

Homeschool Connections Child Protection Policy

Harassment Prevention

Homeschool Connections (Connections) is committed to providing an educational environment where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Connections' Statement of Belief asserts that, *"We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. We believe that demeaning, disrespectful, and bullying behaviors are not in accordance with Scripture."* Every individual has the right to work and learn in an atmosphere that prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment based on protected status.

Connections encourages reporting of all unresolved, perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment to a board member. Such reports will be thoroughly investigated by the Homeschool Connections Board of Directors or other party as appointed by the board. Retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation of such reports is prohibited.

Definitions of Harassment

Harassment is conduct related to an individual's protected statuses such as race, color, religion, creed, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), age, national origin, citizenship, marital status, veteran or military status, medical condition, sensory, physical or mental disability (including HIV status or use of a service animal), genetic information, sexual orientation (including gender identity), political ideology, whistleblower actions, or any other basis protected by federal, state and local laws that a) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment; b) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance; or c) otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes physical contact, epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on Connections' premises or circulated on campus, on Microsoft Teams, Homeschool Life, Connections Facebook pages or groups, Connections' Instagram, Connections' email accounts, or any other means.

Sexual harassment is harassment that is unwelcome and sexual in nature. It includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, graphic verbal or written comments about an individual's sex life or body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, or other visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It also includes harassment based on a person's gender, including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions. Sexual harassment may also include excessive, one-sided romantic advances, such as requests for dates, love notes, gifts, phone calls, and e-mails. The recipient of the action defines an "unwelcome advance," and such definitions must be respected by all individuals affiliated with Connections.

Individuals and Conduct Covered

These policies apply to all students enrolled at Connections, parents and guardians of enrolled students, instructors, and volunteers (members), related to conduct engaged in toward fellow members or visitors to Connections. Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable on campus and at any event sponsored by Connections.

Complaint Process

Connections members are strongly encouraged to report concerns about unwelcome behavior before the situation becomes severe. Connections aims to stop behaviors before they rise to the level of harassment or discrimination.

When possible, Connections encourages individuals who believe they are being subjected to such conduct to promptly advise the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome and request that it be stopped. Often this action alone will resolve the problem.

Connections *Statement of Belief* specifies that “We believe that children are a gift from God, that parents are responsible to train them, and that children should obey their parents. We recognize the parent as the authority figure in the parent-child relationship. (Psalm 127:3-5, Ephesians 6:2-4, Colossians 3:20).”

As such, Connections encourages the parents or guardians of students who have been subjected to such conduct to meet and resolve the issue together. Either party may request a Homeschool Connections board member to attend as a mediator.

However, Connections also recognizes that an individual may prefer to pursue the matter through complaint procedures, especially if the parties are unable to otherwise resolve the matter.

If you believe you are being discriminated or harassed by a fellow member of Connections, you may either attempt to resolve it according to the above suggestions or notify a Homeschool Connections board member.

All Connections members should be confident that complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be thoroughly investigated and will be kept confidential to the extent possible. After the investigation has been completed, prompt and effective corrective action will be taken against anyone found to have violated this policy and may include expulsion from Connections, or in the case of an instructor, termination of their contract.

Connections expressly prohibits any retaliation against any member who, with good faith, makes complaints or who provides information about possible violations of this policy. Any individual who feels that he or she has been retaliated against for bringing forward a complaint or participating in an investigation should promptly notify a Homeschool Connections board member.

Violence on Campus

All members and visitors must be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. All members are expected to refrain from conduct that may be dangerous to others.

Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another member or visitor will not be tolerated. Connections' resources may not be used to threaten, stalk, or harass anyone on or off campus. Connections treats threats coming from an abusive personal relationship as it does other forms of violence.

Indirect or direct threats of violence, incidents of actual violence and suspicious individuals or activities should be reported as soon as possible to a Homeschool Connections board member. When reporting a threat or incident of violence, the reporter should be as specific and detailed as possible. Members should not place themselves in peril, nor should they attempt to intercede during an incident. Members should remain calm, keep constant eye contact, and talk to the individual. If a Homeschool Connections board member can be safely notified of the need for assistance without endangering the safety of the member or others, such notice should be given. Alternatively, if possible, call emergency assistance (911 or other).

Members should promptly inform a board member of any protective or restraining order that they have obtained that lists Connections' campus as a protected area. Any member determined to have engaged in violence on campus will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion or contract termination.