

VENTURA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION NO. 5145.3

ADOPTED: 08/26/02

CLASSIFICATION: Students

REPLACED & REVISED: 12/14/15

REVISED: 06/25/18

02/19/19

08/28/23

SUBJECT: Nondiscrimination/Harassment

The County Superintendent and the County Board the individuals identified below as the employees responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) to comply with state and federal civil rights laws and to answer inquiries regarding the VCOE's nondiscrimination policies. The individuals shall also serve as the compliance officers specified in AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures as the responsible employee to handle complaints alleging unlawful discrimination targeting a student, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, based on the student's actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, immigration status, ethnicity, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, or any other legally protected status or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. The coordinator/compliance officers may be contacted at:

Ventura County Office of Education
Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
5189 Verdugo Way
Camarillo, CA 93012
(805) 383-9337
jsantos@vcoe.org

VCOE Special Education Schools
Executive Director, Student Services
5250 Adolfo Road
Camarillo, CA 93012
(805) 383-1924
hminear@vcoe.org

Gateway and Providence Schools
Director of Alternative Education
200 Horizon Circle
Camarillo, CA 93010
(805) 437-1460
srodriguez@vcoe.org

MEASURES TO PREVENT DISCRIMINATION

To prevent unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, and bullying, of VCOE students at school or in school activities and to ensure equal access of all students to the educational program, the County Superintendent or designee shall implement the following measures:

1. Publicize the VCOE's nondiscrimination policy and related complaint procedures, including the coordinator/compliance officer's contact information, to students, parents/guardians, employees, volunteers, and the general public by posting them in prominent locations and providing easy access to them through VCOE-supported communications.
2. Post the VCOE's policies and procedures prohibiting discrimination, harassment, student sexual harassment, intimidation, bullying, and cyberbullying in a prominent location on the VCOE's web site in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students.
3. Post a section on social media bullying that includes references to possible forums for social media bullying, including Internet websites with free registration and ease of registration and Internet websites offering peer-to-peer instant messaging, comment forums or sections, and image or video posting platforms, in a prominent location on the VCOE's website in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students.
4. Post the definition of discrimination and harassment based on sex as described in Education Code 230, including the rights set forth in Education Code 221.8, in a prominent location on the VCOE's website in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students.
5. Post in a prominent location on the VCOE's website in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students information regarding Title IX prohibitions against discrimination based on a student's sex, gender, gender identity, pregnancy, and parental status, including the following:
 - a. The name and contact information of the COE's Title IX Coordinator, including the phone number and email address.
 - b. The rights of students and the public and the responsibilities of the VCOE under Title IX, including a list of rights as specified in Education Code 221.8 and web links to information about those rights and responsibilities located on the websites of the Office for Equal Opportunity and the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
 - c. A description of how to file a complaint of noncompliance under Title IX, which shall include:
 - i. An explanation of the statute of limitations within which a complaint must be filed after an alleged incident of discrimination has occurred and how a complaint may be filed beyond the statute of limitations.
 - ii. An explanation of how the complaint will be investigated and how the complainant may further pursue the complaint, including web links to this information on the OCR's website.
 - iii. A web link to the OCR complaints form and the contact information for the office, including the phone number and email address for the office.

- d. A link to the Title IX information included on the California Department of Education's (CDE) web site.
6. Post a link to statewide CDE-compiled resources, including community-based organizations, that provide support to youth who have been subjected to school-based discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying and to their families. Such resources shall be posted in a prominent location on the VCOE's website in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students.
7. Provide to students a handbook that contains age-appropriate information that clearly describes VCOE's nondiscrimination policy, procedures for filing a complaint, and resources available to students who feel that they have been the victim of any such behavior.
8. Annually notify all students and parents/guardians of VCOE's nondiscrimination policy, including its responsibility to provide a safe, nondiscriminatory school environment for all students. The notice shall inform students and parents/guardians that they may request to meet with the compliance officer to determine how best to accommodate or resolve concerns that may arise from VCOE's implementation of its nondiscrimination policies. The notice shall also inform all students and parents/guardians that, to the extent possible, VCOE will address any individual student's interests and concerns in private.
9. Ensure that all students and parents/guardians, including those with limited English proficiency, are notified of how to access the relevant information provided in VCOE's nondiscrimination policy and related complaint procedures, notices, and forms in a language they can understand.

