the words be construed in accordance with their plain and ordinary meanings.

The following definitions will apply:
Word – Definition as used in policy

Actual Knowledge - "Actual knowledge" means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator or any Board employee or member who has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the Board. The ability or obligation to report Sexual Harassment or to inform a student about how to report sexual harassment, or having been trained to do so, does not qualify an individual as one who has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the Board. "Notice" includes, but is not limited to, an oral, written or electronic report of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator.

Appeal Officer - A professional neutral decision-maker (such as a retired judge) experienced and trained in adjudicating matters of civil rights, sexual harassment and/or sexual violence and trained on this Policy, who will review the parties' appeals and issue a Notice of Outcome of Appeal.

Board Community - "Board community" refers to students and Board employees, as well as Board members, agents, volunteers, or other persons subject to the control and supervision of the Board.

Complainant - An individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute conduct prohibited by Title IX.

Educational Program or Activity - "Educational program or activity" refers to all operations of the Board over which it exercises substantial control, including in-person and online educational instruction, employment, extra-curricular activities, athletics, performances, community engagement, and outreach programs. The term applies to all activity that occurs on property owned or occupied by the Board. It also includes events and circumstances that take place off-school property/grounds if the Board exercises substantial control over both the Respondent and the context in which the conduct prohibited by Title IX occurs.

Exculpatory Evidence - "Exculpatory evidence" is evidence that tends to clear or excuse a Respondent from allegations of conduct prohibited by Title IX.

Formal Complaint - "Formal complaint" means a document filed by a Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging conduct prohibited by Title IX against a Respondent and requesting that the Board investigate an allegation of conduct prohibited by Title IX. At the time of filing a Formal Complaint with the Board, a Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the Board's educational programs or activities. A "document filed by a complainant" means a document or electronic submission (such as by electronic mail or through an online portal that the Board provides for this purpose) that contains the Complainant's physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that the Complainant is the person filing the Formal Complaint. If the Title IX Coordinator signs a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator does not become a Complainant and is not a party to the Formal Complaint.

Formal Resolution - An investigation and decision-making process initiated when a Formal Complaint is signed and filed alleging conduct prohibited by Title IX against a Respondent, and also requests that the Formal Complaint be investigated. The Formal Resolution includes an investigation, a decision, and appeal.

Inculpatory Evidence - "Inculpatory evidence" is evidence that tends to establish a Respondent's responsibility for alleged conduct prohibited by Title IX.

Informal Resolution - A voluntary process that the parties may consent to participate in, as described in Section VII.F.

Initial Report - A report of conduct that may constitute conduct prohibited by Title IX, which may be made by any person, even if not the person alleged to have experienced the conduct. An Initial Report is made prior to a Formal Complaint, and triggers the Title IX Coordinator's obligation to contact the Complainant and inform the Complainant of the availability of Supportive Measures

Investigation - The phase of the investigation and decision-making process when the parties are invited to provide evidence and identify witnesses to the Investigator related to the allegations in the Notice of Formal Complaint.

Investigative Report - A formal written document that fairly summarizes the relevant evidence gathered during the Investigation and that is provided to the parties to allow them to review and provide a response.

Investigator - The person assigned by the Title IX Coordinator to investigate Formal Complaints under this Policy. The Investigator shall have been trained on all elements of an Investigation as required by federal and state law.

Mandated Reporter - All Board employees, members, volunteers, and visitors are required to disclose to the Title IX Coordinator any conduct prohibited by Title IX of which they are aware to ensure the Board is able to provide a prompt, thorough, and supportive response.

Notice of Dismissal - Formal notification issued by the Title IX Coordinator following a determination that the matter does not meet the definitional or jurisdictional standards of Title IX and stating the reasons for dismissal.

Notice of Formal Complaint - Formal notification issued by the Title IX Coordinator that a Formal Complaint has been filed and that includes the details set forth in Section VII.C.1.

Notice of Outcome of Appeal - A written determination describing the Appeal Officer's final decision of an appeal of a determination of responsibility.

Preponderance of the Evidence - This term is the standard of evidence. A preponderance of the evidence shows that the fact to be proven is more likely than not to be true.

Prohibited Conduct - Conduct prohibited by Title IX and this Policy, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, as those terms are defined by and listed in Section IV.30 of this Policy.

Privacy - This term means that information related to a complaint will be shared with only a limited number of Board employees who "need to know" in order to assist in the assessment, investigation, and resolution of any report of Prohibited Conduct. All employees who are responsible for the Board's response to Title IX Prohibited Conduct shall receive specific training and guidance about sharing and safeguarding private information in accordance with state and federal law. The privacy of student education records will be protected in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), and the privacy of employee records will be protected in accordance with Ohio law and Board policy.

Remedies - Individualized measures implemented after a determination is made or as part of an Informal Resolution that are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Board's educational programs and activities. Remedies may include Supportive Measures, but Remedies may be disciplinary, and need not avoid burdening the Respondent.

Reporting Party - Any person who files a report of conduct prohibited by Title IX.

Representative or Advisor - An individual that serves as an advisor to a party after a Notice of Formal Complaint is issued, at the party's choosing, and that is permitted to be, but need not be, an attorney.

Respondent - An individual who has been reported to have committed conduct prohibited by Title IX.

Sanctions - Individualized measures implemented after a determination of responsibility that may be disciplinary in nature.

Supportive Measures - "Supportive measures" means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the Complainant or the Respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Board's educational programs or activities without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the Board's educational environment or to deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, school escort services, mutual restrictions of contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the Board's buildings and facilities, referral to an Employee Assistance Program, and other similar measures.

