

BULLYING AND TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

The Board of Education promotes a safe and secure school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying and/or teen dating violence behavior. Therefore it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying and/or teen dating violence of a student by another student is prohibited.

The Board believes that a school environment in which students feel safe, supported, engaged and helpfully challenged is optimal for learning and healthy development. The Board seeks an environment in which students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe; an environment that is free of harassment, intimidation and bullying and/or teen dating violence.

“Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property;
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school;
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical development or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or its perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)*

“Cyberbullying” means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

“Teen Dating Violence” means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or have been recently in a dating relationship.”

BULLYING AND TEEN DATING VIOLENCE (continued...)

“Mobile electronic device” means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

“Electronic communication” means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

“Hostile environment” means a situation in which bullying and/or teen dating violence among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate.

“Outside of the school setting” means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education.

“School employee” means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional, or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.

“School climate” means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults, and reflects norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. repeated physical violence and attacks
2. repeated verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
3. repeated threats and intimidation
4. repeated extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
5. repeated exclusion from peer groups within the school
6. repeated misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school (“cyberbullying”)
7. repeated targeting of a student based on the student’s actual or perceived “differentiating” characteristics such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

BULLYING AND TEEN DATING VIOLENCE (continued...)

Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and, therefore, bullying and/or teen dating violence is not acceptable behavior in this district and is prohibited.

Students who engage in any act of bullying or teen dating violence on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying or teen dating violence:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

A comprehensive program, to improve the school climate, involving everyone in the schools and the community, to address bullying and teen dating violence at all school levels is essential to reducing incidences of bullying and teen dating violence. Such a program must involve interventions at all levels, school-wide, classroom and individual.

The District's Program:

1. Requires the development and implementation of a safe school climate plan by the Board of Education to address the existence of bullying and/or teen dating violence in its schools.
2. Permits anonymous verbal or written reports of bullying or teen dating violence by students to school employees and written reports of suspected bullying or teen dating violence by parents or guardians;
3. Requires school employees who witness acts of bullying or teen dating violence or receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence to orally notify the safe school climate specialist or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying or teen dating violence, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such an oral report;
4. Requires the Principal or his/her designee, and safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and/or teen dating violence and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report;
5. Requires the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;

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6. Requires each school to have prevention and intervention strategies, as defined by statute, as amended, for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence, including language about bullying and teen dating violence in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;
7. Provides for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying and teen dating violence;
8. Requires each school to notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying or teen dating violence not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and to the other parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying and teen dating violence;
9. Requires each school to invite the parents or guardians of the student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
10. Establishes a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying or teen dating violence in such school and make such list publicly available, and report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
11. Requires the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents and teen dating violence by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
12. Prohibits discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence;
13. Requires the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
14. Requires the principal of a school or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal or the principal's designee believes that any acts of bullying or teen dating violence constitute criminal conduct;

BULLYING AND TEEN DATING VIOLENCE (continued...)

15. Prohibits bullying and teen dating violence (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device, owned, leased or used the by local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying or teen dating violence (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
16. Requires, at the beginning of each school year, for each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and
17. Requires all school employees to annually complete the training required by C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended. Such training shall include identifying and responding to bullying and teen dating violence and preventing and responding to youth suicide.

Note: *Certified employees are required to complete annual training on the prevention and identification of bullying and teen dating violence and response to bullying and teen dating violence the prevention and response to youth suicide.*

The State Department of Education, within available appropriations, is required to provide annual training to non-certified school employees.

18. Requires students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make reports of bullying or teen dating violence;
19. As required, but not later than January 1, 2012, the Board of Education shall approve the safe school climate plan developed pursuant to the statute and submit such plan to the Department of Education for its review, analysis, and cooperative assistance; and
20. Requires that not later than thirty calendar days after approval by the Board, the safe school climate plan shall be made available on the Board's and each individual school in the District's Internet website and such plan is to be included in the District's publication of the rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

The Board expects prompt and reasonable investigations of alleged acts of bullying or teen dating violence. The safe school climate specialist, principal, or their designee, of each school or is responsible for handling all complaints of alleged bullying or teen dating violence. The safe climate specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying or teen dating violence promptly.

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In addition, the norms that are established by adults through consistent enforcement of all policies pertaining to conduct and modeling appropriate behavior at school and at home will reduce the instances and damage of bullying or teen dating violence. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that is accepted and encouraged.

