
Sweet Home Central School District



Annual Acknowledgement
of Required Policies for all
Sweet Home Employees

2021-2022

“Every Student. One Community. Ready for the Future.”

Sweet Home Board Policies

School Board Policies reflect the legal requirements for New York State school districts. The formulation and adoption of these written policies constitute the means by which the Sweet Home Board of Education exercises its leadership in the operation of our school district.

The full manual of all Sweet Home Board of Education Policies are available on the District's website at: [Board of Education Policies](#)

While all Board policies are important and must be adhered to, the Policies set forth below are ones that all Sweet Home employees must know and understand. All employees are expected to annually acknowledge the requirements of the key policies contained herein.

Please read the attached policies and complete the electronic or written acknowledgement. **The highlighted policies have been updated or added for the 2021-2022 school year.** Your electronic or written signature indicates that you have received this document and have read the policies contained herein. If you have any questions about these policies, please call JoAnn Balazs, Assistant Superintendent, at 250-1417.

Please remember that policies may change throughout the school year. Policies will automatically be updated in this handbook via the blue links. If you do not have regular access to a computer, and want to get access to the current version of any Board of Education Policy, please contact the Superintendent's Secretary and Board of Education Clerk, Sherry McNamara: smcnamara@sweethomeschools.org

Sweet Home Board of Education Policies Important for All Employees

Click on the "blue" link to view the full policy

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To follow is a brief description of each policy and a link to the full policy (click on blue number):

[Use of Outside Vendors to Provide Services to Students Policy 3270](#)

The Board recognizes the value of commercial vendors to provide to students services having a legitimate school purpose. It authorizes the Superintendent or his/her designee to allow the use of commercial vendors to assist in performing such functions provided they do not violate the New York State Constitution or guidelines established by rulings from the Commissioner of Education.

[Solicitation of Charitable Donations from School Children 3271](#)

Direct solicitation of charitable donations from District students on school property during regular school hours is prohibited. It is a violation of District policy to ask District students directly to contribute money or goods for the benefit of a charity during the hours in which they are compelled to be on school grounds.

[Confidentiality of Computerized Information 3320](#)

All school records and reports should be handled in accordance with the New York State Freedom of Information Law and FERPA regulations. The safeguarding of confidential data from inappropriate use is essential to the success of the District's operation. Access to confidential computerized data shall be limited only to authorized personnel of the District.

Code of Conduct on School Property [3410](#)

The District has developed and will amend, as appropriate, a written Code of Conduct for the Maintenance of Order on School Property, including school functions, which shall govern the conduct of students, teachers and other school personnel, as well as visitors and/or vendors. For purposes of this policy, and the implemented Code of Conduct, school property means in or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot or land contained within the real property boundary line of the District's elementary or secondary schools, or in or on a school bus; and a school function shall mean a school-sponsored extracurricular event or activity regardless of where such event or activity takes place. The complete text of the Code of Conduct and a Plain Language Summary can be found on the District's website.

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment in the School District [3420](#)

The Board is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination and harassment. Accordingly, the Board prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or other legally protected category. Such actions and occurrences are prohibited regardless of whether they take place on School District premises or at school sponsored events, programs, or activities held at other locations.

The Civil Rights Compliance Officer will be responsible for coordinating the District's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities regarding non-discrimination and anti-harassment, including investigations of complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, or the failure of the District to comply with its obligations under relevant non-discrimination and anti-harassment laws and regulations (e.g., the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

The District will act to promptly, thoroughly, and equitably investigate all complaints, whether verbal or written, of discrimination and/or harassment based on any of the characteristics described above, and will promptly take appropriate action to protect individuals from further discrimination or harassment. Anyone who knowingly makes a false accusation will face appropriate disciplinary action. Retaliatory behaviors directed against complainants, victims, or witnesses is prohibited.

- Female Civil Rights Compliance Officer: JoAnn Balazs, jbalazs@sweethomeschools.org
- Male Civil Rights Compliance Officer: Don Feldmann, dfeldmann@sweethomeschools.org

Complaint Form: Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment in the School District [3420F](#)

This complaint form should be turned in to your supervisor, JoAnn Balazs (Female Compliance Officer), or Don Feldmann (Male Compliance Officer)

Title IX and Sex Discrimination [3421](#)

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a district receiving federal financial assistance. Title IX prohibits various types of sex discrimination including, but not limited to: sexual harassment; the failure to provide equal athletic opportunity; sex-based discrimination in a district's science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) courses and programs; and discrimination based on pregnancy.