Third Parties - "Third parties" include, but are not limited to, guests and/or visitors on Board property (e.g., visiting speakers, participants on opposing athletic teams, parents), contractors or vendors doing business with, or seeking to do business with the Board, and other individuals who come in contact with members of the Board community at school-related events/activities (whether on or off Board property).

Title IX Coordinators - The individuals designated by the Board to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX responsibilities.

Title IX Sexual Harassment - "Sexual Harassment" means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

A. A Board employee conditions the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the Board on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct ("*quid pro quo*" harassment);

B. Unwelcome sexual conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the Board's educational programs or activities; or

C. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)A(v); "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10); "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8); or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

1. Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of any gender against a person of the same or another gender.
2. Examples of unwelcome sexual conduct may include, but are not limited to, the following actions:
 - a. Unwelcome sexual propositions, invitations, solicitations, and/or flirtations;
 - b. Unwanted physical and/or sexual contact;
 - c. Threats or insinuations implying that a person's conditions of education or employment may be adversely affected by not submitting to sexual advances;
 - d. Unwelcome sexual verbal expressions, including graphic sexual commentaries about a person's body, dress, appearance, or sexual activities; unwelcome sexually degrading language, profanity, jokes, or innuendoes;
 - e. Sexually suggestive objects, pictures, graffiti, videos, posters, audio recordings or literature;
 - f. Unwelcome and inappropriate touching, patting, or pinching;
 - g. Asking about, or telling about, sexual fantasies, sexual preferences, or sexual activities;
 - h. Speculations about a person's sexual activities or sexual history, or remarks about one's own sexual activities or sexual history;

- i. Giving unwelcome personal gifts such as lingerie that suggests the desire for a romantic relationship; and
- j. Leering or staring at someone in a sexual way, such as staring at a person's breasts, buttocks, or groin.

I. DESIGNATION AND ROLE OF TITLE IX COORDINATOR

The Board designates and authorizes the following individuals to oversee and coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX and its regulations:

HUMAN RESOURCES COORDINATOR

1921 EAST GYPSY LANE ROAD
BOWLING GREEN OH 43402

419-352-5115

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1921 EAST GYPSY LANE ROAD
BOWLING GREEN OH 43402

419-352-5115

The Title IX Coordinators shall report directly to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall assign a Title IX Coordinator to handle a report of Prohibited Conduct. Questions about this policy should be directed to the Title IX Coordinators.

The Title IX Coordinators shall be informed of all reports of Prohibited Conduct shared with Board employees and members and shall manage the Board's review, investigation, and resolution of those reports to ensure the Board's compliance with Title IX and the effective implementation of this Policy. All references to actions by the Title IX Coordinators may be performed by the Title IX Coordinators. The Title IX Coordinators shall be:

- Knowledgeable of and trained in Board policies and procedures and relevant state and federal laws;
- Available to advise any individual, including a Reporting Party, Complainant, or Respondent about the courses of action, formal or informal, available at the Board and in the community;
- Responsible for offering and implementing reasonably available Supportive Measures;
- Available to provide assistance to any Board employee regarding how to respond appropriately to a report of Prohibited Conduct;
- Responsible for monitoring full compliance with all procedural requirements, record keeping, and timeframes outlined in this Policy;
- Responsible for managing training, prevention and education efforts; and
- Responsible for facilitating periodic review of this Policy as needed to maintain compliance with state and federal law.

In addition to addressing complaints against a particular party, the Title IX Coordinators shall address reports that the Board's policies or practices may discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. The Title IX Coordinators shall assess such concerns and, using procedures appropriate given the circumstances, shall advise and work with the Board to ensure that its policies and practices are compliant.

II. REPORTING

A. General Reporting Obligations

Any person may report Prohibited Conduct (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of Prohibited Conduct), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the Title IX Coordinators' contact information, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinators receiving the person's oral or written report. The Board encourages persons filing a report to submit it directly to the Title IX Coordinators, but a report may be made to any Board employee. Reports may be made at any time. Reports can be made orally or in writing and should be as specific as possible.

To the extent possible, the report should:

- Identify the alleged victim(s);
- Identify the alleged perpetrator(s)
- Identify any witnesses;
- Identify the date of the incident;
- Identify the location of the incident;
- Identify the of the incident;
- Identify the nature of the conduct (provide specific details);
- Identify the date of any previous report;
- Identify to whom any previous report was made; and
- Provide any written evidence or reports in the person's possession.

All Board employees and members are mandatory reporters pursuant to Title IX regulations. Therefore, Board employees and members witnessing Prohibited Conduct shall report such Prohibited Conduct to a Title IX Coordinator or to any Board employee or member within twenty-four (24) hours. A Board employee or member that receives a report of Prohibited Conduct shall notify the Title IX Coordinators within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt. Members of the Board's Community and Third Parties are encouraged to report Prohibited Conduct promptly to a Title IX Coordinator or to any Board employee. A Board employee's failure to make any report required by this Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. A Board member's failure to make any report required by this Policy may result in removal from the Board pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §5126.0213.

Nothing in this Policy shall negate the obligation to report, or delay the timeline to make a mandatory report under either Ohio Revised Code §5123.61 or Ohio Administrative Code 5123-17-02.

The Board encourages a Complainant to seek assistance from a medical provider and/or law enforcement immediately after an incident of Prohibited Conduct, whether or not the Complainant plans to pursue criminal charges. This allows for the preservation of evidence and a timely response by law enforcement.

If an individual believes that the Title IX Coordinators have engaged in Prohibited Conduct or have otherwise behaved inappropriately, the individual should contact the Superintendent or Board President. In such case, the Superintendent will either serve in place of the Title IX Coordinator for purposes of addressing that particular report of Prohibited Conduct or appoint another person to serve as a Title IX Coordinator.

