

102.030 – SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY

Date Revised: October 2018

POLICY

MMW+C (Maine Media Workshops + College) policies prohibit all sexual misconduct. MMW+C is committed to the prevention of such misconduct, and to the fair treatment of all MMW+C community members in the event of such misconduct. This policy applies to all students, faculty, and staff of MMW+C, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. This policy also applies to third parties.

Disclosures to Alleged Complainants of Crimes of Violence or Non-forcible Sex Offenses.

MMW+C will, upon written request, disclose to the alleged complainant of a crime of violence, or a non-forcible sex offense, the results of any disciplinary hearing conducted by MMW+C against the individual who is the alleged perpetrator of the crime or offense. If the alleged complainant is deceased as a result of the crime or offense, MMW+C will provide the results of the disciplinary hearing to the complainant's next of kin, if so requested.

Sex Offender Registration

MMW+C only performs background checks on individuals who are employed in positions that have direct contact with students enrolled in Maine Media's Youth Program. The background check performed includes national and local sex offender registries. MMW+C does not maintain a list of registered sex offenders on all who may be associated with MMW+C.

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673

<https://www.rainn.org/about-national-sexual-assault-telephone-hotline>

<http://www.mecasa.org/maine-resources-2/>

This policy applies to all operations of MMW+C.

The policy is broken down into three sections:

What is Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence?

How to Report Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence; and

How an Investigation is Conducted

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

1. **Sexual Harassment** is *unwelcome conduct* of a sexual nature, including but not limited to unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or other verbal or nonverbal conduct of a sexual nature, including *rape*, *sexual assault*, and *sexual exploitation*. In addition, depending on the facts, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking may also be forms of sexual harassment.
2. **Unwelcome Conduct.** Conduct is considered “unwelcome” if the individual did not request or invite it and considered the conduct to be undesirable or offensive. Unwelcome conduct may take various forms, including: name-calling, graphic or written statements (including the use of cell phones or the Internet), or other conduct that may be physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating. Unwelcome conduct does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. Unwelcome conduct can involve persons of the same or opposite sex. Participation in the conduct or the failure to complain does not always mean that the conduct was welcome. The fact that an individual may have welcomed some conduct does not necessarily mean that the individual welcomed other conduct. Also, the fact that an individual requested or invited conduct on one occasion does not mean that the conduct is welcome on a subsequent occasion.
3. **Hostile environment caused by sexual harassment.** A “hostile environment” exists when *sex-based harassment* is sufficiently serious to deny or limit the individual’s ability to work or participate in or benefit from the Organization’s programs or activities.

A hostile environment can be created by anyone working or is involved in the organization’s program or activity (e.g., administrators, faculty members, students, and campus visitors). In determining whether *sex-based harassment* has created a hostile environment, the Organization considers the conduct in question from both a subjective and objective perspective. It will be necessary, but not enough, that the conduct was *unwelcome* to the individual who was harassed. But the Organization will also need to find that a reasonable person in the individual’s position would have perceived the conduct as undesirable or offensive in order for that conduct to create or contribute to a hostile environment. To make the ultimate determination of whether a hostile environment exists for an individual(s), the organization considers a variety of factors related to the severity, persistence, or pervasiveness of the *sex-based harassment*, including: (1) the type, frequency, and duration of the conduct; (2) the identity and relationships of persons involved; (3) the number of individuals involved; (4) the location of the conduct and the context in which it occurred; and, (5) the degree to which the conduct affected one or more individual’s work or education.

The more severe the *sex-based harassment*, the less need there is to show a repetitive series of incidents to find a hostile environment. Indeed, a single instance of *sexual assault* may be sufficient to create a hostile environment. Likewise, a series of incidents may be sufficient even if the *sex-based harassment* is not particularly severe.

First Amendment Considerations. This policy does not impair the exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment. The organization’s sexual misconduct policy prohibits only sex-based harassment that creates a hostile environment. In this and other ways, the organization applies and enforces this policy in a manner that respects the First Amendment rights of students, staff, faculty, and others.