Extraclassroom Activity Fund [5520](#)

Any organization within the District whose activities are conducted by students, and whose financial support is raised other than by taxation or through charges of the Board, is an extraclassroom activity (ECA). The moneys raised by these organizations are referred to as ECA funds. ECA fund management provides students with the

opportunity to learn proper business practices and how to operate a successful business. The Board and designated District staff will protect and provide oversight of ECA funds. All ECAs will be approved by the Board. All ECA funds will be handled in accordance with the financial procedures set forth in The Safeguarding, Accounting, and Auditing of Extraclassroom Activity Funds, Revised 2019, published by the New York State Education Department. The Director of Finance and Plant Services will establish local procedures for safeguarding, accounting for and auditing all moneys received and derived from ECA activity.

Smoking/Tobacco Use 5640

NYS Law prohibits tobacco use anywhere on school grounds. Smoking and vaping are prohibited on school grounds and within 100 feet of entrances, exits, or outdoor areas of any of the District's schools. In addition, the use of tobacco products, smoking, and vaping are prohibited at any school sponsored event or activity that occurs off school grounds.

School Safety Plans 5681

The District considers the safety of its students and staff to be of utmost importance and is keenly aware of the evolving nature of threats to schools. As such, it will address those threats accordingly through appropriate emergency response planning. The District-wide school safety plan and the building-level emergency response plan will be designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of schools and the District with local and county resources in the event of these incidents or emergencies.

Code of Ethics for Board Members and All District Personnel 6110

Officers and employees of the District hold their positions to serve and benefit the public, and not to obtain unwarranted personal or private gain in the exercise of their official powers and duties. The Board recognizes that, in furtherance of this fundamental principle, there is a need for clear and reasonable standards of ethical conduct. This policy establishes those standards. The provisions of this policy are intended to supplement Article 18 of General Municipal Law Sections and any other law relating to ethical conduct of District officers and employees, and should not be construed to conflict with those authorities.

Equal Employment Opportunity 6120

The District is an equal opportunity employer that does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity or the status of being transgender), sexual orientation, disability, age, military status, predisposing genetic characteristics, marital status, domestic violence victim status, criminal arrest or conviction record, or any other basis prohibited by state or federal non-discrimination laws. The Civil Rights Compliance Officer and will promptly investigate complaints of alleged discrimination.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace 6121

The Board affirms its commitment to non-discrimination and recognizes its responsibility to provide for all District employees an environment that is free of sexual harassment and intimidation. Sexual harassment is a violation of law and stands in direct opposition to District policy. Therefore, the Board prohibits and condemns all forms of sexual harassment by employees, school volunteers, students, and non-employees such as contractors and vendors which occur on school grounds and at all school-sponsored events, programs and activities including those that take place at locations off school premises and in another state. It is essential that any employee who believes he/she has been a victim of sexual harassment in the work environment, as well as any other person who is aware of and/or who has knowledge of or witnesses any possible occurrence of sexual harassment, immediately report such alleged harassment to:

- JoAnn Balazs - Female Compliance Officer: jbalazs@sweethomeschools.org, or
- Don Feldmann - Male Compliance Officer: dfeldmann@sweethomeschools.org

Complaint Form for Sexual Harassment in the Workplace 6121F

This complaint form should be turned in to your supervisor, JoAnn Balazs (Female Compliance Officer), or Don Feldmann (Male Compliance Officer)

Alcohol, Drug and other Substances (Staff) 6150

The Board of Education, recognizing that students are often influenced by teachers and other members of a school's staff, impresses upon staff members the importance of maintaining a high level of professionalism appropriate to their position, which, in turn, shall set a positive example for students. The Board, therefore, prohibits the consumption, sharing and/or selling, use and/or possession of illegal drugs (including prescription drugs for which the employee does not have a prescription), counterfeit and designer drugs, the misuse of over-the-counter drugs, or alcoholic beverages in the workplace, or when the effects of such drugs and/or alcohol use may impair an employee's job performance. The Superintendent has designated one or more individuals to provide information regarding where and how to find available substance use related services to students, parents, and staff. The designated individual(s) for the District is the Family Support Center Coordinator, Anne Nowak.

