

Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School (Stokes School)

Equal Employment Opportunity & Affirmative Action Policies

The policy of Stokes School is to promote equal employment opportunity through affirmative action. The school ensures equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, national origin, age, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status, including disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era.

Stokes School is committed to equal opportunity and is an equal opportunity employer. No employee of Stokes School will discriminate against an applicant for employment or a fellow employee because of race, creed, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, or veteran status. This policy applies to all employment practices and personnel actions.

Stokes School recognizes the continuing need to vigorously recruit employees from those groups who historically have suffered discrimination based on race, color, gender, gender identity, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or a chronic/catastrophic mental, physical, medical condition or physical disability. Stokes School has adopted an Affirmative Action policy which essentially means that Stokes School will aggressively seek out, hire, develop, and promote qualified members of protected groups (defined as racial minorities, women, individuals with physical or mental disabilities, veterans with disabilities, veterans of the Vietnam era, and persons aged 40 and over).

Compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policies

It is the intent and resolve of Stokes School to comply with the requirements and spirit of the law in the implementation of all facets of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. In the recruitment, selection, training, utilization, promotion, termination, or any other personnel action, there will be no discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, religious belief, gender, gender identity, sexual preference, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental handicap, or veteran status. Stokes School fully complies with all government requirements for setting up and carrying through affirmative action policies related to the protected classes mentioned above.

This personnel manual, made available to all employees, communicates Stokes School's equal employment opportunity policy throughout the organization. In addition, the following measures are in place to communicate our equal employment opportunity policy to our employees:

- 1) A copy of our equal opportunity policy will be made available to each new employee or applicant on the first day (s) he reports to work or upon request.
- 2) Stokes School's policy on equal opportunity is posted in public areas within the school buildings.
- 3) The Executive Director is the designated person with responsibility for affirmative action reporting.

Sexual Harassment

Stokes School is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from all types of discrimination, including sexual harassment, in accordance with provisions of all state and local statutes and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 United States Code, Section 2000e et.seq). Stokes School prohibits sexual harassment of an employee or student in any form by any employee, consultant, or member of the Board of Trustees.

It is the intent of Stokes School to provide a work environment free from verbal, physical, and visual (signs, posters or documents) forms of sexual harassment. All employees are asked to be sensitive to the individual rights of their co-workers.

We view sexual harassment as a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. No employee or student, either male or female, should be subjected to unsolicited and unwelcome verbal or physical sexual overtures or conduct. Sexual harassment, which is unlawful, does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Sexual harassment pertains to behavior that is not welcome; that is personally offensive; that debilitates morale and may create an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment; and that, therefore, interferes with work effectiveness. Such behavior is

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances (either verbal or physical);
- Requests for favors;
- Graphic or degrading verbal comments about an employee's appearance;
- Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and
- Other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment may occur when:

- 1) An employee or student feels his or her dignity has been abused as a result of insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct;
- 2) An employee threatens, demands or suggests that a student's or another employee's school success or work status is contingent on his or her toleration of or acquiescence to sexual advances;
- 3) Submission to such conduct is either an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment (e.g. promotion, training); or

4) The conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the employee's or student's

Work performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

If an employee finds himself or herself experiencing sexual harassment, as described above, (s) he should take the following steps:

1) If possible and/or appropriate, the employee should immediately speak to the person creating the problem about his or her behavior. The employee should state firmly that the behavior is unacceptable.

2) If the request to curb the behavior is not heeded, or if the inappropriate situation should recur, the employee should file a complaint.

3) If the employee is uncomfortable confronting the alleged harasser, then a complaint should be made immediately.

Complaints of sexual harassment should be brought to the attention of the employee's supervisor. The supervisor will notify the Executive Director of the complaint immediately. If the alleged harasser is the employee's supervisor, or the employee does not feel comfortable discussing the matter with the employee's supervisor, the employee should place the complaint directly with the Executive Director. If the alleged harasser is the Executive Director or a member of the Board of Trustees, the employee should take the complaint directly to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

After notification of a complaint, an impartial investigation will be initiated by the Executive Director (or by the Board of Trustees in cases where the alleged harasser is the Executive Director). The investigation will begin as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours from the date the complaint was filed. After the investigation has been completed, the Executive Director or the Board of Trustees will make a determination regarding the resolution of the case within five (5) days of completion of the investigation. If warranted, disciplinary action will be taken up to and including involuntary termination.

This policy also prohibits retaliation against an employee who brings sexual harassment charges or who assists in investigating charges. An employee who brings a good faith sexual harassment complaint or assists in the investigation of such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment nor discriminated against or discharged because of the complaint.

If, while in the performance of work, the employee believes that he or she is being harassed by someone who is a non-employee, (s) he should immediately inform his or her supervisor of the situation. While Stokes School has limited control over the behavior of non-employees, its management will attempt to remedy the situation.

Stokes School acknowledges that sexual harassment constitutes illegal and unacceptable behavior on the part of all employees. Consequences to the perpetrator may include termination of employment with the School.

