

CIVIL AND LEGAL RIGHTS

An employee's personal beliefs and activities, including religious, political, cultural, social, or other beliefs or activities, or lack thereof, shall not be grounds for disciplinary action against the employee, provided that the beliefs or activities do not violate law, Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) policy, or administrative regulation.

(cf. 4030 - Nondiscrimination in Employment)

(cf. 4119.21/4219.21/4319.21 - Professional Standards)

(cf. 4119.25/4219.25/4319.25 - Political Activities of Employees)

MCOE shall make no inquiry concerning the personal values, attitudes, and beliefs of MCOE employees or their sexual orientation or political or religious affiliations, beliefs, or opinions except when authorized by law. In addition, no MCOE employee shall be required to provide critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the employee has a familial relationship. However, MCOE reserves the right to access any publicly available information about any employee.

No employee shall be disciplined or retaliated against solely for acting to protect a student engaged in conduct authorized under Education Code (EC) 48907 or 48950.

When necessary to protect the health, welfare, or safety of students and staff, school officials may search MCOE property under an employee's control.

(cf. 3515 - Campus Security)

(cf. 4040 - Employee Use of Technology)

Whistleblower Protection

An employee shall have the right to disclose to the Monterey County Superintendent of Schools, Chief Human Resources Officer, an MCOE administrator, a member of the Monterey County Board of Education, or the Superintendent of Public Instruction any improper governmental activity by MCOE or an MCOE employee that violates state or federal law, is economically wasteful, or involves gross misconduct, incompetency, or inefficiency. When the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of state or federal statute or a violation of or noncompliance with a state or federal rule or regulation, he/she has the right to disclose such information to a government or law enforcement agency or to refuse to participate in any such activity. [EC 44112, 44113; Labor Code 1102.5]

The Chief Human Resources Officer shall prominently display in lettering larger than size 14 point type a list of employees' rights and responsibilities under the whistleblower laws, including the telephone number of the whistleblower hotline maintained by the office of the California Attorney General. [Labor Code 1102.8]

No employee shall use or attempt to use his/her official authority or influence to intimidate, threaten, coerce, or command another employee for the purpose of interfering with that employee's right to disclose improper governmental activity. [EC 44113]

(cf. 4118 - Suspension/Disciplinary Action)

(cf. 4218 - Dismissal/Suspension/Disciplinary Action)

An employee who has disclosed improper governmental activity and believes that he/she has subsequently been subjected to acts or attempted acts of reprisal shall file a written complaint in accordance with MCOE's complaint procedures. After filing a complaint with MCOE, the employee may also file a copy of the complaint with local law enforcement and/or seek civil law remedies against the supervisor or administrator who retaliated or attempted to retaliate against him/her, in accordance with EC 44114.

(cf. 1312.1 - Complaints Concerning District Employees)

(cf. 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures)

(cf. 4144/4244/4344 - Complaints)

Protection Against Liability

No employee shall be liable for harm caused by his/her act or omission when he/she is acting within the scope of employment or district responsibilities; when the employee's act or omission is in conformity with federal or state law, MCOE policy, or administrative regulation; or when the employee's act or omission is in furtherance of an effort to control, discipline, expel, or suspend a student or to maintain order or control in the classroom or school.

(cf. 9260 - Legal Protection)

The protection against liability shall not apply when:

1. The employee acted with willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, recklessness, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to rights or safety of the individual harmed.
2. The employee caused harm by operating a motor vehicle or other vehicle requiring license or insurance.
3. The employee was not properly licensed, if required, by state law for such activities.
4. The employee was found by a court to have violated a federal or state civil rights law.
5. The employee was under the influence of alcohol or any drug at the time of the misconduct.
6. The misconduct constituted a crime of violence pursuant to 18 United States Code (USC) 16 or an act of terrorism for which the employee has been convicted in a court.

7. The misconduct involved a sexual offense for which the employee has been convicted in a court.
8. The misconduct occurred during background investigations, or other actions, involved in the employee's hiring.