Drug-Free Workplace 6151

The Board affirms that all programs in the District that receive Federal funds will guarantee that their workplaces are free of controlled substances. "Controlled substance" means a controlled substance in schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act. Workplace is defined as any school building or school premises.

Staff-Student Relations (Fraternization) 6180

The Board requires that all District employees maintain a professional, ethical relationship with District students that is conducive to an effective, safe learning environment, and that staff members act as role models for students at all times, whether on or off school property and both during and outside of school hours. Staff must establish appropriate personal boundaries with students and not engage in any behavior that could reasonably lead to even the appearance of impropriety. It is essential that any employee who is aware of and/or who has knowledge of or witnesses any possible occurrence of inappropriate behavior, immediately report such alleged fraternization to a Title IX Officer: JoAnn Balazs:

jbalazs@sweethomeschools.org

Staff Use of Computerized Information Resources 6460

The Board will provide staff with access to various computerized information resources through the District's computer system (DCS) consisting of software, hardware, computer networks, wireless networks/access, and electronic communication systems. Access to confidential data is a privilege afforded to District employees in the performance of their duties. Staff members must ensure that confidential information is properly maintained. Staff members who engage in unacceptable use may lose access to the DCS and may be subject to further discipline under the law and in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements. Legal action may be initiated against a staff member who willfully, maliciously, or unlawfully damages or destroys property of the District. Staff members should not expect that information stored on the DCS is private.

Leaves of Absence 6550

A leave of absence may be requested by an employee and granted by the district pursuant to the special circumstances outlined in the Policy.

Family and Medical Leave Act 6551

The District allows eligible employees to take unpaid FMLA leave for up to 12 work weeks in a 12-month period as determined by the District. Employees are eligible if they have been employed by the District for at least 12 months and for at least 1,250 hours of service during the previous 12-month period. The District uses a "rolling" 12-month period measured backward from the date of any FMLA leave usage to calculate the FMLA leave. In certain cases, FMLA leave may be taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis rather than all at once. The entitlement to leave for the birth or placement of a child expires at the end of the 12-month period beginning on the date of the birth or placement.

A serious health condition is defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider that renders the person incapacitated for more than three consecutive calendar days. An employee claiming a serious health condition must first visit a healthcare provider within seven days of the incapacity; the second visit must occur within 30 days of the incapacitating event. An employee claiming the need for continuous treatment under FMLA for a chronic serious health condition must visit a healthcare provider at least twice per year, and the condition must continue over an extended period of time. The condition may cause episodic rather than a continuing period of incapacity. Employees may use paid leave concurrently with periods of FMLA leave.

Student Records: Access and Challenge 7240

The District will comply with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Under its provisions, parents or guardians and noncustodial parent(s) whose rights are not limited by court order or formal agreement, of a student under 18, or a student who is 18 years of age or older, or who is attending an institution of post-secondary education, have a right to inspect, review, and challenge any and all education records maintained by the District. Unless provided for in the approved list of exceptions, the District is not permitted to release personally identifiable information without parent, guardian, or eligible student consent.

Corporal Punishment/Emergency Interventions 7350

Corporal punishment as a means of discipline shall not be used against a student by any teacher, administrator, officer, employee or agent of this District. The need for emergency interventions permit reasonable force for the following reasons: self-protection, protection of others, protection of property, or restraining/removing a disruptive student. Whenever a school employee uses physical force against a student, the school employee shall immediately report the situation to his/her Principal/Supervisor. The Principal/Supervisor shall, within the same school day, make a report to the Superintendent describing in detail the circumstances and the nature of the action taken.

Child Abuse and Maltreatment 7530

The District takes seriously the obligations of its officers and employees to report cases of child abuse or maltreatment. The District is committed to the protection of students in educational settings from abuse and maltreatment by employees or volunteers as enumerated in law. Persons required to report cases of child abuse or maltreatment to the State Central Register (SCR) pursuant to Social Services Law Section 413(1) include, but are not limited to, school teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, school administrators or other school personnel required to hold a teaching or administrative license or certificate, and full- or part- time compensated school employees required to hold a temporary coaching license

or professional coaching certificate. The "Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Maltreatment" Form LDSS-2221A may be accessed at the website of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

