



## **Accrediting Commission for Schools Western Association of Schools and Colleges**

### **Anti-Discrimination Policies and Procedures** [ACS WASC Bylaws, Section 13]

#### **13.1 Code of Professional Responsibility**

ACS WASC affirms that its policies, actions, activities, and relationships are based on principles of honesty, integrity, fairness, and mutual respect. ACS WASC is primarily a volunteer organization that relies on educators from its member schools to conduct accreditation visits; it expects the highest level of conduct and professionalism in all ACS WASC-related activities. A commitment to the ACS WASC Code of Professional Responsibility will enhance the accreditation experience and strengthen the integrity of the process.

ACS WASC employees and volunteers agree to abide by the following guiding principles in all accreditation-related work:

1. Honesty and transparency in all words, attitudes, and actions.
2. Integrity in following the guidelines of accreditation as established by ACS WASC.
3. Professionalism in all conversations and activities during accreditation visits, evidenced by respect and kindness in the treatment of others.
4. Recognition that no individual accreditation visiting committee member holds authority over any school or institution; only the visiting committee as a whole exercises the right to provide recommendations to the school and an accreditation status recommendation to the ACS WASC Commission.
5. Establishment of appropriate personal relationships with school staff and visiting committee personnel that is above reproach.
6. Agreement to wear professional attire (not casual) for all meetings throughout the accreditation visit.
7. Commitment to professional conduct that does not allow for texting during meetings or taking numerous personal calls or calls from one's own school.

8. Agreement not to sell or market any materials bringing personal benefit during accreditation visits. It is also inappropriate to take school forms/materials from schools during site visits for use in one's own school.
9. Acceptance of ACS WASC expectations for visiting committee members:
  - a. The accreditation process is confidential and requires the full attention of Committee members from early morning to late evening; consequently, friends, family members, or colleagues should not accompany any visiting committee members to the site visit.
  - b. Committee members are not to solicit employment during site visits or give resumes to school leaders. Also, committee members may not solicit resumes from school staff members during or after the accreditation visit.
  - c. Committee members may accept token gifts of appreciation from the school (mugs, T-shirts, gift baskets, etc.); gifts of significant value, however, must be graciously declined.

### **13.2 Non-Discrimination Statement**

ACS WASC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability in the administration of its policies, accreditation activities, events, publications, and employment practices, including the selection of volunteers for visiting committees, and it complies with all federal and state laws regarding discriminatory practices.

### **13.3 Sexual Harassment Policies**

ACS WASC is committed to providing a workplace in its offices and school accreditation visits that are free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment in the workplace or on school visits is against the law and will not be tolerated. A victim of sexual harassment can be a man or a woman and can be of the same sex as the harasser. When ACS WASC determines that an allegation of sexual harassment is credible, it will take prompt and appropriate corrective action.

Sexual harassment is defined as:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- Unwelcome conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or abusive work environment.
- Sexual pranks, sexual teasing, jokes, pictures, music, or innuendo either in person, on the phone, or via email.
- Any touching that represents sexual advances of any nature.

If ACS WASC receives an allegation of sexual harassment or has reason to believe sexual harassment has or is occurring, it will take the necessary steps to ensure that the matter is promptly investigated and will take immediate and effective measures to end the inappropriate behavior. ACS WASC will take appropriate action even if the individual does not wish to file a formal complaint.

ACS WASC is committed to ensuring that all investigations of sexual harassment are conducted in a prompt, thorough, and impartial manner. The Executive Vice President or Directors and other ACS WASC staff members who observe, are informed of, or reasonably suspect incidents of possible sexual harassment must immediately report such incidents to the President of the Commission. If he/she is not available, the Executive Vice President should be notified.

ACS WASC will seek to protect the identities of the alleged victim and harasser, except as reasonably necessary to complete an investigation successfully. ACS WASC will also take the necessary steps to protect from retaliation those employees who in good faith report incidents of potential sexual harassment. It is a violation of both federal law and this policy to retaliate against someone who has reported possible sexual harassment.