4. **Gender-based Harassment** is *unwelcome conduct* of a nonsexual nature based on an individual’s actual or perceived sex, including conduct based on gender identity, gender expression, and nonconformity with gender stereotypes.
5. **Sexual Assault** is actual or attempted sexual contact with another person without that person’s *consent*. Sexual assault includes, but is not limited to:
 - Intentional touching of another person’s intimate parts without that person’s *consent*; or
 - Other intentional sexual contact with another person without that person’s *consent*; or
 - Coercing, forcing, or attempting to coerce or force a person to touch another person’s intimate parts without that person’s *consent*; or
 - *Rape*, which is penetration, no matter how slight, of (1) the vagina or anus of a person by any body part of another person or by an object, or (2) the mouth of a person by a sex organ of another person, without that person’s consent.

6. **Dating violence** is defined as violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the complainant. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the reporting party's statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. For the purposes of this definition
 - dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse.
 - dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

7. **Domestic Violence** is defined as a felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed
 - by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the complainant.
 - by a person with whom the complainant shares a child in common.
 - by a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the complainant as a spouse or intimate partner.
 - by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the complainant under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred;
 - by any other person against an adult or youth complainant who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred.

8. **Sexual Exploitation** occurs when a person takes sexual advantage of another person for the benefit of anyone other than that person without that person's *consent*. Examples of behavior that could rise to the level of sexual exploitation include:
 - Prostituting another person;
 - Recording images (*e.g.*, video, photograph) or audio of another person's sexual activity, intimate body parts, or nakedness without that person's *consent*;
 - Distributing images (*e.g.*, video, photograph) or audio of another person's sexual activity, intimate body parts, or nakedness, if the individual distributing the images or audio knows or should have known that the person depicted in the images or audio did not *consent* to such disclosure and objects to such disclosure;and,
 - Viewing another person's sexual activity, intimate body parts, or nakedness in a place where that person would have a reasonable expectation of privacy, without that person's *consent*, and for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire.

9. **Stalking** is defined as engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to
 - fear for the person's safety or the safety of others; or
 - suffer substantial emotional distress.

10. **Non-forcible sex offenses** include sexual conduct with individuals that the law assumes are not capable of giving consent to sexual acts such as underage individuals, physically helpless, and mentally incompetent individuals.

Consent

"Consent" must be informed, voluntary, and mutual, and can be withdrawn at any time. There is no consent when there is force, expressed or implied, or when coercion, intimidation, threats, or duress is used. Whether a person has taken advantage of a position of influence over another person may be a factor in determining consent. Silence or absence of resistance does not imply consent. Past consent to sexual activity with another person does not imply ongoing future consent with that person or consent to that same sexual activity with another person.

If a person is mentally or physically incapacitated or impaired so that such person cannot understand the fact, nature, or extent of the sexual situation, there is no consent; this includes impairment or incapacitation due to alcohol or drug consumption that meets this standard, or being asleep or unconscious.

HOW TO REPORT SEXUAL HARRASEMENT OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Complaint Confidentiality

When an individual reports any incident of sexual misconduct to any MMW+C Responsible Employee, the Responsible Employee will report such information to the Title IX Coordinator. The organization will take immediate and appropriate steps to investigate what happened and to resolve the matter promptly and equitably. MMW+C will need to determine what happened– including the names of the complainant and alleged perpetrator(s), any witnesses, and any other relevant facts, including the date, time and specific location of the alleged incident.

To the extent possible, information reported to the organization employee will be shared only with people responsible for handling the organization's response to the report. MMW+C employees will not share information with law enforcement without the complainant's consent or unless the complainant has also reported the incident to law enforcement.

Before a complainant reveals any information to an MMW+C employee, the employee should ensure that the complainant understands the employee's reporting obligations – and, if the complainant wants to maintain complete confidentiality and anonymity, direct the complainant to resources outside of MMW+C.

If the complainant wants to tell the MMW+C employee what happened but also maintain confidentiality, the employee should tell the complainant that the organization will consider the request, but cannot guarantee that the organization will be able to honor it. In reporting the details of the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, the employee will also inform the Coordinator of the complainant's request for confidentiality.

MMW+C employees will not pressure a complainant to request confidentiality, but will honor and support the complainant's wishes, including for the organization to fully investigate an incident. By the same token, employees will not pressure a complainant to make a full report if the complainant is not ready to.