B. Anonymous Reporting

A report of Prohibited Conduct can be made without disclosing one's own name, identifying the Respondent, or requesting any action. Depending on the level of information available about the incident or the individuals involved, anonymous reporting may limit the Board's ability to respond or take further action.

If not submitted to the Title IX Coordinators, anonymous reports shall be shared with the Title IX Coordinator. Where there is sufficient information, the Title IX Coordinators shall ensure that anonymous reports are reviewed. Board employees and members have a duty to report information to the Title IX Coordinator under this Policy and may not make such reports anonymously.

C. Reporting Considerations - Timeliness of Report

In order to ensure the Board's ability to respond promptly and effectively, any person, other than a Board employee or member, affected by Prohibited Conduct is encouraged to file a report as soon as possible. A Board employee or member that witnesses Prohibited Conduct or receives a report alleging Prohibited Conduct shall notify the Title IX Coordinators within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt. If a Respondent is no longer a student or employee at the time of the report, the Board may not be able to take disciplinary action against them. The Board shall provide reasonably available Supportive Measures to a Complainant, as well as assistance in identifying appropriate external reporting options.

D. Report Resolution

A report to the Title IX Coordinator is not the same as a Formal Complaint. In order for a report to be officially resolved, a Formal Complaint must be filed in writing alleging Prohibited Conduct against a Respondent and requesting that the Board officially investigate and resolve the allegation. The Formal Complaint may be resolved through either Informal Resolution (see Section VII.F.) or through the Formal Resolution (see Section VII.G.).

III. INVESTIGATION AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: INITIAL RESPONSE, FORMAL COMPLAINT, INITIAL ASSESSMENT, NOTICE OF FORMAL COMPLAINT, INVESTIGATION, INFORMAL RESOLUTION, FORMAL RESOLUTION, AND APPEAL

A. General Principles

The Board shall promptly investigate and resolve student and employee complaints alleging Prohibited Conduct. In addressing allegations of Prohibited Conduct, the Board shall (1) treat Complainants and Respondents equitably, (2) provide reasonable supportive measures to both the Complainant and Respondent, as appropriate, and (3) follow the provisions of this Section VII before imposing any Remedies, other than Supportive Measures, against the Respondent.

The process described in Section VII relates exclusively to complaints brought under this Policy. The Board will continue to handle complaints subject to the Board's other non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies separately.

B. Receipt of an Initial Report of Title IX Prohibited Conduct

1. Offer of Supportive Measures

Upon receipt of notice of an Initial Report of Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator shall, within two (2) calendar days contact the Complainant and:

- Discuss the availability of Supportive Measures;
- Consider the Complainant's wishes with respect to Supportive Measures;
- Inform the Complainant of the availability of Supportive Measures with or without the filing of a Formal Complaint;
- Explain to the Complainant the process for filing a Formal Complaint;
- Advise the Complainant that, if the reported conduct could be a crime, the Complainant has the right but not the obligation to file a police report, and that if there is a police investigation, the Title IX Coordinator will cooperate with law enforcement; and
- Discuss the importance of preserving evidence and identification and location of Witnesses.

If, on the face of the Initial Report, the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct alleged does not fall within the scope of Title IX, the Title IX Coordinator may inform the Complainant that the matter may be referred for decision by the Superintendent pursuant to other Board policies. Even then, the Complainant shall receive an offer of Supportive Measures.

The Title IX Coordinators are responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of Supportive Measures. Supportive Measures are based on individualized review and may not be the same in every situation. The Title IX Coordinators shall consider the Complainant's wishes with respect to Supportive Measures. The Board shall maintain as private any Supportive

Measures provided to the Complainant or Respondent, to the extent that maintaining such privacy would not impair the ability of the Board to provide the Supportive Measures.

2. Privacy

Notice to the Title IX Coordinator or another Board employee of Prohibited Conduct requires the Board to follow its obligations under this Policy to review the available information and determine whether to proceed to an Investigation. In this context, "privacy" means that information related to a complaint will be shared with only a limited number of Board employees who "need to know" in order to assist in the assessment, investigation, and resolution of the report. The privacy of student education records will be protected in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the privacy of employee records will be protected in accordance with Ohio law and Board policy.

Once a report has been shared with the Title IX Coordinator, a Complainant may request that his/her identity not be shared with the Respondent (request for anonymity), that no investigation occur, or that no disciplinary action be pursued. The Board will balance this request in the context of its obligation to provide a safe and non-discriminatory educational environment. Confidentiality will not always be possible. Whether or not the Complainant requests confidentiality, the Board shall maintain privacy with respect to the identity of all Complainants, Respondents, and witnesses, except as necessary to carry out this Policy or as may be required by applicable state or federal law. Should a Complainant make a request that the Board not disclose the Complainant's identity to the Respondent, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the Complainant that the Board's ability to investigate the allegations effectively may be limited if the request is granted. A Complainant who initially requests confidentiality is not prohibited from later requesting that the Board conduct a full investigation.

3. Initial Actions by Board

Based upon an Initial Report or Formal Complaint of Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator may undertake an individualized safety and risk analysis to determine whether the allegations of Prohibited Conduct indicate a Respondent who is a student poses an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any other student or person. If it is determined that removal from the Board's educational programs and facilities is appropriate in light of the existing circumstances, the Board shall provide notice to the Respondent and an opportunity to challenge the Board's decision immediately following the removal. Any removal under this Policy must be conducted consistently with student due process rights regarding emergency removal, suspension or expulsion, and consistently with any applicable obligations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Board may place a Board employee on administrative leave with pay in accordance with Ohio Revised Code §124.388 after notice of a report of Prohibited Conduct and during the pendency of resolution of the matter. After notice of a report of Prohibited Conduct by a Board member, appropriate measures will be taken, including, but not limited to, the process described in Ohio Revised Code §§5126.0213-5126.0217.