In cases involving ACS WASC employees or members of accreditation visiting committees, the appropriate disciplinary steps will be taken, including, but not limited to the following:

- For employees, discipline may include reprimand, suspension, or release from employment.
- For visiting committee members, discipline will include immediate termination of participation in the current accreditation visit and restriction from participating in future accreditation visits.

### **Reporting Procedures**

ACS WASC employees or visiting committee members are encouraged to tell the offending person to stop the behavior immediately and then report the inappropriate conduct as soon as possible to the President, the Executive Vice President, and/or the Chairperson of the Commission at (650) 696-1060. To report a sexual harassment incident, the person should carefully explain what happened in writing and give as much detail as to place, time, exact words used, physical actions taken, etc. to assist in the investigation. This written narrative should be given to the President or another person listed above. The report will be treated as confidential to the extent permissible by law and the matter will be investigated immediately.

ACS WASC is committed to a working environment, both in its offices and in accreditation visits to schools, that is free from any uncomfortable or unprofessional behavior that is not of the highest possible standards. ACS WASC commits itself to these policies and procedures.

### **13.4 ADA Compliance Statement**

It is the policy of ACS WASC to comply with all federal and state laws concerning utilization of volunteers with disabilities and to act in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Furthermore, it is the organization's policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, retention of volunteers, visiting committee assignment(s), training or other terms, conditions and privileges of volunteering.

Volunteers with a disability who believe they need a reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of their job should contact their member organization. ACS WASC encourages individuals with disabilities to request reasonable accommodations.

To the extent that any volunteer visiting committee member requires any reasonable accommodation, ACS WASC requires the volunteer's member organization to cover the costs.

A volunteer who has questions regarding this policy or believes that he or she has been discriminated against based on a disability should notify their member organization and the President of the Commission. All such inquiries or complaints will be treated as confidential to the extent permissible by law.

# **Whistleblower Protection Policy**

## **[ACS WASC Bylaws, Section 14]**

As a corporate entity, ACS WASC requires directors, officers, volunteers and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Employees and representatives of ACS WASC must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

This policy applies to ACS WASC as a corporate entity distinct from its affiliated Commissions, which are assumed herein to operate under their own Whistleblower Protection Policies to ensure high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their own several duties and responsibilities.

### **Reporting Responsibility**

This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable affiliated individuals and others to raise serious concerns internally so that ACS WASC can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions. It is the responsibility of all board members, officers, employees and volunteers to report concerns about violations of ACS WASC's code of ethics or suspected violations of law or regulations that govern ACS WASC's operations.

### **No Retaliation**

It is contrary to the values of ACS WASC for anyone to retaliate against any board member, officer, employee or volunteer who in good faith reports an ethics violation, or a suspected violation of law, such as a complaint of discrimination, or suspected fraud, or suspected violation of any regulation governing the operations of ACS WASC. Any affiliate or employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to any appropriate discipline up to and including termination of employment.

### **Compliance Officer**

The President of the Commission fills the role of ACS WASC's corporate Compliance Officer and is responsible for ensuring that all complaints about unethical or illegal conduct are investigated and resolved. The Compliance Officer will advise the Board of Directors of all complaints and their resolution and will report at least annually to the corporate Board of Directors on compliance activity relating to accounting or alleged financial improprieties.

### **Reporting Procedure**

ACS WASC has an open door policy and suggests that affiliates or employees share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly, such as a member of the ACS WASC corporate Board of Directors or President. Individuals receiving such communications are required to report complaints or concerns about suspected ethical and legal violations in writing to ACS WASC's corporate Compliance Officer, who has the responsibility to investigate all reported complaints. Affiliates or employees with concerns or complaints may also submit their concerns in writing directly to their supervisor or to the President or Compliance Officer.

**Accounting and Auditing Matters**

ACS WASC's corporate Compliance Officer shall immediately notify the corporate Board of Directors of any concerns or complaint regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing and work with the board until the matter is resolved.

**Acting in Good Faith**

Anyone filing a written complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

**Confidentiality**

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential except when required by law or judged necessary to conduct an adequate investigation.

**Handling of Reported Violations**

ACS WASC's corporate Compliance Officer will notify the person who submitted a complaint and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation. All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.