

Syracuse Arts Academy Civil Rights Policy



Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment

It is policy of Syracuse Arts Academy (the “School”) not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, creed, religion, age, marital status, or disability in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The policy against non-discrimination applies in all aspects of the School’s programs and activities, including but not limited to admissions and the administration of discipline.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student or employee of the School to harass a student or an employee through conduct or communication in any form as defined by this policy or to retaliate against any individual for filing, receiving, investigating, or providing information concerning any complaint alleging violation of a federal civil rights law under this policy.

This policy will be posted on the School’s website and distributed as part of the annual online registration process.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. In compliance with Title VI, the School prohibits all discriminatory practices, including but not limited to the following:

1. Preventing a person from enrolling in a school, class, or extracurricular school activity based on race, color, or national origin.
2. Arbitrarily placing a student in a school or class with the intent of separating the student from the general population of students because of the student's race, color, or national origin.
3. Setting higher standards or requirements as a prerequisite before allowing minorities to enroll in a school, class, or activity.
4. Unequally applying disciplinary action based on a student's race, color, or national origin.
5. Failing to provide the necessary language assistance to allow limited English proficient students the same opportunity to learn as English proficient students.
6. Administering tests or other evaluative measures, which by design or by grading do not allow minority students the same opportunity to present a true measure of their abilities.

7. Providing advice or guidance to minority with the intent to direct minority students away from schools, classes, or educational activities based on their race, color, or national origin.
8. Providing instructional and related services to minority students that are inferior to those provided to non-minority students.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in providing educational programs and services.

It is policy of the School not to discriminate against any student, employee, or applicant on the basis of sex. The School will ensure that no student will be excluded from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, or other school resources based on unlawful discrimination. The School will take all necessary steps to ensure that each employee's work environment is free of unlawful discrimination based on sex. No employee of the School, including any person representing the School, shall intimidate, threaten, harass, coerce, discriminate against, or commit or seek reprisal against anyone who participates in any aspect of the discrimination complaint process associated with this policy.

The Lead Director will designate a Title IX Coordinator and provide notice of the name and contact information on the School's website and otherwise as appropriate.

Response to Sexual Harassment

The School will respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent to any actual knowledge of sexual harassment in its educational program.

Therefore, in the event of any actual knowledge of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly contact the complainant to 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, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

The School will thereafter treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures to a complainant and by following the grievance process defined below for formal complaints of sexual harassment.

"Actual knowledge" means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to the School's Title IX Coordinator or any official of the School who has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the School, or to any employee of the School. Imputation of knowledge based solely on vicarious liability or constructive notice is insufficient to constitute actual knowledge. This standard is not met when the only official of the School with actual knowledge is the respondent. The mere 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 School. “Notice” as used in this paragraph includes, but is not limited to, a report of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator.

“Complainant” means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

“Respondent” means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

“Sexual harassment” means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- (a) An employee of the School conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the School on an individual’s participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
- (b) Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the Schools education program; or
- (c) “Sexual assault” as defined by 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).

“Supportive measures” are individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the other party while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, or deter sexual harassment. The School will make supportive measures available to complainants and respondents, as appropriate, which may include measures such as:

- No-contact orders
- Leaves of absence
- Class schedule changes, teacher reassignment, or other academic adjustments
- Increased monitoring of certain areas

Personnel; Training Requirements

No individual designated by the School as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or the facilitator of an informal resolution process will have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

The School will ensure that any individual designated by the School as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or the facilitator of an informal resolution process will receive training on the applicable definition of sexual harassment; the scope of the School’s educational program and activities; how to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable; and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias.

The School will ensure that investigators receive training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.

Any materials used to train a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or the facilitator of an informal resolution process must not rely on sex stereotypes and must promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment.

Grievance Process Time Frames

The School will promptly carry out the grievance process for formal complaints of sexual harassment. Unless reasonable cause exists, the School will conclude the grievance process of a formal complaint of sexual harassment within forty-five (45) calendar days of receipt of a formal complaint. Informal resolution processes will be concluded within forty-five (45) calendar days of when the School obtains the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

The grievance process for formal complaints of sexual harassment may be temporarily delayed, and time frames may be extended by the School for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent that describes the reasons for the delay or extension. Good cause may include considerations such as the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.