When faced with a report of Prohibited Conduct against a Third Party, the Board may take appropriate preventative action with the Third Party to ensure the health and welfare of the Complainant.

C. Filing a Formal Complaint

After the Initial Report, further proceedings on the Initial Report will not occur unless and until a Formal Complaint is filed. A Formal Complaint can be filed by a Complainant or Title IX Coordinator. A Complainant may complete and sign a Formal Complaint alleging Prohibited Conduct against a Respondent and requesting that the Board investigate the allegation of Prohibited Conduct.

If the Complainant does not respond to contact by the Title IX Coordinators after the filing of the Initial Report or declines to file a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinators must consider the Complainant's wishes, safety of students and employees, and the Board's obligation to maintain an environment free from Prohibited Conduct, and determine whether to initiate a Formal Complaint. In considering a Complainant's request to take no action and evaluating whether to proceed, the Title IX Coordinator will assess and consider:

- the preferences and concerns of the Complainant;
- the nature and circumstances of the allegation;

- the severity and impact of the reported conduct;
- any pattern or evidence of other similar conduct by Respondent;
- the respective ages of the parties, including whether the Complainant is a minor (under the age of 18);
- whether the Respondent has admitted to the conduct;
- whether the Respondent has been the subject of other complaints or reports of Prohibited Conduct under this policy;
- whether the Respondent threatened sexual violence or other violence against the Complainant or others;
- whether the report indicates that multiple respondents were involved;
- whether the report indicates that the conduct was perpetrated with a weapon;
- whether the Respondent is an employee; and,
- whether the Board possesses independent means to obtain relevant evidence (e.g., witnesses, security cameras or personnel, or physical evidence).

Where the Board is unable to take action consistent with the request of the Complainant, the Title IX Coordinators shall inform the Complainant in writing about the chosen course of action and implement necessary Supportive Measures. The Board's response must be reasonable in light of the known circumstances. If a report alleges conduct by a Board employee member against a student, the Title IX Coordinator shall complete a Formal Complaint and initiate an Investigation.

1. Receipt or Execution of Formal Complaint

Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint by a Complainant or execution of a Formal Complaint by the Title IX Coordinators, the Title IX Coordinators shall provide written notice of the following to the parties who are known:

- a. Notice of the Board's investigation and decision-making process, including any informal resolution available;
- b. Notice of the allegations of Prohibited Conduct, including sufficient details known at the time and providing sufficient time for a party to prepare a response before any initial interview. Sufficient details include the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known, a description of the Prohibited Conduct, and the date and location of the alleged incident, if known. The written notice must also:
 1. Include a statement that the Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility will be made at the conclusion of the grievance process;
 2. Inform the parties that they may have a Representative or Advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and who may proffer, inspect and review evidence;
 3. Inform the parties of any provision in any Board Policy or Procedure, that prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.
- c. If, during the course of the Investigation, the Investigator decides to investigate allegations about the Complainant or Respondent that are not included in the original notice provided to the parties, the Title IX Coordinator shall provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

To the extent practicable, the Board shall conclude the Investigation and decision-making process, including resolving any appeals, no later than sixty business days from receipt of the Formal Complaint. Based upon good cause, a Title IX Coordinator may approve requests for temporary delays or limited extensions with written notice to either the Complainant or the Respondent and the reasons for the action. "Good cause" includes, but is not limited to, absence of a party, a party's Representative or Advisor, or a Witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.

2. Responsibilities and Rights of Parties and Witnesses

During an Investigation, the Complainant, Respondent and Witnesses have the following responsibilities and rights.

a. Responsibilities

1. Complainant, Respondent and Witnesses have the responsibility to be truthful, to cooperate with the process, and to follow the directions of Board staff and agents responsible for administering this process. Knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information shall result in disciplinary action or other consequences;
2. Complainant, Respondent and Witnesses have the responsibility not to retaliate against, intimidate, harass, or threaten any individual who has reported Prohibited Conduct or who has participated as a party or witness in the process. The Board shall investigate allegations of a person engaging in any act of retaliation, intimidation, harassment, or threat;
3. Complainant, Respondent and Witnesses have the responsibility to keep private documents, materials, and information received from the Board during this process; and
4. Complainant, Respondent and Witnesses have the responsibility to destroy, when so directed by the Board, evidentiary materials and/or writings submitted by the other party as part of the process.

b. General Rights

1. A person has the right to be protected from retaliation and intimidation where he/she has reported Prohibited Conduct or participated as a party or witness in the process;
2. A person has the right to be treated equitably and receive the equal access to Supportive Measures;
3. A person has the right to have the investigation and decision-making process completed within a reasonably prompt timeframe;
4. A person has the right to a Representative or Advisor to support and/or advise the party during the investigation and decision-making process;
5. A person has the right to receive a Notice of Formal Complaint that provides sufficient detail about the allegations for the Respondent to be able to respond and for both parties to understand the scope of the Investigation;
6. A person has the right to decline to give a statement about the allegations made in a Formal Complaint;
7. A person has the right to participate in the Investigation, including by identifying Witnesses and identifying and/or providing inculpatory, exculpatory and other relevant information and evidence to the Investigator;
8. A person has the right to receive any Notice of Dismissal;
9. A person has the right to appeal any Notice of Dismissal or determination of responsibility;
10. A person has the right to review all evidence directly related to the allegations, in electronic format or hard copy, and for a period of time to allow the parties to inspect, review, and respond to the evidence.
11. A person has the right to receive an Investigative Report that summarizes relevant evidence, in electronic format or hard copy, and for a period of time to allow the parties to respond;
12. A person has the right to receive a written determination regarding responsibility for the alleged Prohibited Conduct (if any);

13. A person has the right to receive a written Notice of Outcome of Appeal.

c. Rights of the Respondent

1. A Respondent has the right not to have any Sanctions imposed before a determination of responsibility in accordance with this Policy; and
2. A Respondent has the right to be presumed not responsible for the alleged Prohibited Conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made.