Responsible Employees

A responsible employee is an organization employee who has the authority to address incidents of sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking and is obligated to report such incidents, or whom an individual could reasonably believe has this authority or duty. Responsible employees are respectful of a complainant's wishes to the extent appropriate and are discreet, but they are not able to maintain confidentiality. Responsible employees at the organization include staff members at the Director level or above.

General inquiries or questions about the Sexual Misconduct, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking Policy and procedures do not have to be reported, and the organization will strive to protect the privacy interests of individuals to the extent it can while maintaining its obligations to uphold relevant policies and regulations and/or to take reasonable steps to promote the safety of members of the organizations community. Otherwise, once any employee learns of an incident of sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, written or unwritten, the employee must immediately notify the Title IX Coordinator of such complaint.

The employee must report all relevant details about the incident (such as the name of the complainant and respondent, any witnesses, and other relevant facts, such as the date, time and specific location of the alleged incident). Such notice to the organization generally obligates the organization to investigate the incident and take appropriate steps to address the situation. Within the requirements of applicable laws and policy, confidentiality will be observed as practicable.

If a complainant discloses an incident to a responsible employee but wishes to maintain confidentiality or requests that no investigation into a particular incident be conducted or disciplinary action taken, the organization will weigh that request against the organization's obligation to provide a safe, non-discriminatory environment for all individuals, including the complainant. If the organization honors the request for confidentiality, a complainant must understand that the organization will be unable to conduct an investigation into the particular incident or pursue disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator. Although rare, there are times when the organization may not be able to honor a complainant's request in order to provide a safe, non-discriminatory environment for all individuals.

The organization will protect the confidentiality of individuals allegedly subjected to sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence and/or stalking to the extent practicable in light of the need to do investigations and conduct disciplinary proceedings.

Complaint Confidentiality Request

If a complainant discloses an incident to an MMW+C employee but wishes to maintain confidentiality or requests that no investigation into a particular incident be conducted or disciplinary action taken, the organization must weigh that request against its obligation to provide a safe, non-discriminatory environment for all students, including the complainant.

Due to the small size of the organization MMW+C does not provide any counselors who would maintain the complete confidentiality and anonymity of a complainant. If a complainant wishes to receive support while maintaining anonymity, they should contact support services outside of MMW+C. This website is a helpful starting point: <https://www.notalone.gov/students/>

If MMW+C honors the request for confidentiality, a complainant must understand that the organization's ability to meaningfully investigate the incident and pursue disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator(s) may be limited.

Although rare, there are times when the organization may not be able to honor a complainant's request in order to provide a safe, non-discriminatory environment for all.

MMW+C has designated a Title IX coordinator to evaluate requests for confidentiality once an employee is on notice of alleged sexual violence.

When weighing a complainant's request for confidentiality or that no investigation or discipline be pursued, the Title IX Coordinator will consider a range of factors, including the following:

- The increased risk that the alleged perpetrator will commit additional acts of sexual or other violence, such as:
 - whether there have been other sexual violence complaints about the same alleged perpetrator;
 - whether the alleged perpetrator has a history of arrests or records from a prior organization indicating a history of violence;
 - whether the alleged perpetrator threatened further sexual violence or other violence against the complainant or others;
 - whether the sexual violence was committed by multiple perpetrators;
- whether the sexual violence was perpetrated with a weapon;
- whether the complainant is a minor;
- whether the organization possesses other means to obtain relevant evidence of the sexual violence (e.g., security cameras or personnel, physical evidence);
- whether the complainant's report reveals a pattern of perpetration (e.g., via illicit use of drugs or alcohol) at a given location or by a particular group.

The presence of one or more of these factors could lead MMW+C to investigate and, if appropriate, pursue disciplinary action. If none of these factors is present, MMW+C will likely respect the complainant's request for confidentiality.

If MMW+C determines that it cannot maintain a complainant's confidentiality, MMW+C will inform the complainant prior to starting an investigation and will, to the extent possible, only share information with people responsible for handling the organization's response.

