

Washington County School District Initial Investigation Questions

The initial interview with the complainant should address each of the following:

1. **What exactly happened?** It is important to get as exact as possible the words that were said, the gestures that were made, the way the complainant was touched, where the touch was located on the body, etc. This is no time for euphemisms or for avoiding the details.
2. **Where and when did it happen?** In the school, at a school related function, in the work place, during working time, after hours? How has it affected the work of the complainant? Have you noticed changes in habits, demeanor, and schoolwork?
3. **What was the context?** Was it intended as a joke? Was there a pattern of previous episodes? Was there a history of off color or inappropriate comments?
4. **Was there a prior relationship?** How long have the parties known each other? Is there a history of group or individual socializing? Is this a consensual relationship gone sour?
5. **Was the behavior unwelcome?** Was there a clear “NO”? (if it was a student, the NO is assumed) Was it apparent from the situation that the accused should have known the behavior was unwelcome? Has the complainant participated in or acquiesced to similar behavior in the past? What was said or done immediately before the incident? How were the parties dressed?
6. **Is corroboration available?** Did anyone else see or hear the incident? How can witnesses be reached? What would complainant expect them to say? Did the complainant talk about the incident with anyone else? Did the supervisor, teacher, or principal know about the incident, and if so, what, if anything, did he/she do? Are there relevant documents?
7. **If there is a significant gap?** (between the time of the alleged behavior and the report) What is the reason for the complaint being made at this time?
8. **Is there a pattern of incidents?** (that have gone unreported and /or uncorrected) Has this or something similar happened before? Was it reported? What was done? Has the complainant witnessed similar behavior by the accused toward another employee or been told of a similar incident by another employee? (Who, What, When, Where?)
9. **What does the complainant want?** What would the ideal outcome be? What are the complainant’s expectations?
10. **Ask supplemental questions!** (fill in the gaps for information)
11. **Ask for background information!** Job title, work history, school history, related home issues, etc. (Background information may become primary information in the investigation.)