D. Initial Assessment of Formal Complaint

The Title IX Coordinator shall make an initial assessment as to whether a Formal Complaint submitted by a Complainant contains sufficient allegations on its face to describe an act of Prohibited Conduct, to permit an Investigation to be conducted, or to issue a Notice of Formal Complaint (for example, the identity of the Respondent is not provided). If it does not, the Title IX Coordinator may seek new or additional information from the Complainant and inform the Complainant that a Notice of Formal Complaint cannot be issued and an Investigation cannot be conducted until the Complainant provides additional information.

E. Withdrawal or Dismissal of Formal Complaint

A Complainant may withdraw a Formal Complaint by informing the Title IX Coordinator in writing that he/she wants to withdraw the Formal Complaint or the allegations. The Title IX Coordinator may choose to dismiss a Formal Complaint if a Respondent is no longer participating in the Board's educational programs or activities, is no longer a member or employee of the Board, or is no longer a member of the Board's Community or Third Party, the Complainant submits a written request to withdraw the complaint, or specific circumstances prevent the Board from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination.

The Board shall investigate a Formal Complaint unless the conduct alleged by a Complainant

- (a) would not constitute Prohibited Conduct; (b) did not occur in the Board's educational programs or activities; or (c) did not occur against a person in the United States. If one of the preceding circumstances exist, the Title IX Coordinator shall dismiss the Formal Complaint. If dismissed, the Board may still investigate and take appropriate action with respect to alleged misconduct pursuant to any other Board policy.

The parties will be notified in writing of any dismissal, including the reasoning.

F. Informal Resolution

After a Formal Complaint has been filed, the Title IX Coordinator may offer to the parties an Informal Resolution process. An Informal Resolution is the resolution of a Formal Complaint through informal interventions such as Remedies and mediation. Informal Resolution is voluntary and shall occur only with written consent of both parties. Participation in Informal Resolution is not a required condition of admission/enrollment/placement or continuing enrollment/placement, or employment or continuing employment, or the enjoyment of any other right, and a party's election to participate in Informal Resolution does not constitute a waiver of the right to an Investigation and determination of a Formal Complaint of Prohibited Conduct. Any person who facilitates an Informal Resolution shall be experienced and trained in dispute resolution and on this Policy.

Prior to initiating Informal Resolution, the Title IX Coordinator will issue each party a written notice disclosing:

- the allegations;
- the requirements and procedure of the Informal Resolution process; and
- any consequences resulting from participating in the Informal Resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.

At any time, either party has the right to withdraw from Informal Resolution and request that the Formal Complaint be resolved through Formal Resolution. If the parties are not able to resolve the Formal Complaint through Informal Resolution, the Formal Complaint shall be resolved through Formal Resolution.

G. Formal Resolution

Formal Resolution may be pursued only after a Formal Complaint has been filed. The Title IX Coordinator shall identify the potential violations and prepare the initial notification of Investigation outlining the charges to be investigated and assessed. At the completion of the Investigation and any appeal, the Formal Complaint shall be resolved by a written determination of responsibility by the appointed decision-maker. Both parties will have the opportunity to appeal the written determination regarding responsibility.

1. Investigation

The Title IX Coordinator shall designate an individual to conduct the Investigation of a Formal Complaint. The Investigator may designate either an employee of the Board or an external person. The Title IX Coordinator shall send the parties the identity and contact information for the Investigator and provide written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews or other meetings, with sufficient time for a party to prepare to participate in such investigative interview or meetings.

The Investigator may gather information in multiple ways. The Investigator may collect relevant documents and other information and may also interview parties and/or Witnesses. In addition, a Complainant or Respondent may:

- submit documents to the Investigator;
- submit a list of Witnesses to be interviewed by the Investigator; and/or
- request that the Investigator attempt to collect documents and other information that are not accessible to the requesting party.

During the Investigation, neither party shall be restricted from discussing the allegations under investigation or gathering and presenting relevant evidence. During the Investigation, the parties have an equal right to:

- Present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence; and
- Have others present during any interview or meeting, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by a Representative or Advisor of his/her choice. The Board shall not limit the choice or presence of a Representative or Advisor for either the Complainant or Respondent in any interview or meeting. Any restrictions the Board imposes on participation by a Representative or Advisor will apply equally to both parties.

The burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on the Board and not the parties.

- A person's medical, counseling/psychological, and similar treatment records are privileged and confidential documents that a party shall not be required to disclose. The Investigator shall not access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use any information or documents that are subject to a privilege and maintained by a professional (including, but not limited to a physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist) in connection with the provision of treatment to a party, unless voluntary, written consent from that party is executed and provided to the Investigator. Where a party provides written consent to share medical, counseling/psychological, and similar treatment records as part of the Investigation, only the portion of the records directly related to the allegations raised in the Formal Complaint shall be included in the case file for review by the other party and for use in the Investigation.
- Questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the Complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the conduct alleged by the Complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the Complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the Respondent and are offered to prove consent.

