Bullying and Harassment are against federal, state, and local policy, and are not tolerated by the Fayette County Board of Education. The board is committed to providing a safe, disciplined, learning environment that empowers all students to develop their full potential. Additionally, the board is committed to the principle that all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the board has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce or eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment of students, staff, and/or volunteers who have direct contact with students will not be tolerated in the school or district.

School employees, volunteers, parents, or guardians, and students will assist with the enforcement of this policy, including, but not limited to assisting with educational and preventative measures, reporting, and investigations of bullying and harassment.

1. **Bullying, Intimidation, Violence, and Threats of Violence Prohibited**

No student shall engage in nor should any be subjected to bullying, violence, threats of violence, or intimidation by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics set forth in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions as specified in the *Code of Student Conduct* subject to the investigating school administrator’s authority and decision. (See pages 17 - 21 STUDENT CONDUCT - Classification of Violation. - CLASS I - CLASS II - CLASS III.)

1. **Definitions**

In this policy, these terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) “Bullying” means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior on or off of school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to, cyberbullying or written, electronic, verbal or physical actions that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics contained in this policy. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:

* Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
* Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student.
* Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school.
* Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function.
* Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

(b) “Hostile environment” means the perception by an affected student that the conduct of another student constitutes a threat of violence or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person under the circumstances would agree that the conduct constitutes bullying, threat of assault, or assault.

(c)“Violence” means the unjustified infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.

(d) “Threat” means a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action to cause fear of harm. The intention may be communicated through an electronic, written, verbal, or physical act to cause fear, mental distress, or interference in the school environment. The intention may be expressly stated or implied and the person communicating the threat has the ability to carry out the threat.

(e) “Threat of violence” means an unjustified expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student.

(f) “Intimidation” means an unjustified threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student..

(g) “Student” as used in this policy means a student who is enrolled in the Fayette County School District.

**3**. **Description of Behavior Expected of Students**

1. Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, dignity and comply with the *Code of Student Conduct*. Students are expected and required: (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting bullying, violence, or intimidation; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student; and (3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristics of the student that is identified in this policy.
2. Bullying, intimidation, violence, threats of violence, are prohibited and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences and/or sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the student:

* Race
* Sex
* Religion
* National origin
* Disability

1. **Consequences for Violations**

A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the *Fayette County Code of Student Conduct* or any rule or standard adopted under authority of this policy. When a student has committed two acts of bullying as documented by the school administrator(s), the parents will be notified and a phone or in-person conference will be held between the principal/assistant principal and the parent. The principal may ask other staff members to participate in the conference, if needed.

1. **Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedures**
2. Complaints alleging violations of this policy must be made ona *Fayette County Schools Complaint Form* available in the *Code of Student Conduct* on the county website*,* or at the school’s office.The complaint must be delivered to the principal or the principal’s designee either by mail or personal delivery. Incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally.
3. Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal’s designee will determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal’s designee determines that the complaint alleges a serious violation, the principal or the principal’s designee will undertake a reasonably prompt investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence taking into account the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violation(s) may also be imposed by the principal or school system.
4. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the *Code of Student Conduct*. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*.

1. **Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms**

This policy and any procedures, rules, and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be posted on the district website at *fayette.k12.al.us* under Departments - Prevention and Support - Bullying. The policy and complaint form will also be posted on each school website. The policy and complaint form shall also be made available hard copy at the central office and at each of the six schools (in the office). Reference to the Bullying Policy and Complaint Form shall be included in information sent out to parents at the beginning of the school year AND included in the information given to a new student upon enrollment. Staff members will receive training on this policy and the complaint form at the beginning of school.

**Common Forms of Bullying**

[Please note that this is not intended to constitute an exhaustive list.]

**Verbal Bullying**

Teasing

Name-calling

Inappropriate sexual comments

Taunting

Threatening to cause harm

Degrading language

Other pervasive, ongoing pattern intended to intimidate, harass or shame a student

**Social Bullying**

Exclusion – intentionally excluding a student

Social Isolation

Telling other students not to be friends with someone

Spreading rumors about someone

Embarrassing someone in public

Other pervasive, ongoing pattern intended to intimidate, harass or shame a student

**Physical Bullying** – the victim’s personal boundaries are violated

Hitting/kicking/pinching

Spitting

Tripping/pushing

Taking or breaking someone’s things

Making mean or rude hand gestures

Other pervasive, ongoing pattern intended to intimidate, harass or shame a student

**Cyberbullying**

Intimidating text messages or emails

Rumors by email or social networking sites

Embarrassing pictures and videos

Trolling

Other pervasive, ongoing pattern intended to intimidate, harass or shame a student