Prevention and Intervention Strategy

The District shall implement, as required by C.G.S. 10-222d, as amended, a prevention and intervention strategy which may include, but is not limited to:

1. Implementation of positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence identified by the Department of Education.
2. School rules prohibiting bullying and teen date violence, harassment, and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts.
3. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom, and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence is likely to occur.
4. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in seventh through twelfth grade.
5. Individual interventions with the bully or perpetrator of teen dating violence, parents; and school employees and prevention strategies with the bullied child, victim of teen dating violence, parents; and the school employees.
6. School wide training related to safe school climate.
7. Student peer training, education and support.
8. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying and teen dating violence prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings, and individual interventions.

District Safe School Climate Coordinator

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent of Schools shall appoint, from among existing District staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Coordinator shall:

1. Implement the District's safe school climate plan;
2. Collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying and teen dating violence in District schools;

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3. Provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education; and
4. Meet with the safe school climate specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss bullying or teen dating violence issues in the District and make recommended changes to the District's safe school climate plan.
5. Successfully complete, for the school year commencing July 1, 2014, the mental health first aid training provided by the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services. (Such training only required once.)

Safe School Climate Specialist

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each school Principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist for the school.

The Specialist working with the Principal or their designee **in each school shall:**

1. Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying or teen dating violence in the school in accordance with the District's Safe School Climate Plan;
2. Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying or teen dating violence in the school; and
3. Acts as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying or teen dating violence reports in the school.

Safe School Climate Committee

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Principal of each District school shall establish a new committee or designate at least one existing committee that is responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying and teen dating violence in the school. The committee must include at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, appointed by the Principal.

The Safe School Climate Committee shall:

1. Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying or teen dating violence;
2. Identify and address patterns of bullying or teen dating violence among students in the school;

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3. Implement the provisions of the school security and safety plan, (developed pursuant to Section 87 or PA 13-3) regarding the collection, evaluation and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying (defined in Connecticut General Statutes 10-222d) or teen dating violence and report such information, as necessary, to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator and to the District's Security and Safety Committee;
4. Review and amend school policies relating to bullying and teen dating violence;
5. Review and make recommendation to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the District's Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
6. Educate students, school employees and parents and guardians of students on issues related to bullying and teen dating violence;
7. Collaborate with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying and teen dating violence; and
8. Perform any other duties as determined by the School Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and/or teen dating violence for the school.

Parent members of the Safe School Climate Committee are excluded from activities #1 and #3 above and from any other committee activities that may compromise student confidentiality.

Safe School Climate Plan

The Board of Education shall develop and implement at Safe School Climate Plan to address the existence of bullying and/or teen dating violence in its schools. Such plan shall:

1. Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees and require students and the parents or guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make such reports;
2. Enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying or teen dating violence;
3. Require school employees who witness acts of bullying or teen dating violence or receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence to orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist, or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying or teen dating violence, and to file a written report not later than two school days after make such oral report;

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4. Require the Safe School Climate Specialist working together with the Principal or their designee to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying or teen dating violence and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this section;
5. Require the Safe School Climate Specialist working together with the Principal or their designee to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
6. Include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying or teen dating violence;
7. Provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying and teen dating violence;
8. Require each school to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation. The required notification and invitation shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
9. Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
10. Establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education, and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
11. Direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying or teen dating violence incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
12. Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence;

BULLYING AND TEEN DATING VIOLENCE (continued...)

13. Direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such student against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
14. Require the Principal of a school, or the Principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such Principal, or the Principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying or teen dating violence constitute criminal conduct;
15. Prohibit bullying or teen dating violence (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying or teen dating violence (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
16. Require, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's Safe School Climate Plan; and
17. Require that all school employees annually complete the training described in C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended.

Safe School Climate Assessment

The Board requires each school in the District, on or after July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, to complete an assessment using school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the Department of Education pursuant to C.G.S. 10-22h, as amended by PA 11-~~XX~~ 232. The Board will collect the school climate assessments of each District school and submit them to the Department of Education.

The Superintendent shall develop rules and procedures, which carry out the provisions of this policy. In addition, the Superintendent shall provide that students and parents of students are notified of this prohibition against bullying and teen dating violence and the penalties for violating the prohibition by ensuring the posting of such information at each school and by ensuring inclusion of such information in student and parent handbooks.

