Civil Rights Policy

Policy statement. Bishop Walsh School is committed to providing an educational and workplace environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. The school will provide equal access to its programs, activities, services, and employment opportunities in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local law.

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes standards for preventing and addressing civil rights concerns. It applies to students, employees, applicants, families, volunteers, contractors, visitors, and other participants in school programs or activities, including conduct occurring on school property, during school-sponsored activities, through school technology, or in other circumstances that affect access to the school environment.

2. Prohibited Conduct

Discrimination or harassment based on a legally protected characteristic is prohibited. Protected characteristics may include race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, and any other status protected by applicable law.

Prohibited conduct includes denying equal access or benefits; applying rules unequally; hostile-environment harassment; failure to provide required language assistance or reasonable accommodations; and retaliation against anyone who reports a concern, participates in a review, requests an accommodation, or exercises a protected right.

3. Civil Rights Coordinator

The school shall designate a qualified Civil Rights Coordinator to receive reports, coordinate supportive measures, oversee impartial investigations, monitor compliance, maintain records, and arrange training.

Coordinator: Jennifer Flinn
Office: 700 Bishop Walsh Road Cumberland MD 21502
Phone: 301-724-5360
Email: jflinn@bishopwalsh.org

4. Reporting a Concern

Any person may report a civil rights concern verbally or in writing to the Civil Rights Coordinator, a principal, or another trusted school employee. Reports may be made at any time, including outside regular business hours by email or other published reporting method. Employees who receive a report shall promptly forward it to the Coordinator, subject to applicable confidentiality requirements.

A report should include, when known, the names of those involved, a description of the conduct, dates and locations, witnesses, and relevant records. A report will not be rejected solely because information is incomplete or it is submitted anonymously. The school will provide disability-related accommodations and language assistance for the reporting process when required.

5. Immediate Response and Support

Upon receiving a report, the school will promptly assess safety and access needs, explain available resolution options, preserve relevant information, and offer appropriate supportive measures. Measures may include counseling, schedule or seating adjustments, academic support, safety planning, no-contact directions, accessibility supports, or other non-disciplinary steps designed to preserve equal access.

Emergency conditions should be reported immediately to emergency services and school administration. Contacting law enforcement does not replace the school's duty to address potential policy violations.

6. Assessment and Resolution

The Coordinator will conduct an initial assessment to determine whether the reported facts fall within this policy and whether another school procedure also applies. When appropriate and voluntarily accepted by the parties, the school may offer an informal resolution. Informal resolution will not be required as a condition of receiving a formal review.

Formal Investigation

1. The school will provide notice of the allegations and applicable process to the parties involved.
2. A trained, impartial investigator will gather relevant information and provide a fair opportunity for the parties to identify evidence and witnesses.

3. The school will evaluate the available evidence using the standard required by applicable law or governing school policy.
4. The school will issue a written outcome to the extent permitted by student, personnel, and privacy laws.

The process will be completed promptly. If additional time is reasonably necessary, the Coordinator will notify the parties of the delay and revised anticipated timeline.

7. Remedies and Corrective Action

When a violation is found, the school will take prompt and effective action reasonably designed to stop the conduct, remedy its effects, prevent recurrence, and restore equal access. Action may include education, counseling, policy changes, supervision, accommodations, discipline consistent with applicable rules and due-process protections, or other measures appropriate to the circumstances.

8. Appeal or Review

A party may request review of an outcome based on procedural error, significant new information, conflict of interest or bias, or another ground required by applicable law. A request must be submitted to the principal within 14 school or business days after notice of the outcome. The reviewer will be impartial and will issue a written decision within a reasonable period.

9. Retaliation and Good-Faith Participation

Retaliation, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against a person for reporting a concern, requesting support, participating in a process, or opposing conduct reasonably believed to violate civil rights law is prohibited. Knowingly making a materially false statement may be addressed under applicable conduct rules; an unsubstantiated report alone does not establish bad faith.

10. Privacy and Records

Information will be shared only with people who need it to respond, investigate, provide support, comply with law, or protect safety. The school cannot guarantee complete confidentiality. Records will be maintained securely and retained in accordance with applicable law and the school's records-retention requirements.

11. Accessibility and Accommodations

The school will provide reasonable modifications, auxiliary aids and services, and effective communication when required by law. Requests may be directed to the Civil Rights Coordinator or the school official responsible for disability access. The school will engage in an individualized, interactive process and will not impose a surcharge for required access supports.

12. Training, Notice, and Monitoring

The school will publish this policy and Coordinator contact information in accessible locations and formats. Relevant employees will receive periodic training in recognizing concerns, responding to reports, avoiding retaliation, preserving evidence, and referring matters appropriately. The Coordinator will periodically review patterns, barriers, and the effectiveness of corrective measures.

13. Relationship to Law and Other Policies

This policy supplements, and does not replace, rights or procedures available under applicable law or other school policies. When overlapping requirements apply, the school will use the process necessary to satisfy all governing obligations. Nothing in this policy limits lawful speech, academic freedom, due process, or any right protected by law.

Policy Administration

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Approved by: Jennifer Flinn, Principal