2. Disclosure of Evidence

After the Investigator has concluded the collection of evidence, the Investigator shall send the parties all evidence directly related to the allegations, in electronic format or hard copy, as requested by the parties, including (a) the evidence upon which the Board may not rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and (b) all inculpatory or exculpatory evidence. Each party shall have ten (10) calendar days to review the evidence. A party may, but is not required to provide a response to the Investigator, and any response made shall be in writing.

The parties may identify and proffer new evidence or rebuttal evidence only to allow the consideration of information that was not available earlier in the investigation or that could not have been reasonably anticipated to be relevant to rebut an issue that came to light. "New evidence" is evidence that was not available earlier in the investigation, could not have been available based on reasonable and diligent inquiry, and is relevant to the matter. "Rebuttal evidence" is evidence presented to contradict other evidence in the file, which could not have been reasonably anticipated by a party to be relevant information at the time initial information, documents or witness statements were provided to the Investigator. The opportunity to review evidence does not permit a party who previously declined to give a statement about the Formal Complaint during the investigation to offer a statement for the first time after the Investigator has concluded the collection of all other evidence.

3. Investigative Report.

After the Investigator has received and considered the parties' responses to the evidence, if any, the Investigator may conduct any follow up interviews or collection of evidence deemed necessary, shall complete an Investigative Report that objectively evaluates and summarizes the relevant evidence, and shall submit the Investigative Report to the Title IX Coordinator and to the parties in electronic format or hard copy, as requested by the parties. The parties shall have ten (10) calendar days to respond in writing to the Investigative Report and shall submit such responses to the Title IX Coordinator. After the Title IX Coordinator has reviewed the parties' responses to the Investigative Report, if any, the Title IX Coordinator shall make the determination whether to dismiss the Formal Complaint or submit it to a decision-maker for a determination of responsibility.

4. Dismissal after Investigation

a. Mandatory Dismissal

The Board must dismiss the Formal Complaint after the investigation if the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint does not constitute Title IX Prohibited Conduct, even if proven to be true; did not occur in the Board's educational programs or activities; or did not occur against a person in the United States.

b. Discretionary Dismissal

The Board may dismiss the Formal Complaint if:

1. The Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the Board;
2. Specific circumstances prevent the Board from gathering sufficient evidence to reach a determination; or
3. The Complainant informs the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the Complainant desires to withdraw the Formal Complaint.

c. Appeal of Dismissal

The Title IX Coordinator shall promptly send a Notice of Dismissal (mandatory or discretionary) and the basis for the dismissal to the Parties. Either party may appeal a Notice of Dismissal by sending a written appeal to an appropriately trained staff member designated by the Title IX Coordinator within ten (10) calendar days from the receipt of the Notice of Dismissal

The scope of the appeal is limited to the following questions:

- Were there any procedural irregularities that substantially affected the outcome of the matter to the detriment of the Complainant?

- Was there any substantive new evidence that was not available at the time of the decision that could not have been available based on reasonable and diligent inquiry that would substantially affect the outcome of the decision?
- Did the Title IX Coordinator have a conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome of the matter?
- Is the decision to dismiss one that a reasonable person might have made?

The remedy on appeal is limited to directing the Title IX Coordinator to designate a decision-maker and submitting the record to the decision-maker for a determination of responsibility.

5. Determination by decision-maker

The Title IX Coordinator shall appoint a decision-maker to issue a determination of responsibility. The Title IX Coordinator, the Investigator, and the Appeal Officer shall not act as the decision-maker. The Title IX Coordinator shall ensure that the designated decision-maker has received appropriate training under this Policy.

Before the decision-maker reaches a determination of responsibility, the decision-maker shall afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. The decision-maker shall set the time frame for receiving response from the parties and allowing for additional, limited follow-up questions. If the decision-maker excludes any particular question posed to him/her, the decision-maker shall explain any decision to exclude such question.

The decision-maker shall reach his/her decision by using the preponderance of the evidence standard and shall consider the totality of the evidence presented during the Investigation and to the decision-maker. To find a violation of the Title IX policy, the decision-maker must find that there is sufficient evidence that is relevant, probable, and persuasive to convince him/her that the assertion of a Title IX policy violation is more likely than not to be true, and that the evidence supporting such an assertion outweighs any evidence to the contrary.

The decision-maker shall issue a written determination regarding responsibility to the parties and the Title IX Coordinator. The written determination shall include:

- Identification of the Prohibited Conduct found by the Investigation to have occurred, if any;
- A description of the steps taken from the receipt of the Formal Complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses and other methods used to gather other evidence;
- Findings of fact;
- Conclusions about whether the alleged Prohibited Conduct occurred;
- Rationale for the result as to each allegation of Prohibited Conduct;
- Identification of Sanctions, if any, set forth in Appendix A that should be imposed on the Respondent;
- Identification of Remedies, if any, set forth in Appendix A that the Board must provide to the Complainant;
- Identification of the steps a party must follow to appeal the determination.

The decision-maker shall explain his/her decisions on responsibility, Sanctions (if applicable) and Remedies with sufficient detail for the parties to be able to file meaningful appeals. In determining any Sanctions to be imposed, the decision-maker shall consider the following factors, to the extent the information is available:

- The Respondent's prior conduct history;
- How the Board has sanctioned similar incidents in the past;
- The nature of the Prohibited Conduct, including whether acts violence were committed by Respondent;
- The impact of the conduct on the Complainant;
- Whether the Respondent has accepted responsibility for his/her actions; and

- Any other mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

6. Appeal

Subject to this paragraph, either party has the right to appeal a written determination regarding responsibility on the limited bases set forth below. A party may appeal only on the following grounds:

- a. Were there any procedural irregularities that substantially affected the outcome of the matter to the detriment of the appealing party?
- b. Was there any substantive new evidence that was not available at the time of the investigation and determination and that could not have been available based upon the reasonable and diligent inquiry of a party that would substantially affect the outcome of the determination?
- c. Did the Title IX Coordinator, Investigator, or decision-maker have a conflict of interest or bias for or against the Complainant or Respondent that affected the outcome of the matter?
- d. Are the sanctions and/or remedies ones that could have been issued by a reasonable person given the findings of the case?
- e. Is the decision of the decision-maker clearly erroneous based upon the evidentiary record?

In a request for an appeal, the burden of proof lies with the party requesting the appeal. Mere dissatisfaction with the determination of responsibility is not grounds for appeal. A Complainant may not appeal or challenge any Sanction or disciplinary action imposed upon the Respondent.

Within ten (10) calendar days from receipt of written determination regarding responsibility, a Complainant or a Respondent may submit a notice of appeal in writing to the Title IX Coordinator, who shall forward the notice of appeal to a designated Appeal Officer to decide the appeal. The Appeal Officer shall not be the Investigator or decision-maker. Any appeal filed by a party shall be shared with the other party. The Title IX Coordinator shall share the identity and contact information of the Appeal Officer with the parties.

The Appeal Officer shall offer both parties the opportunity to submit a written statement to the Appeal Officer with respect to any appeal of the determination regarding responsibility. The Appeal Officer shall establish the format for any written statement and shall require the parties to submit their written statements to the Appeal Officer and the Title IX Coordinator within five (5) business days after receipt of such notice from the Appeal Officer.

The Appeal Officer may reject the appeal in whole or in part, issue a new determination regarding responsibility, modify the imposition of Sanctions and Remedies, including ordering new Sanctions or Remedies, or refer the matter to a new decision-maker. The Appeal Officer shall provide the written Notice of Outcome of Appeal to the Title IX Coordinator no later than ten (10) calendar days after receipt of all appeal documents. The Title IX Coordinator shall send the Notice of Outcome of Appeal to the parties. If necessary, the Appeal Officer shall consult with the Title IX Coordinator regarding the management of ongoing remedies.

Unless there is an appeal, the determination of responsibility by the decision-maker shall be final. Otherwise, the Notice of Outcome of Appeal by the Appeal Officer shall be the final decision, and neither party is afforded any further appeal.

7. Sanctions and Remedies

The Title IX Coordinator shall ensure prompt implementation of any Remedies identified by the decision-maker or the Appeal Officer for the Complainant. Such Remedies may include Supportive Measures, and Remedies may include discipline of the Respondent.

Students who engage in Prohibited Conduct shall be subject to Sanctions identified in Appendix A, including disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and expulsion.

Board employees who engage in Prohibited Conduct shall be subject to Sanctions identified in Appendix A, including but not limited to, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Board members who engage in Prohibited Conduct are subject to Sanctions identified in Appendix A, including, but not limited to, removal from the Board pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §5126.0213.

Any other member of the Board Community or a Third Party who is alleged to be a Respondent and is determined to have committed Prohibited Conduct shall be subject to Sanctions identified in Appendix A.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Training

The Title IX Coordinators, Investigator, decision-maker(s), Appeal Officer, or other person(s) designated to facilitate an informal resolution process shall receive training on:

- the definition of Prohibited Conduct (as that term is used in this Policy);
- the scope of the Board's educational programs and activities;
- how to conduct an investigation and implement the investigation and decision-making process under this Policy, including appeals and Informal Resolution, as applicable; and
- how to serve in their respective role impartially, including by avoiding: prejudgment of the facts at issue, presumption of responsibility by the Respondent, conflicts of interests, and bias.

Materials used for training shall not rely on sex stereotypes and must promote impartial investigations and determinations of Formal Complaints.

Any appointed decision-maker shall be trained on evaluating evidence, including, but not limited to, determining issues of relevance and including how to apply the rape shield protections and when questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant.

All Board employees and members shall be trained concerning their legal obligation to report Prohibited Conduct to the Title IX Coordinator under this Policy. Such training shall address how to identify Prohibited Conduct.

B. Conflict of Interest or Bias

No person involved in the investigation and decision-making process, including, but not limited to, the Title IX Coordinators, Investigator, decision-maker, Appeal Officer, or any person appointed to facilitate Informal Resolution shall have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual Complainant or Respondent in a particular case. A conflict of interest exists if the person has prior involvement in or knowledge of the allegations at issue in the case, has a personal relationship with one of the parties or witnesses, or has some other source of bias. The Superintendent shall take reasonable actions to ensure that no person involved in the investigation and decision-making process has a conflict of interest or bias.

C. Recordkeeping

The Board shall maintain the following records for a period of ten calendar years as established in an approved records retention schedule:

1. Records of each investigation of Prohibited Conduct, including any determination regarding responsibility, any Sanctions recommended and/or imposed on the Respondent, and any Remedies provided to the Complainant;

2. Records of any appeal and the resulting Notice of Outcome of Appeal;
3. Records of any Informal Resolution; and
4. All training materials.

D. Criminal acts

A person may file criminal charges with appropriate law enforcement simultaneously with filing a Formal Complaint. A person does not need to wait until the Title IX investigation is completed before filing a criminal complaint. Likewise, questions or complaints relating to Title IX may be filed with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights at any time.

