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***PENNSYLVANIA’S EDUCATION FOR ALL COALITION, INC***

***POLICY PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE***

**I. POLICY**

a. Protected Categories

Pennsylvania’s Education for All Coalition, Inc. (PEAC) is committed to providing every PEAC employee, prospective employee and volunteer with a work environment free from prohibited discrimination or harassment. Under this policy, forms of employment discrimination or harassment based upon the following protected categories are prohibited and will not be tolerated: disability, race, creed, color, national origin, nationality, ancestry, age, sex/gender, pregnancy, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, familial status, religion, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, genetic information, or liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States.

To achieve the goal of maintaining a work environment free from discrimination and harassment, PEAC strictly prohibits the conduct that is described in this policy. This is a zero-tolerance policy. This means that PEAC reserve the right to take either disciplinary action, if appropriate, or other corrective action, to address any unacceptable conduct that violates this policy, regardless of whether the conduct satisfies the legal definition of discrimination or harassment.

b. Applicability

Prohibited discrimination/harassment undermines the integrity of the employment relationship, compromises equal employment opportunity, debilitates morale, and interferes with work productivity. Thus, this policy applies to all employees and applicants for employment. PEAC will not tolerate harassment or discrimination by anyone in the workplace including supervisors, coworkers, or persons doing business with PEAC. This policy also applies to conduct that occurs in the workplace and conduct that occurs at any location that can be reasonably regarded as an extension of the workplace (any off-site business-related social function, or any facility where PEAC business is being conducted and discussed.)

This policy also applies to posts on any social media site and/or electronic device, personal or business, that adversely affects the work environment defined by this policy.

This policy also applies to third-party harassment. Third-party harassment is unwelcome behavior involving any of the protected categories referred to in (a) above that is not directed at an individual but exists in the workplace and interferes with an individual’s ability to do his/her or their job. Third-party harassment based upon any of the aforementioned protected categories is prohibited by this policy.

**II. PROHIBITED CONDUCT**

a. Defined

It is a violation of this policy to engage in any employment practice or procedure that treats an individual less favorably based upon any of the protected categories referred to in (a) above. This policy pertains to all employment practices such as recruitment, selection, hiring, training, promotion, transfer, assignment, layoff, return from layoff, termination, demotion, discipline, compensation, fringe benefits, working conditions, and career development.

It is a violation of this policy to use derogatory or demeaning references regarding a person's race, gender, age, religion, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, ethnic background, or any other protected category set forth in (a) above. A violation of this policy can occur even if there was no intent on the part of an individual to harass or demean another.

b. Sexual Harassment

It is a violation of this policy to engage in sexual (or gender-based) harassment of any kind, including hostile work environment harassment, quid pro quo harassment, or same-sex harassment. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example:

* Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment,
* Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
* Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

**III. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Any employee who believes that she/he or they have been subjected to any form of prohibited discrimination/harassment, or who witnesses others being subjected to such discrimination/harassment, should promptly report the incident(s) to the Board member or Board president. A person who wishes to take action about prohibited sexual physical contact can file a criminal complaint with law enforcement of the municipality where the incident occurred. That person can also make a criminal report and a report to a Board member or the Board President who is the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Officer (EEO/AA). One does not have to choose one or the other.

**IV. DISSEMINATION**

PEAC shall post this policy on its website for public view and distribute it to each board member, volunteer, independent contractor, and employee.

**V. COMPLAINT PROCESS**

All investigations of discrimination/harassment claims shall be conducted in a way that respects, to the extent possible, the privacy of all the persons involved. The investigations shall be conducted in a prompt, thorough, and impartial manner. The results of the investigation shall be forwarded to the PEAC Board to make a final decision as to whether a violation of the policy has been substantiated.

**VI. PROHIBITION AGAINST RETALIATION**

Retaliation against any employee who alleges being a victim of discrimination/harassment, provides information in the course of an investigation into claims of discrimination/harassment in the workplace, or opposes a discriminatory practice, is prohibited by this policy. No employee bringing a complaint, providing information for an investigation, or testifying in any proceeding under this policy shall be subjected to adverse employment consequences based upon such involvement or be the subject of other retaliation.

**VII. FALSE ACCUSATIONS AND INFORMATION**

The burden is on the complainant to articulate a sufficient nexus between the alleged conduct to a protected category. An employee who knowingly makes a false accusation of prohibited discrimination/harassment or knowingly provides false information in the course of an investigation of a complaint, will be subjected to administrative and/or action, up to and including termination of employment. Complaints made in good faith, however, even if found to be unsubstantiated, shall not be considered a false accusation.

**VII. CONFIDENTIALITY**

All complaints and investigations shall be handled, to the extent possible, in a manner that will protect the privacy interests of those involved. To the extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances, confidentiality shall be maintained throughout the investigative process. In the course of an investigation, it may be necessary to discuss the claims with the person(s) against whom the complaint was filed and other persons who may have relevant knowledge or who have a legitimate need to know about the matter. To protect the integrity of the investigation, minimize the risk of retaliation against the individuals participating in the investigative process, and protect the important privacy interests of all concerned, the EEO/AA Officer/investigator shall request that persons interviewed, including witnesses, not discuss any aspect of the investigation with others, unless there is a legitimate business reason to disclose such information.