Notice of Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment

Upon receipt of a formal complaint of sexual harassment, the School will provide the following written notice to the parties who are known:

- (a) Notice of the School's grievance process for formal complaints, including any informal resolution process;
- (b) Notice of allegations of sexual harassment potentially constituting sexual harassment as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 106.30, including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time for the respondent to prepare a response before any initial review. Sufficient details include the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known; the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment under 34 C.F.R. § 106.30; and the date and location of the alleged incident, if known.

The written notice will include a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.

The written notice will inform the parties that they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and may inspect and review evidence.

The written notice will inform the parties that they are prohibited from knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If, during the course of an investigation, the School decides to investigate allegations about the complainant or respondent that are not included in the notice provided above, the School will provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

Grievance Process for Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment

A “formal complaint” means a document, including an electronic submission, filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that the recipient investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. Formal complaints should be filed with the Title IX Coordinator.

In response to a formal complaint of sexual harassment, the School will follow the grievance process set forth below and in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 106.45. The grievance process for formal complaints will treat complainants and respondents equitably. Before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent in connection with a formal complaint, the School will follow this policy and applicable legal requirements.

The grievance process for formal complaints will provide remedies to a complainant where a determination of responsibility has been made against the respondent. Such remedies may include the same individualized services included in the supportive measures. However, such remedies need not be non-disciplinary or non-punitive and need not avoid burdening the respondent.

The grievance process for formal complaints will involve an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence, including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, and provide that credibility determinations may not be based on a person’s status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.

The grievance process for formal complaints will be conducted with a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.

Following a determination of responsibility for sexual harassment, the School will take prompt remedial action, including appropriate disciplinary actions. These actions may include, for a respondent who is a student, disciplinary actions in accordance with the School’s Student Conduct and Discipline Policy, which may include suspension or expulsion. These actions may include, for a respondent who is an employee, discipline up to and including termination.

The standard of evidence to be used to determine responsibility is the preponderance of the evidence standard. This standard will be applied to all formal complaints of sexual harassment, including formal complaints against both students and employees.

The grievance process for formal complaints will not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

The School will investigate the allegations in a formal complaint of sexual harassment. If the conduct alleged in the formal complaint would not constitute sexual harassment as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 106.30 even if proved, did not occur in the School's educational program, or did not occur against a person in the United States, then the School must dismiss the formal complaint with regard to that conduct for purposes of sexual harassment under Title IX. Such a dismissal does not preclude action under another provision of the School's policies.

The School may also dismiss a formal complaint of sexual harassment, or any allegations in the complaint, if at any time during the investigation (a) a complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein; (b) the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the School; or (c) specific circumstances prevent the School from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

Upon dismissal of a formal complaint of sexual harassment as provided above, the School will promptly send written notice of the dismissal and reason(s) therefore simultaneously to the parties.

The School may consolidate formal complaints as to allegations of sexual harassment against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

When investigating a formal complaint of sexual harassment and throughout the grievance process, the School will do the following:

- (a) Ensure that the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rest on the School and not on the parties provided that the School cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use medical and psychological records of the party without the party's consent, as provided in 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(5)(i);
- (b) Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence;
- (c) Not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence;
- (d) Provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and not limit the choice or presence of advisor for either the complainant or respondent in any meeting or grievance proceeding; however, the School may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties;

- (e) Provide, to a party whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings, investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate;
- (f) Provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which the recipient does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation. Prior to completion of the investigative report, the School will send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties will have at least ten (10) days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report. The School will make all such evidence subject to the parties' inspection and review available at any hearing to give each party equal opportunity to refer to such evidence during the hearing, including for purposes of cross-examination; and
- (g) Create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and, at least ten (10) days prior to the time of determination regarding responsibility, send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the investigative report in an electronic format or a hard copy, for their review and written response.

