Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 Compliance 2.74

The School Board of Sarasota County is committed to ensuring that no qualified individual with a disability is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any district program, service, or activity. This policy establishes the district's commitment to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and all other applicable federal and state laws.

This policy applies to students, employees, applicants for employment, parents and guardians, members of the public, contractors, vendors, and visitors participating in or accessing district programs, services, and facilities.

I. District ADA/Section 504 Coordinator

The District ADA/Section 504 Coordinator is the person designated by the Superintendent to oversee compliance, respond to accommodation requests, and address grievances. The contact information for the District's ADA/Section 504 Coordinator is included directly below.

ADA/Section 504 Coordinator

Department of Human Resources

1960 Landings Boulevard

Sarasota, FL 34231

(941) 927-9000

The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing the district's compliance with applicable federal and state disability laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator will receive and respond to requests for reasonable accommodations, modifications, and aids. The Coordinator will also provide guidance to schools and departments regarding disability-related obligations. Additionally, the Coordinator will oversee the district's ADA/Section 504 grievance process.

The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator may designate trained staff to assist with specific functions; however, overall responsibility for compliance shall remain with the designated Coordinator.

II. Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications

a. Students:

The district shall provide students with disabilities equal access to educational

programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and, where applicable, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Students may receive accommodations, services, or supports through an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a Section 504 Plan, or other ADA-required reasonable modifications, as appropriate.

Requests for accommodations that are not addressed through an IEP or Section 504 Plan shall be reviewed on an individual basis to determine whether a reasonable accommodation or modification is required by law. The district shall ensure that no student is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability.

b. Employees and Applicants:

The district shall provide reasonable accommodations to qualified employees and applicants with disabilities to enable them to perform the essential functions of their position or to participate in the application, hiring, or employment process, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the district or substantially alter the nature of the position.

Employees and applicants requesting accommodations shall work with the district through an interactive process to identify appropriate accommodations. Medical documentation may be requested when permitted by law and when necessary to evaluate the request.

The district shall not discriminate against or retaliate against any employee or applicant for requesting a reasonable accommodation or exercising rights under the ADA.

c. Members of the Public

Members of the public or other school visitors with disabilities shall be afforded equal access to the district's programs, services, activities, meetings, and facilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The district shall provide reasonable modifications, auxiliary aids, or services when necessary to ensure effective communication and access, unless doing so would substantially alter the nature of the program, service, or activity or result in an undue burden.

Members of the public seeking accommodations or modifications are encouraged to submit requests to the District's ADA/Section 504 Coordinator. Requests will be reviewed on an individual basis and addressed in a manner consistent with applicable law.

The District shall make reasonable efforts to provide accommodations for public meetings and district-sponsored events when requested in accordance with applicable law.

III. Facilities Accessibility

The district shall ensure that its facilities, programs, services, and activities are accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with applicable federal and state law. New construction and alterations shall comply with current ADA accessibility standards. For existing facilities, the district shall ensure that, when viewed in their entirety, programs and services are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. Where structural modifications are not required or feasible, the district may provide access through alternative methods or locations, provided that such alternatives afford equal opportunity to participate.

IV. Service Animals

Service animals shall be permitted in district facilities, programs, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Requirements and procedures regarding service animals are set forth in District Policy 3.48.

V. Grievance Procedures

The district shall maintain a grievance procedure for the prompt resolution of complaints under the ADA or Section 504. The grievance procedure shall be available to students, employees, parents, and members of the public and shall provide for appropriate notice, investigation, and resolution of complaints. Information regarding the grievance procedure, including how to file a complaint, can be found on the district website.

VI. Retaliation Prohibited

The district strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who requests an accommodation, files a complaint, participates in an investigation, or otherwise exercises rights protected under the ADA or Section 504. Retaliatory conduct is considered a serious violation of District policy and may result in disciplinary action.

VII. Training

The district will provide appropriate training to administrators and staff regarding their obligations under the ADA and Section 504.

VIII. Confidentiality

Information obtained in connection with disability-related accommodation requests shall be maintained in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements and state and federal law.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: **1001.41, 1001.42, F.S.**

LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED: **1000.05, 413.08, F.S.**

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended,

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

HISTORY:

ADOPTED: T B D

REVISION DATE(S):

FORMERLY: NEW

NOTES:

Refer to: