

Gate City Charter School for the Arts Sexual Harassment Policy

I. Purpose

Gate City Charter School for the Arts (GCCSA) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning and working environment for all students, staff, and community members. Sexual harassment, in any form, will not be tolerated. This policy outlines definitions, reporting procedures, and the school's commitment to prevention and response.

II. Definition of Sexual Harassment

Legal Definition (Title IX & NH Standards):

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that:

1. Denies or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program, or
2. Creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment for students, staff, or others in the school community.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome touching or physical contact.
- Sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or innuendo.
- Display of sexually explicit images or materials.
- Pressure for sexual activity or favors.
- Repeated unwanted attention (verbal, digital, or physical).

Plain Language Interpretation:

Anything sexual that makes someone feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or disrespected at school—or gets in the way of their learning or work—is not allowed.

III. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Students, staff, board members, volunteers, and visitors.
- Conduct that occurs on school grounds, during school-sponsored events, or online when connected to school activities.

IV. Reporting Procedures

1. **Who Can Report:** Any student, staff member, parent/guardian, or community member may file a report.
2. **How to Report:**
 - Verbally or in writing to any teacher, staff member, or administrator.
 - Directly to the Director or designee.
 - Reports regarding the Director would be filed with the Board of Trustees.
3. **What Happens Next:**
 - Reports will be taken seriously and handled promptly.
 - The Director (or designee/BOT as indicated) will conduct an initial review to determine next steps.
 - Supportive measures (such as counseling resources, schedule or assignment changes, or no-contact directives) will be offered as needed.

V. Investigation and Response

- Investigations will be prompt, thorough, and impartial.
- Both the complainant and the respondent will have the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses.
- Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.
- Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or expulsion, will be taken when sexual harassment is substantiated.
- The appropriate authorities will be contacted as needed.

VI. Prevention and Education

- All staff will receive training on recognizing, preventing, and reporting sexual harassment.

VII. Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation against anyone who reports sexual harassment or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in possible disciplinary action and report to authorities as indicated.

Jenn Blanchette, Director
Gate City Charter School for the Arts
7 Henry Clay Drive Merrimack, NH 03054
603-943-5273
blanchettej@gccs-nh.org