The organization will remain ever mindful of the complainant's well-being, and will take ongoing steps to protect the complainant from retaliation or harm and work with the complainant to create a safety plan. Retaliation against the complainant, whether by students or MMW+C employees, will not be tolerated. MMW+C will also:

- assist the complainant in accessing other available complainant advocacy, academic support, counseling, disability, health or mental health services, and legal assistance in the local area or in their place of residence.
- provide other security and support, which could include issuing a no-contact order, helping arrange a change of living or working arrangements or course schedules (including for the alleged perpetrator pending the outcome of an investigation) or adjustments for assignments or tests; and
- inform the complainant of the right to report a crime to local law enforcement – and provide the complainant with assistance if the complainant wishes to do so.

MMW+C may not require a complainant to participate in any investigation or disciplinary proceeding.

If MMW+C determines that it can respect a complainant's request for confidentiality, the organization will also take immediate action as necessary to protect and assist the complainant.

MMW+C's Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence are reviewed during the Policies & Procedures Orientation held in June of each year. MMW+C does not offer counseling services for complainants of sex offenses, but will assist individuals in seeking counseling for sex offenses in the local community.

Complainants residing in the organization housing, have the option to change their residency living situations after alleged sexual assault, if such changes are reasonably available.

FALSE REPORTS

MMW+C will not tolerate false allegations of incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence.

Complaints made in good faith that are found not to constitute sexual harassment or violence will not be considered false allegations. Any individual who knowingly, maliciously, or frivolously makes a false allegation of sexual harassment or sexual violence will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion or termination. Similarly, any party or witness who is later proven to have intentionally given false information during the course of an investigation or conduct process may be subject to disciplinary action.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

This procedure is intended to provide prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of harassment, sexual harassment and sexual violence by individuals.

MAKING A REPORT

1. **Individuals may submit a report via MMW+C's hotline at (802) 962-1465.**

The individual will be asked to leave a message and contact information (name, phone number, and email address), so MMW+C may follow up on the complaint. For messages left Monday-Friday, the call will be returned within 24 hours. Messages left over the weekend will be followed up on by Tuesday mid-day. All messages are transcribed and forwarded to the Title IX Coordinator(s) email.

2. Individuals are strongly encouraged to notify the Title IX Coordinator if they believe a violation of this nature have occurred. All others within the organization's community are also expected to report possible violations of this nature as soon as possible.

Title IX Coordinator

Jane Richardson, Business Manager

email: jrichardson@mainemedia.edu

office phone: 207.236.8581 x308, or cell phone: 207.691.3320

- a. If the complaint is against the Title IX Coordinator, the report should be made to the President. If there is a complaint against the President, the Chair of the Board should be notified of the complaint. In such cases, the Chair of the Board will handle the complaint and shall contact with an outside investigator to investigate the complaint.
 - b. Individuals also have the option to make a report of sexual violence to law enforcement, and will be assisted by the Title IX Coordinator in doing so, if desired.
3. Once a report is made, the Title IX Coordinator may take interim measures to ensure the safety of the individual and/or others. These interim measures will depend on the precise nature and circumstances of the complaint.
 4. When a complainant requests that their name or other identifiable information not be shared with the accused (hereinafter "respondent") or that no formal action be taken, the organization will balance this request with its obligations to provide a safe environment for all members of the organizations community

and to follow the principles of fundamental fairness that require notice and an opportunity to respond before any action is taken against a respondent. The organization will take reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the report consistent with the request for confidentiality or request not to pursue an investigation, but its ability to do so may be limited based on this request.

5. The Title IX Coordinator will inform the complainant in writing of the evidentiary standard (preponderance of the evidence), potential remedies and sanctions, and sources of counseling, advocacy and support.
6. If a report of misconduct under this policy indicates that there is a serious and/or continuing threat to the organizations community, the organization may institute an organization wide warning to protect the health or safety of the community. Such warnings will not include any identifying information about the complainant.
7. Individuals will not be retaliated against for making a complaint or participating in an investigation. Retaliation is illegal under state and federal laws and any retaliation will result in disciplinary measures.

Individuals are encouraged to utilize this complaint procedure. However, individuals are hereby notified that they also have the right to report complaints to the Maine Human Rights Commission, State House Station 51, Augusta, ME 04333 (telephone: 207-624-6290) and/or to the federal Office for Civil Rights, Regional Director, U.S. Department of Education, 5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02110-1491 (telephone: 617-289-0111).