If 15 percent or more of students enrolled in a particular VCOE school speak a single primary language other than English, VCOE's policy, regulation, forms, and notices concerning nondiscrimination shall be translated into that language in accordance with Education Code 234.1 and 48985. In all other instances, VCOE shall ensure meaningful access to all relevant information for parents/guardians with limited English proficiency.
10. Provide to students, employees, volunteers, and parents/guardians age-appropriate training and information regarding VCOE's nondiscrimination policy; what constitutes prohibited discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying; how and to whom a report of an incident should be made; and how to guard against segregating or stereotyping students when providing instruction, guidance, supervision, or other services to them. Such training and information shall include details of guidelines VCOE may use to provide a discrimination-free environment for all VCOE students.
11. At the beginning of each school year, inform school employees that any employee who witnesses any act of unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, against a student is required to intervene if it is safe to do so.
12. At the beginning of each school year, inform each principal or designee of VCOE's responsibility to provide appropriate assistance or resources to protect students from threatened or potentially discriminatory behavior and ensure their privacy rights.

ENFORCEMENT OF VCOE POLICY

Appropriate actions shall be taken to reinforce VCOE policy regarding Nondiscrimination/Harassment. As needed, these actions may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Removing vulgar or offending graffiti
2. Providing training to students, staff, and parents/guardians about how to recognize unlawful discrimination, how to report it or file a complaint, and how to respond
3. Disseminating and/or summarizing the VCOE's policy and regulation regarding unlawful discrimination
4. Consistent with laws regarding the confidentiality of student and personnel records, communicating to students, parents/guardians, and the community the school's response plan to unlawful discrimination or harassment
5. Taking appropriate disciplinary action against students, employees, and anyone determined to have engaged in wrongdoing in violation of VCOE policy, including any student who is found to have filed a complaint of discrimination that the student knew was not true

PROCESS FOR INITIATING AND RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS

Students who feel that they have been subjected to unlawful discrimination described above or in VCOE's policy are strongly encouraged to immediately contact the compliance officer, principal, or any other staff member. In addition, students who observe any such incident are strongly encouraged to report the incident to the compliance officer or principal, whether or not the alleged victim files a complaint.

Any school employee who observes an incident of unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, or to whom such an incident is reported shall report the incident to the compliance officer or principal within a school day, whether or not the alleged victim files a complaint.

Any school employee who witnesses an incident of unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, shall immediately intervene to stop the incident when it is safe to do so.

When a report of unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, is made to, or received by, the principal or compliance officer, the principal or compliance officer shall notify the student or parent/guardian of the right to file a formal complaint in accordance with VCOE's Uniform Complaint Procedures or, for complaints of sexual harassment that meet the federal Title IX definition, the Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures. Once notified verbally or in writing, the compliance officer shall begin the investigation and implement immediate measures necessary to stop the discrimination and ensure that all students have access to the educational program and a safe school environment. Any interim measures adopted to address unlawful discrimination shall,

to the extent possible, not disadvantage the complainant or a student who is the victim of the alleged unlawful discrimination.

Any report of or complaint alleging unlawful discrimination involving the principal, compliance officer, or any other person to whom the complaint would ordinarily be made or complaint filed shall instead be made to or filed with the County Superintendent or designee who shall determine how the complaint will be investigated.

ISSUES UNIQUE TO INTERSEX, NOBINARY, TRANSGENDER, AND GENDER-NON-CONFORMING STUDENTS

Gender identity of a student means the student's gender-related identity, appearance, or behavior as determined from the student's internal sense, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance, or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the student's physiology or assigned sex at birth.

Gender expression means a student's gender-related appearance and behavior, whether stereotypically associated with the student's assigned sex at birth.

Gender transition refers to the process in which a student changes from living and identifying as the sex assigned to the student at birth to living and identifying as the sex that corresponds to the student's gender identity.

Gender-nonconforming student means a student whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations.

Intersex student means a student with natural bodily variations in anatomy, hormones, chromosomes, and other traits that differ from expectations generally associated with female and male bodies.

Nonbinary student means a student whose gender identity falls outside of the traditional conceptions of strictly either female or male, regardless of whether the student identifies as transgender, was born with intersex traits, uses gender-neutral pronouns, or uses agender, genderqueer, pangender, gender nonconforming, gender variant, or such other more specific term to describe their gender.