At any point, the Board, its Title IX Coordinator, or the Investigator may involve local law enforcement and/or file criminal charges related to allegations of Prohibited Conduct that may involve a sexual assault or other crime.

If the decision-maker(s) determines a Third-Party Respondent is responsible for violating this Policy (*i.e.*, engaging in Prohibited Conduct), the decision-maker(s) shall recommend appropriate Remedies, including the imposition of Sanctions.

E. Retaliation

Neither the Board nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, its implementing regulations, or this Policy, including making a report or filing a Formal Complaint, testifying, assisting, or participating or refusing to participate in any manner in an Investigation or proceeding under this Policy. Such actions, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, its implementing regulations, or this Policy, constitute retaliation.

Proven retaliation is a violation of this Policy, which shall result in the imposition of Sanctions and/or other appropriate Remedies. A person subject to retaliation may file a complaint with the Title IX Coordinator, the Superintendent, or the Board President.

Taking action against a person for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of the investigation and decision-making process under this Policy shall not constitute retaliation. However, a determination regarding responsibility itself does not mean a person made a materially false statement in bad faith.

F. Confidentiality

Except in order to carry out its responsibilities under Title IX and this Policy, or as permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. §1232g, and FERPA's regulations, and Ohio law, including Ohio Revised Code §5126.044, the Board and its staff and agents shall keep confidential the identity of all Complainants, Respondents, and Witnesses. Disclosure of such information may be required by federal or state law, and the Board's commitment and obligation to keep such information confidential shall not impair or otherwise affect the Complainant's and Respondent's right to receive the information under this Policy and Title IX.

Appendix A

REMEDIES AND SANCTIONS

A. Remedies

Following a determination of responsibility under Policy 01-WLS-ALL-0225 that the Respondent engaged in Prohibited Conduct, Remedies shall be provided to a Complainant. Remedies shall be designed to restore or preserve access to the Board's educational programs and activities. Remedies may include the same individualized services as those offered as Supportive Measures. Remedies need not be non-disciplinary or non-punitive and need not avoid burdening the Respondent; therefore, Remedies may include Sanctions or other disciplinary or corrective actions against a Respondent.

The decision-maker or the Appeal Officer may consult with the Title IX Coordinator in crafting Remedies. The decision-maker or the Appeal Officer shall decide on the Remedies as the decision-maker or the Appeal Officer deems appropriate for a particular case.

1. Remedies relating to a Complainant

In addition to Remedies directed toward a Respondent, the decision-maker or Appeal Officer may identify additional Remedies for a Complainant. Unless a Remedy affects the Respondent, these additional Remedies should remain confidential and should only be included in the Written Determination Regarding Responsibility for the Complainant. Additional Remedies may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Academic or workplace accommodations;
- b. Safety accommodations;
- c. Other reasonable and appropriate accommodations;
- d. Reference to EAP;
- e. Restoration of any employment benefits lost as a result of Prohibited Conduct.

2. General Remedies relating to a Respondent

Remedies relating to all Respondents could include the following restrictions:

- a. Directive not to contact (directly or indirectly) the Complainant;
- b. Limiting or denying access to all or parts of the Board's property and facilities;
- c. Limiting or denying participation in or attendance at the Board's educational programs or activities.

3. Timeframe for Remedies

The decision-maker or Appeal Officer shall indicate a timeframe for Remedies to be in effect in order to achieve the purpose of Remedy imposed. The Title IX Coordinator shall ensure compliance with a Remedy during the identified timeframe.

B. Sanctions

Sanctions to be imposed will depend on the category under which a Respondent falls. The decision-maker or Appeal Officer shall identify the Sanctions to be imposed against a Respondent for whom a determination of responsibility has been issued.

1. Sanctions against students

A variety of disciplinary actions may be imposed on a student who is determined responsible for engaging in Prohibited Conduct. Such disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Training or counseling, as appropriate;
- Suspension of transportation or change of transportation;
- Suspension or removal from extra-curricular activities, for a period of time or permanently;
- Suspension or removal from the Board's programs to the extent permitted by and in accordance with state or federal law.

2. Sanctions against Board employees and members

a. Board employees

A variety of disciplinary actions may be imposed on a Board employee who is determined responsible for engaging in Prohibited Conduct, depending upon the severity of the conduct. Such disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to:

- oral or written warning;
- written reprimand;
- management or performance improvement plan;
- Completion of counseling, training or education as a condition of continued employment;
- demotion;
- suspension with or without pay;
- last chance agreement;
- termination.

More than one Sanction may be imposed. Any resulting disciplinary action against an employee will be conducted in accordance with applicable state or federal law and Board policy.

b. Board members

Depending on the severity of the conduct, a Board member that is determined to be responsible for committing Prohibited Conduct may be asked to resign, may be required to undergo mandatory counseling, training or education as a condition of continued membership, or may be removed pursuant to and in accordance with Ohio Revised Code §§5126.0213 – 5123.0217.

3. Sanctions against other members of the Board's community or Third Parties

Sanctions or other consequences may be imposed on members of the Board's community or a Third Party determined responsible for engaging in Prohibited Conduct. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Mandatory counseling, training or education as a condition of continued volunteer services;
- Rescission of ability to volunteer;
- Direct supervision when on Board property or attending programs, activities, or events;
- Exclusion from the Board's facilities, programs, activities, or events;
- Prohibition of employee or agent of a vendor or contractor from continued work under contract;
- Suspension or termination of the Board's contract with a vendor or contractor;

More than one Sanction may be imposed.

References: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681(a))
U.S. Department of Education Proposed Title IX Regulation Fact Sheet

Policies: 01-WLS-ALL-0225