B. Complaint Handling

1. The Title IX Coordinator or a designated qualified outside investigator shall meet with the complainant and make an initial assessment of the alleged conduct, including whether any interim measures and/or assistance to the complainant are necessary.
2. The Title IX Coordinator will inform the President that a complaint has been received.
3. If the complainant discloses the name of the alleged respondent, the Title IX Coordinator shall contact him/her to inform him/her that a complaint has been received. In this initial contact, the Title IX Coordinator may keep the name of the complainant confidential. The Title IX Coordinator will inform the complainant in writing of the complaint, the evidentiary standard (preponderance of the evidence), potential remedies and sanctions, and sources of counseling, advocacy and support.
 - a. If the respondent accepts responsibility for misconduct at this point, disciplinary action will be taken based on the facts and circumstances of the particular case.
4. If the respondent does not accept responsibility at this point, the complainant shall be advised of the following options for proceeding:
 - a. If the complainant chooses to pursue a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will personally investigate the complaint, or will obtain the services of an outside investigator to investigate the complaint.
 - b. The complainant may opt out of pursuing a formal complaint, but may still request an opportunity to communicate with the alleged respondent about the effects of the incident in question. This process will not involve mediation if the allegation concerns sexual violence, but it may involve an agreement between the complainant and the respondent about safety measures put in place. The Title IX Coordinator or an outside investigator will oversee this process. The complainant may end this informal process at any time and decide to utilize option (a).

The complainant may request that the organization take no action at all. In such cases, the Title IX Coordinator will assess whether the request for no action can be honored within the broader context of the organization's obligation to maintain a safe community. In making this assessment, the Title IX Coordinator will consider the likelihood that the incident will recur and/or put the larger community at risk and whether there have been other reports of misconduct under this policy naming the same alleged respondent.

HOW AN INVESTIGATION IS CONDUCTED.

The following process will be used when investigations are conducted.

1. The investigator will interview the complainant, the respondent and any other witnesses or individuals with pertinent information, including witnesses named by the complainant and respondent. The complainant and respondent may be accompanied by a supporter at their interviews. At the investigator's discretion, more than one interview may be conducted with individuals involved in the case.
2. The investigator will review any other relevant information, including information provided by the organization and/or law enforcement, as well as any physical evidence and relevant documents (including but not limited to social media posts, text messages, emails, etc.).
3. The investigator may conduct a site visit(s) as necessary.
4. The investigation will be deemed complete when the investigator determines that all available relevant information has been collected and questions explored.
5. The investigator will prepare an investigation report and submit it to the Title IX Coordinator (or the President, if the investigation was conducted by the Title IX Coordinator). The investigator will make factual findings using a preponderance of the evidence standard (more likely than not) whether the respondent committed one or more violations of this policy, and/or other Institute policies.
6. The investigation will be completed as soon as reasonably possible under all of the circumstances of the case, with a target of 60 days.
7. The complainant and the respondent will have an opportunity to review the investigation report. Within ten days of reviewing the report, the parties may submit personal impact statements of no more than five typed pages for review by the Title IX Coordinator and the President. The complainant and the respondent will also have an opportunity to meet with the Title IX Coordinator to discuss their views about the report, within the ten-day period for submitting personal impact statements.
8. The President will review the investigation report and the impact statements. The President may accept the investigation report or request that the investigator pursue additional information. If additional information is collected, the complainant and respondent will have an opportunity to review the revised report and amend their impact statements.
9. The President has the following options:
 - a. Accept the investigator's finding that the respondent is not responsible. The President has the discretion of implementing remedial measures even when there is a finding of not responsible.
 - b. Accept the investigator's finding that the respondent is responsible and determine appropriate disciplinary action and other remedial measures.
10. A copy of the President's decision will be provided to the complainant and respondent. The respondent will be fully informed of any sanctions. In cases of sexual violence, the complainant will also be fully informed of any sanctions. For other policy violations, the complainant will be informed only of those sanctions that directly relate to the complainant.
11. Investigations conducted under this policy and procedures are entirely administrative and are not considered legal proceedings. Neither party may audio or video record interviews or meetings.
12. The Title IX Coordinator will retain records of all reports, investigations and resolutions. Affirmative findings of responsibility are part of the individuals' formal records.
13. An individual who is found to have committed a criminal sex offense will be subject to disciplinary action, suspension, expulsion or termination from MMW+C.