Transgender student means a student whose gender identity or gender expression is different from the gender assigned at birth.

The VCOE prohibits acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility that are based on sex, gender identity, or gender expression, or that have the purpose or effect of producing a negative impact on the student's academic performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment, regardless of whether the acts are sexual in nature. Examples of the types of conduct which are prohibited and which may constitute gender-based harassment include, but are not limited to:

1. Refusing to address a student by a name and the pronouns consistent with the student's gender identity;

2. Disciplining or disparaging a student or excluding the student from participating in activities, for behavior or appearance that is consistent with the student's gender identity or that does not conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity, as applicable;
3. Blocking a student's entry to the restroom that corresponds to the student's gender identity;
4. Taunting a student because the student participates in an athletic activity more typically favored by a student of the other sex;
5. Revealing a student's gender identity to individuals who do not have a legitimate need for the information, without the student's consent;
6. Using gender-specific slurs; and
7. Physically assaulting a student motivated by hostility toward the student because of the student's gender, gender identity, or gender expression.

VCOE's uniform complaint procedures or Title IX sexual harassment procedures, as applicable, shall be used to report and resolve complaints alleging discrimination against intersex, nonbinary, transgender, and gender-nonconforming students.

Examples of bases for complaints include, but are not limited to, the above list, as well as improper rejection by VCOE of a student's asserted gender identity, denial of access to facilities that correspond with a student's gender identity, improper disclosure of a student's gender identity, discriminatory enforcement of a dress code, and other instances of gender-based harassment.

To ensure that intersex, nonbinary, transgender, and gender-nonconforming students are afforded the same rights, benefits, and protections provided to all students by law and VCOE policy each situation shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Right to privacy: A student's intersex, nonbinary, transgender, or gender-nonconforming status is the student's private information. Such strategies may include, but are not limited to, collecting or maintaining information about student gender only when relevant to the educational program or activity, protecting or revealing a student's gender identity as necessary to protect the health or safety of the student, and keeping a student's unofficial record separate from the official record.

VCOE shall only disclose a student's private information to others with the student's prior written consent, except when the disclosure is otherwise required by law or when the VCOE has compelling evidence that disclosure is necessary to preserve the student's physical or mental well-being. In any case, VCOE may allow disclosure of a student's personally identifiable information to employees with a legitimate educational interest as determined by VCOE pursuant to 34 CCR 99.31. Any VCOE employee to whom a student's intersex, nonbinary, transgender, or gender-nonconforming status is disclosed shall keep the student's information confidential. When disclosure of a student's gender identity is made to a VCOE employee by the student, the employee shall seek the student's permission to notify the compliance officer. If the student refuses to give permission, the employee shall keep the student's information confidential, unless

the employee is required to disclose or report the student's information pursuant to VCOE policy. The employee shall inform the student that honoring the student's request may limit VCOE's ability to meet the student's needs related to the student's status as an intersex, nonbinary, transgender, or gender-nonconforming student. If the student permits the employee to notify the compliance officer, the employee shall do so within three school days.

As appropriate given the student's need for support, the compliance officer may discuss with the student any need to disclose the student's intersex, nonbinary, transgender, or gender-nonconformity status or gender identity or gender expression to the student's parents/guardians and/or others, including other students, teacher(s), or other adults on campus. VCOE shall offer support services, such as counseling, to students who wish to inform their parents/guardians of their status and desire assistance in doing so.

