



Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Code of Ethics

Guiding Principles

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) affirms that its policies, actions, activities, and relationships are based on principles of honesty, integrity, fairness, and mutual respect. 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 WASC-related activities. A commitment to the WASC Code of Ethics will enhance the accreditation experience and strengthen the integrity of the process.

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 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 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 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.

Non-Discriminatory Statement

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin, sex, disability, and sexual orientation in the administration of its policies, accreditation activities, events, publications, and employment practices and it complies with all federal and state laws regarding discriminatory practices.

Sexual Harassment Policies

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges 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 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 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. WASC will take appropriate action even if the individual does not wish to file a formal complaint.

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

WASC will seek to protect the identities of the alleged victim and harasser, except as reasonably necessary to complete an investigation successfully. 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 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

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 a responsible WASC official. Several members of WASC's leadership are offered as contact persons to receive sexual harassment complaints. They are listed as follows:

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| Dr. David Brown | Executive Director | 650-696-1060 |
| Dr. Harlan Lyso | Chair of WASC Commission | 650-696-1060 |
| Dr. Marilyn George | Associate Executive Director | 650-696-1060 |
| Dr. Lee Duncan | Associate Executive Director | 951-693-2550 |
| Mrs. Jo Cacicedo | Burlingame Office Manager | 650-696-1060 |
| Dr. Ginger Hovenic | Temecula Member Services | 951-693-2550 |
| Mrs. Emily Barton | Temecula Member Services | 951-693-2550 |

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 WASC Executive Director or another person listed above. The report will be kept confidential as much as possible and the matter will be investigated immediately.

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. WASC commits itself to these policies and procedures.

February 1, 2012