The School will not conduct a hearing on formal complaints of sexual harassment. After the School has sent the investigative report as provided above and before reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker(s) will 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 provided, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. 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. The decision-maker(s) will explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

The decision-maker(s), who cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s), must issue a written determination regarding responsibility. To reach this determination, the School must apply the standard of evidence described above. The written determination must include the following:

- (a) Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 106.30;
- (b) A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with

parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather other evidence, and hearings held;

- (c) Findings of fact supporting the determination;
- (d) Conclusions regarding the application of the School's policies to the facts;
- (e) A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions the School imposes on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the School's education program will be provided by the School to the complainant; and
- (f) The School's procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

The School will provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously. The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that the School provides the parties with the written determination of the result of an appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

The Title IX Coordinator (and the Lead Director, if the Title IX Coordinator is not the Lead Director) is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies.

Nothing in this Policy precludes the School from removing a respondent from the School's education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that the School undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. This provision may not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Nothing in this this Policy precludes the School from placing a non-student employee respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of a grievance process under this Policy. This provision may not be construed to modify any rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Appeals

The School will offer both parties an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from the School's dismissal of a formal complaint of any allegations therein, on the following bases: (a) Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter; (b) New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and (c) The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants

or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

Appeals must be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator in writing within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written determination regarding responsibility.

As to all appeals, the School will (a) Notify the other party in writing within five (5) business days when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties; (b) Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator; (c) Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal complies with the standards for decision-makers set forth above and in 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(1)(iii); (d) Give both parties a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit, within ten (10) business days, a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome; (e) Issue, within ten (10) business days of receipt of both parties' written statements, a written decision describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result; and (f) Provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties.

Informal Resolution

The School will not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continuing employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to an investigation and adjudication of formal complaints of sexual harassment as provided above. Similarly, the School will not require parties to participate in an informal resolution process and may not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed.

However, at any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility the School may facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication, provided that the School:

- (i) Provides to the parties a written notice disclosing: the allegations; the requirements of the informal resolution process, including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations, provided, however, that at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint; and any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared;
- (ii) Obtains the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process; and
- (iii) Does not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

Recordkeeping

The School will maintain for a period of seven years records of:

- (a) Each sexual harassment investigation including any determination regarding responsibility and any audio or audiovisual recording or transcript required, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and any remedies provided to the complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to the School's education program;
- (b) Any appeal and the result therefrom;
- (c) Any informal resolution and the result therefrom; and
- (d) All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process. The School will make these training materials publicly available on its website.

For each response to sexual harassment required above and under 34 C.F.R. § 106.44, the School will create, and maintain for a period of seven years, records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment. In each instance, the School will document the basis for its conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent, and document that it has taken measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to the School's education program. If the School does not provide a complainant with supportive measures, then the School will document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. The documentation of certain bases or measures does not limit the School in the future from providing additional explanations or detailing additional measures taken.

Retaliation

The School and its personnel will not intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or its regulations, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing. Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for policy violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or its regulations, constitutes retaliation. The School will keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by the FERPA statute, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, or FERPA regulations, 34 CFR part 99, or as required by law, or to carry out the purposes of 34 CFR part 106, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising thereunder. Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the School's grievance procedures for sex discrimination.

The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute prohibited retaliation.

Charging an individual with a policy violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a grievance proceeding does not constitute prohibited retaliation, provided, however, that a determination regarding responsibility, alone, is not sufficient to conclude that any party made a materially false statement in bad faith.

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. The School does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. Because of the affirmative obligation under Section 504 to provide a free appropriate public education as well as to avoid harassment and discrimination based on disability, the Lead Director may establish additional procedures regarding issues related to compliance with Section 504.

Other Complaint Procedures

Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of discrimination or harassment by another student or an employee of the School, or any third person with knowledge of conduct that may constitute discrimination or harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to the Lead Director. Notice of sexual harassment should be given to the Title IX Coordinator designated by the Lead Director.

If the complaint is against the Lead Director, the complaint should be submitted to the president of the School's Board of Directors.

The School is committed to investigating all complaints of discrimination or harassment under federal civil rights laws and will take action to stop any harassment or discrimination that is discovered.

The Lead Director will establish a process for handling complaints alleging harassment or discrimination under federal civil rights laws that complies with applicable legal requirements.

Any complaints related to the School's lunch program will be reported to the Utah State Office of Education, Child Nutrition Programs.

Compliance Officer

The Lead Director is designated the compliance officer for all federal civil rights matters under any of the foregoing federal laws and shall coordinate the School's efforts to comply with federal civil rights laws. Any questions concerning this policy should be directed to the School's Lead Director.