2. **Determining a Student's Gender Identity:** The compliance officer shall accept the student's assertion of gender identity and begin to treat the student consistent with that gender identity unless VCOE personnel present a credible and supportable basis for believing that the student's assertion is for an improper purpose.
3. **Addressing a Student's Transition Needs:** The compliance officer shall arrange a meeting with the student and, if appropriate, the student's parents/guardians to identify and develop strategies for ensuring that the student's access to educational programs and activities is maintained. The meeting shall discuss the intersex, nonbinary, transgender, or gender-nonconforming student's rights and how those rights may affect and be affected by the rights of other students and shall address specific subjects related to the student's access to facilities and to academic or educational support programs, services, or activities, including, but not limited to, sports and other competitive endeavors. In addition, the compliance officer shall identify specific school site or program employee(s) to whom the student may report any problem related to the student's status as an intersex, nonbinary, transgender, or gender-nonconforming individual, so that prompt action can be taken to address it. Alternatively, if appropriate and desired by the student, the school may form a support team for the student that will meet periodically to assess whether the arrangements for the student are meeting the student's educational needs and providing equal access to programs and activities, educate appropriate staff about the student's transition, and serve as a resource to the student to better protect the student from gender-based discrimination.
4. **Accessibility to Sex-Segregated Facilities, Programs, and Activities:** When VCOE maintains sex-segregated facilities, such as restrooms and locker rooms, or offers sex-segregated programs and activities, such as physical education classes, intermural sports, and interscholastic athletic programs, students shall be permitted to access facilities and participate in programs and activities consistent with their gender identity. To address any student's privacy concerns in using sex-segregated facilities, VCOE shall offer available options such as a gender-neutral or single-use restroom or changing area, a bathroom stall with a door, an area in the locker room separated by a curtain or screen, or use of the locker room before or after the other students. However, the VCOE shall not require a student to utilize these options because the student is intersex, nonbinary, transgender, or gender-nonconforming. In addition, a student shall be permitted to participate in accordance with the student's gender identity in other circumstances where students are separated by gender, such as for class discussions, yearbook pictures, and field trips. A student's right to participate in a sex-segregated activity in accordance with the student's gender

identity shall not render invalid or inapplicable any other eligibility rule established for participation in the activity.

5. Student Records: Upon each student's enrollment, the COE is required to maintain a mandatory permanent student record (official record) that includes the student's gender and legal name.

A student's legal name as entered on the mandatory student record required pursuant to 5 CCR 432 shall only be changed with proper documentation. A student's gender as entered on the student's official record required pursuant to 5 CCR 432 shall only be changed with written authorization of a parent/guardian having legal custody of the student.

However, when proper documentation or authorization, as applicable, is not submitted with a request to change a student's legal name or gender, any change to the student's record shall be limited to the student's unofficial records such as attendance sheets, report cards, and school identification.

6. Names and Pronouns: If a student so chooses, VCOE personnel shall be required to address the student by a name and the pronouns consistent with the student's gender identity, without the necessity of a court order or a change to the student's official record. However, inadvertent slips or honest mistakes by VCOE personnel in the use of the student's name and/or consistent pronouns will, in general, not constitute a violation of this administrative regulation or the accompanying VCOE policy.
7. Uniforms/Dress Code: A student has the right to dress in a manner consistent with the student's gender identity, subject to any dress code adopted on a school site.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

200-262.4	Prohibition of discrimination
48900.3	Suspension or expulsion for act of hate violence
48900.4	Suspension or expulsion for harassment, threats, or intimidation
48904	Liability of parent/guardian for willful student misconduct
48907	Exercise of free expression; time, place and manner rules and regulations
48950	Speech and other communication
48985	Notices to parents in language other than English
49020-49023	Athletic Programs
51500	Prohibited instruction or activity
51501	Prohibited means of instruction
60044	Prohibited instructional materials

GOVERNMENT CODE

11135	Prohibition of discrimination
-------	-------------------------------

PENAL CODE

422.55 Definition of hate crime
422.6 Crimes; harassment

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

432 Student records
4600-4670 Uniform complaint procedures
4900-4965 Nondiscrimination in elementary and secondary educational programs receiving state or federal financial assistance

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20

1681-1688 Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; discrimination based on sex

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 29

794 Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Section 504

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 42

12101-12213 Americans with Disabilities Act
2000d-2000e-17 Title VI and Title VII Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
2000h-2-2000h-6 Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
6101-61107 Age Discrimination Act of 1975

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 28

35.107 Nondiscrimination on basis of disability; complaints

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 34

99.31 Disclosure of personally identifiable information
100.3 Prohibition of discrimination on basis of race, color or national origin
104.7 Section 504; designation of responsible employee and adoption of grievances procedures
104.8 Notice of nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap
106.8 Designation of coordinator; dissemination of policy, and adoption of grievance procedures
106.9 Severability
110.25 Prohibition of discrimination based on age

COURT DECISION

Donovan v. Poway Unified School District, (2008) 167 Cal.App.4th 567
Flores v. Morgan Hill Unified School District, (2003, 9th Cir.) 324 F.3d 1130