Drug and Alcohol Free Work Place

Maintaining a drug free work environment is an important goal of Stokes School. Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination of employment. Stokes School's commitment to maintaining a drug and alcohol free work place is strong. To that end, Stokes School has established a policy that forbids the possession, use, distribution, or sale of alcohol or illegal drugs in the work place. It is the goal of Stokes School in establishing this policy to:

- 1) Establish and maintain a safe, healthy working environment for all employees;
- 2) Reduce absenteeism and tardiness and improve productivity; and
- 3) Reduce the risk of injury to other employees, the impaired employee, to third parties, such as colleagues or clients, or to property.

Further, federal regulations governing award of federal grants and/or moneys require recipient organizations to maintain a "drug free" work environment and to submit (and publish for all employees) signed certification regarding a "drug free" work environment. This certification affirms Stokes School's "zero tolerance" for employee possession or use of controlled substances.

An employee who begins work while impaired by drugs and/or alcohol by such substances or who becomes impaired by such substances while at work is guilty of a major violation of federal regulations and is subject to severe disciplinary action. Severe disciplinary action can include suspension, dismissal, or any other penalty appropriate under the circumstances. Likewise, the use, possession, transfer, or sale of any substance in Stokes School's building or other work site, such as a field trip or a conference, is prohibited; and violations are subject to severe disciplinary action.

An employee who is taking prescription drugs that might affect his or her ability to perform or his or her safety is responsible for reporting this fact to his or her supervisor. The purpose of such reporting is for the protection of the employee; i.e. for safety purposes in case of an adverse reaction to the drug while at work, and to prevent false accusations of illegal substance use. Such information will be held in confidence.

As a step toward providing its employees a safe, healthy and drug-free work environment, in compliance with State and Federal laws, Stokes School reserves the right to perform pre-employment, random and for-cause drug testing on employees.

Complaint Policy/Grievance Procedure

Stokes School, consistent with its commitment to a comprehensive and open personnel system, has established a grievance procedure designed to deal with employee, job-related grievances in a just and equitable manner. Although Stokes School anticipates that most grievances will be handled through this procedure, the school reserves the right to respond to any particular grievance in a different manner, as it may deem appropriate.

It is expected that an employee will have made every effort to resolve a conflict before initiating the formal grievance process. The employee is strongly encouraged to talk with the fellow staff member who may be the cause of the grievance. If these attempts at resolution are unsatisfactory the following formal procedure should be followed:

1) *Grievance Process Initiation:*

- The employee brings the grievance to the attention of his or her supervisor, through a written, or verbal complaint.
- The employee's supervisor discusses the issue with the employee and attempts resolution.
- If the results of this process are unsatisfactory to the employee, (s)he follows step (2).
- If the employee's grievance concerns or involves the supervisor, the employee should proceed immediately to step 2.

2) *Grievance Brought to Grievance Group:*

- The employee files a written grievance with the Executive Director. If the grievance involves the Executive Director, the employee should file a written grievance with the Board of Trustees.
- A 3-person grievance hearing board is established. The board is made up of two representatives, one each chosen by the two involved parties and one representative, chosen by the Executive Director, or Designee. If the grievance involves the Executive Director, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees will choose the third representative.
- The grievance group hears the case and identifies a resolution for the conflict
- If the results of this process are unsatisfactory to either party involved (s)he follows step (3).

3) *Grievance Appealed:*

- The employee files a written appeal with the Executive Director, or Designee within 5 days of the resolution made by the grievance board.

□ The executive Director, or Designee reviews the case, as quickly as possible, and establishes a final decision.

□ If the grievance involves the Executive Director, the appeal is filed with the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson reviews the case and establishes a final decision.

Whistle Blower Policy

General

The Stokes School Code of Ethics and Conduct (Code) requires directors, officers and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of the School, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Reporting Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all directors, officers and employees to comply with the Code and to report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy.

No Retaliation

No director, officer or employee who in good faith reports a violation of the Code shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the School prior to seeking resolution outside the School.

Reporting Violations

The Code addresses the School's open door policy and suggests that employees share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, an employee's supervisor is the best position to address an area of concern. However, if you are not comfortable speaking with your supervisor or you are not satisfied with your supervisor's response, you are encouraged to speak with someone in the Human Resources Department or anyone in management whom you are comfortable approaching. Supervisors and managers are required to report suspected violations of the Code of Conduct to the School's Compliance Officer who has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all reported violations. For suspected fraud, or when you are not satisfied or uncomfortable with following the School's open door policy, individuals should contact the School's Compliance Officer directly.

Compliance Officer

The School's Compliance Officer is responsible for investigating and resolving all reported complaints and allegations concerning violations of the Code and, at his/her discretion, shall advise the Executive Director and/or the finance committee. The Compliance Officer has direct access to

the finance committee of the board of trustees and is required to report to the finance committee at least annually on compliance activity.

Accounting and Auditing Matters

The finance committee of the board of trustees shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing. The Compliance Officer shall immediately notify the audit committee of any such complaint and work with the committee until the matter is resolved.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Code must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Code. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

Confidentiality

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Handling of Reported Violations

The Compliance Officer will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five business days. All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.