



# WESTOVER SCHOOL

## **Westover School Student Handbook Policies Related to Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Reporting**

### **Respect**

In a residential community, respect is vital in all situations and with all people on campus. We must respect the space and all the people in it through our words and actions by treating all community members with dignity. All of these policies apply to both in person and online (e.g. social media, email, etc.) interactions, communications and behavior.

### **Harassment**

Harassment against any individual on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race, color, religion, national origin, disability or any other characteristic protected by law of is a form of discrimination that will not be tolerated. Harassment in this context is defined as any unwelcome conduct on the basis of actual or perceived membership in a protected class that creates a hostile environment such that the conduct unreasonably interferes with, limits or denies an individual's educational access or opportunities. The discriminatory effect can result from conduct that is verbal (e.g. innuendos, threats, ethnic slurs, derogatory jokes, pejorative epithets, propositions or gestures), non-verbal (e.g. obscene gestures), written (including online communications), visual (e.g. graphic posters and drawings) or physical (e.g. unwanted touching, assault) that is severe or pervasive and objectively offensive.

Repeated microaggressions that create an unfavorable school environment are also prohibited and may constitute bullying or harassment, especially if a student has already reported and sought assistance from the Student Support Council for such behavior. Microaggressions are considered to be verbal or behavioral messages that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial slights and insults toward any group, particularly culturally marginalized groups. They can be intentional or unintentional. \*Sue, Derald Wing. (2010). *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*.

(See the Appendix in the Student Handbook for Westover's Non-Discrimination Policy).

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is conduct that is sexual in nature, is unwelcome, and/or denies or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from a school's educational program. As with other forms of protected class harassment, sexual harassment can be verbal, nonverbal, or physical. Examples of sexual conduct that might constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: suggestive or lewd remarks; touching of a sexual nature; telling sexual or dirty jokes; spreading sexual rumors; circulating or

showing emails or web sites of a sexual nature; retaliation for lodging a sexual harassment complaint; displaying or distributing sexually explicit drawings, pictures, or written materials; sexual assault.

Any concerns about possible bullying, harassment, abuse, assault, or other similar behaviors (of someone else or oneself) should be reported immediately to the Dean of Students, the Director of Diversity, or the Assistant Head of School. All reports will be investigated promptly and as confidentially as practicable. Students may make anonymous reports, and Westover will investigate such reports to the extent possible. However, it is important for students to recognize that Westover may have limited ability to adequately investigate anonymous reports or social media accounts, and disciplinary action may not be taken based solely on an anonymous complaint without further information.

A complete copy of the School's Non-Discrimination Policy and procedures for reporting and responding to complaints can be found in the Appendix.

### **Student Sexual Activity/Intimacy**

Westover does not condone students engaging in sexual activity even if consensual. The School believes that appropriate sexual relationships, and the various consequences of intimate sexual contact, require an emotional and psychological maturity not typically found at the adolescent stage of development. Additionally, in certain instances, Connecticut's child abuse law may require the School to report sexual activity involving students to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) and/or to the police. Even in situations involving sexual activity between minor students (or between a student and a minor or other individual outside of the School), the School may have an obligation to report sexual activity if it is non-consensual or if there is an age difference that suggests abuse, coercion or exploitation, regardless of apparent consent. In this context, students should be aware that in Connecticut, sexual activity with someone between 13 and 16 years of age may be reportable and prohibited by law, regardless of consent, if the other person is more than 3 years older.

Any form of sexual activity on campus or on school time between students or students and guests is a major violation of school rules. However, the School understands that adolescent sex presents personal, emotional, and psychological complexities that other infractions may not and so a first offense may not be referred to the full Discipline Committee, but will most often result in response from the Chair of the Discipline Committee which may include, but is not limited to, a discussion with parents.

To support our education of students in this area, all students are educated on sexuality and sexual relationships through our health and wellness curriculum. The School's Health Center is also available for students as a resource for information or counseling and can assist students in obtaining appropriate support from professionals in accordance with our policies on confidentiality and privacy. Students are encouraged to utilize these resources and the support of adults in our community with these sensitive and complicated topics.

### **Professional Boundaries and Faculty/Staff Expectations**

There are no circumstances in which a romantic, intimate or sexual relationship between any school employee and a student should ever occur. Sexual contact between any school employee and a student is prohibited by law and is expressly contrary to Westover's policies and expectations. Though it should go without saying, it is inappropriate and expressly prohibited for any faculty, staff member or other adult representing Westover to engage in or initiate any romantic relationship, physical or sexual contact or sexual activity with any student at any time, whether occurring on or off campus and regardless of a student's age. Any student who feels she has been subjected to unwanted sexual advances or attention, inappropriate communications or inappropriate physical contact from an adult (or anyone else), or who becomes aware of a fellow student in a similar circumstance, is encouraged to report such issues as soon as possible to the Dean of Students, Assistant Head of School or another trusted adult within the school community. Students may also submit reports of inappropriate conduct using the online reporting form available on the School's website.

### **Reporting Inappropriate Conduct (Including Harassment, Discrimination and/or Concerns Regarding Inappropriate Boundaries with Students)**

If any individual has a concern about any behavior or conduct that is inappropriate in any way, including conduct that might be considered discriminatory, harassment, inappropriate sexual contact and/or a violation of professional boundary expectations, they should inform the Dean of Students, Assistant Head of School or other trusted adult in the School. Students may also submit the information on this form (below) found on the HUB. Reports will be maintained as confidentially as possible and the School will work with anyone making a report to provide appropriate resources and supports as needed. As noted elsewhere, while Westover will attempt to adequately investigate reports that are made anonymously, individuals making an anonymous report must understand that anonymous reports may limit the School's ability to adequately and thoroughly investigate concerns and take appropriate action if needed.

<p><b>REPORTING FORM</b> (Form will be available on the HUB) The form will ask the following questions:</p>
Today's Date:
Name (optional):
Name of person targeted/harmed by the conduct:
Name of person(s) who engaged in the inappropriate conduct:
When and where did the inappropriate conduct occur?
Please describe what happened/provide additional information or details to explain your concern:

Is there anyone else who knows about this concern, witnessed the behavior or has information that would be helpful? Please list the name(s) of anyone who may have witnesses or have relevant information (for follow-up).

Thank you for sharing your concern.