Sexual Harassment of Students 7541

The Board affirms its commitment to provide an environment free from sex-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual violence and intimidation. The Board, therefore, prohibits all forms of sexual harassment against students by other students, employees, school volunteers, and non-employees such as contractors and vendors, which occur on school grounds or at school sponsored events, programs, or activities, including those that take place at locations off school premises.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. It includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment also includes sexual violence. Sexual harassment can originate from a person of either sex against a person of the opposite or same sex, and from students, District employees, or third parties such as visitors or school volunteers. Reports of sexual harassment should be directed to the Title IX Officer, JoAnn Balazs, jbalazs@sweethomeschools.org

Bullying in the Schools 7542

Bullying of a student by another student is strictly prohibited on school property, in school buildings, on school buses, and at school sponsored events and/or activities whether occurring on or off campus. For purposes of this policy, the term "bullying" among children is defined, in general, as: "a variety of negative acts carried out repeatedly over time. It involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, with a more powerful child or group attacking those who are less powerful." Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal, psychological and/or cyber bullying. Personnel at all levels are responsible for taking corrective action to prevent bullying behavior of which they have been made aware at School District sites or activities and/or reporting such behavior to their immediate supervisor.

Dignity For All Students 7544

The District seeks to create an environment free of harassment, bullying, and discrimination, to foster civility in its schools, and to prevent conduct which is inconsistent with its educational mission. The District, therefore, prohibits all forms of harassment and bullying of students by employees or other students on school property and at school functions. In addition, other acts of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination which can reasonably be expected to materially and substantially disrupt the education process may be subject to discipline or other corrective action.

Reports of discrimination or harassment against a student should be made to the DASA Coordinator in your building. The list of DASA coordinators can be found on the District's website. All District staff who are aware of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination, are required to orally report the incident(s) within one (1) school day to the principal, Superintendent, or his/her designee and report it in writing within two (2) school days after making an oral report. The principal, Superintendent, or the principal's or Superintendent's designee will lead and/or supervise a thorough investigation of all reports of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination, and ensure that such investigations are completed promptly after receipt of any such reports.

Student Gender Identity 7545

All students need a safe and supportive educational environment to progress academically and developmentally. The District is committed to fostering a safe learning environment for all students, free from discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity, gender nonconformity, and gender expression. In accordance with applicable law, regulations, and guidelines, the District will ensure that students have equal access to all school programs, facilities, and activities. The District will assess and address the specific needs of

each student on a case-by-case basis.

Supervision of Students [7560](#)

Students working on any activity must be supervised by the teacher or staff member in charge of the activity. This applies to all in school and extracurricular activities as well as sports activities and events. District personnel are fully responsible for the supervision of all students in either their classes or after school activities.

Use of Copyrighted Material [8350](#)

All employees and students are prohibited from copying materials not specifically allowed by the US Copyright Law, fair use guidelines, licenses or contractual agreements, or the permission of the copyright proprietor. Any person who willfully disregards the copyright policy shall be in violation of Federal Copyright Laws and District policy and shall assume all liability.

Human Resources and Payroll Contact Information

Topic	Contact	Phone	Email
Regulation, Policy, Discrimination & Harassment Complaints	JoAnn Balazs Donald Feldmann	(716) 250-1417 (716) 250-1406	jbalazs@sweethomeschools.org dfeldmann@sweethomeschools.org
FMLA/Leaves of Absence	Karen Galli	(716) 250-1408	kgalli@sweethomeschools.org
Instructional Personnel (Certified Staff)	Karen Galli	(716) 250-1408	kgalli@sweethomeschools.org
Non-Instructional Personnel (Civil Service Staff)	Leigh Lawrenson	(716) 250-1413	llawrenson@sweethomeschools.org
Payroll & Staff Attendance	Michelle Callowhill	(716) 250-1409	mmcburney@sweethomeschools.org
	Jessica Schmiri	(716) 250-1421	jschmiri@sweethomeschools.org
Absence Management (AESOP)	Leigh Lawrenson	(716) 250-1413	llawrenson@sweethomeschools.org
Benefits and Health Insurance	Debbie Crist	(716) 250-1425	dcrist@sweethomeschools.org
Disability/Workers' Compensation	Michelle Callowhill	(716) 250-1409	mmcburney@sweethomeschools.org
Family Support Center Employee Assistance (EAP)	Anne Nowak	(716) 250-1229	anowak@sweethomeschools.org