BULLYING AND TEEN DATING VIOLENCE (continued...)

This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is protected by state or federal law.

- (cf. 0521 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 4131 – Staff Development)
- (cf. 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)
- (cf. 5131 – Conduct)
- (cf. 5131.21 – Violent and Aggressive Behavior)
- (cf. 5131.8 – Out-of-School Misconduct)
- (cf. 5131.912 – Aggressive Behavior)
- (cf. 5131.913 – Cyberbullying)
- (cf. 5131.91 – Hazing)
- (cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
- (cf. 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 6121 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 6121.1 – Equal Educational Opportunity)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-15b Access of parent or guardian to student’s records. Inspection, and subpoena of school or student records.
10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160 and PA 11-232.
PA 06-115 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in Schools and Notices Sent to Parents or Legal Guardians
PA 11-232 An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws.
PA 13-3 An Act Concerning Gun Violence Protection and Safety

Regional School District No. 7
REPORT OF SUSPECTED BULLYING
AND TEEN DATING VIOLENCE BEHAVIORS

Name of person completing report: _____

Date: _____

Relationship of Reporter to Target (self, parent, teacher, peer, etc): _____

Complaint Filed Against: _____

Date of Incident: _____

Location: _____ Time: _____

Briefly summarize the problem as you see it. Describe any relevant background information, the incident itself, participants, and your attempts to resolve the matter. Include relevant dates, times and places.

Provide contact information of any witnesses who can provide more information about the complaint:

Name	Address	Phone Number

Have there been previous incidents: Yes No

If yes, briefly describe the behavior of concern, approximate dates and location:

Were these incidents reported to administration? Yes No

If yes, who received the report?

Was the report given orally or was it provided in writing?

Proposed Solution:

What outcome would you like to see to improve this situation?

I certify that the information contained in this report is accurately described, to the best of my knowledge:

Signature of Complainant Received	Date Submitted	Received by	Date
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Please refer to **Board of Education Policy 5131.911 for the Regional School District No. 7 Safe School Climate Plan.*

***Definition of Bullying:** “Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to a student or damage to student’s property,
- places student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- creates a hostile environment at school for student,
- infringes on the rights of student at school, or
- substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical development or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or its perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)*

***Definition of Teen Dating Violence:** “Teen Dating Violence” means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or have been recently in a dating relationship.”

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Has reporter requested anonymity? Yes No

Does the school have parent/guardian consent to disclose the student's name in connection with the investigation? Yes No

Administrative Investigation Notes:

Is bullying or teen dating violence verified? Yes No

Remedial Action Taken:

If bullying or teen dating violence is verified, notify parents of students involved:

Parents' Name _____ Date Notified _____

Parents' Name _____ Date Notified _____

Parents' Name _____ Date Notified _____

Parents' Name _____ Date Notified _____

If bullying or teen dating violence is verified, has invitation to meet gone home to the parents of students involved?

Parents' Name _____ Date Sent _____

Parents' Name _____ Date Sent _____

Parents' Name _____ Date Sent _____

Parents' Name _____ Date Sent _____

Dates of parent meetings: _____

If bullying or teen dating violence was verified, has the school developed a student safety support and/or intervention plan? Yes No

*****Attach bullying or teen dating violence complaint, witness statements and notifications to parents of students involved if bullying or teen dating violence is verified, invitations to parent meetings and records of parent meetings.***

Regional School District No. 7
Report of Bullying or Teen Dating Violence
Consent to Release Student Information

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

School: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

A complaint has been filed on behalf of your child alleging that he/she has been a victim of (Bullying) or (Teen Dating Violence). In order to facilitate a prompt and thorough investigation of the complaint, Regional School District No. 7 may need to disclose the name of your child and/or any other information that may otherwise identify your child's identity.

Please Check One:

_____ I hereby grant permission for Regional School District No. 7 to disclose my child's name, along with any other information necessary to permit the district to adequately and appropriately investigate such a complaint, to their parties contacted by the district as part of its investigation.

_____ I do **NOT** grant permission for Regional School District No. 7 to disclose my child's name, along with any other information necessary to permit the district to adequately and appropriately investigate such a complaint, to their parties contacted by the district as part of its investigation.

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Name (please print)