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**RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**BULLYING PROHIBITION POLICY**

**I. PURPOSE**

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, is conduct that interferes with students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to educate students in a safe environment. The school district cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under the direct supervision of school personnel. However, to the extent such conduct affects the educational environment of the school district and the rights and welfare of its students and is within the control of the school district in its normal operations, it is the school district's intent to prevent bullying and to take action to investigate, respond, remediate, and discipline those acts of bullying which have not been successfully prevented. The purpose of this policy is to assist the school district in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, and other similar disruptive behavior.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

For purposes of this policy, the definitions included in this section apply.

- A. "Bullying" means repeated behavior by a student or a group of students that is intended to cause or is perceived as causing another student or a group of students to feel frightened, threatened, intimidated, humiliated, shamed, disgraced, ostracized, or physically abused. The bullying that is addressed in this policy is that which substantially interferes with the targeted student's or students' educational benefits, opportunities, or performance. Bullying implies an imbalance in real or perceived physical, social or psychological power. Bullying can occur via physical, verbal, social/relational, electronic or other forms of interactions or communication. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, repeated conduct by a student against another student or a group of students that a reasonable person under the circumstances knows or should know has the effect of:
1. Hurting another physically by hitting, kicking, tripping, or pushing;
  2. Stealing or damaging another person's property;
  3. Ganging up on another person;

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4. Teasing another person in a hurtful way;
5. Calling another person hurtful names;
6. Using put-downs, such as insulting another person's race, making fun of another person because of their characteristics related to gender, or denigrating another person for other personal characteristics;
7. Isolating a person;
8. Spreading rumors or untruths about another person.
9. Intimidating a student or group of students.

B. "Cyberbullying" means bullying using technology or other electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of a sign, signal, writing, image, sound, or data, including a post on a social network internet web site or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device.

C. "Immediately" means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.

D. "On school district property or at school-related functions" means all school district buildings, school grounds, and school property or property immediately adjacent to school grounds, school bus stops, school buses, school vehicles, school contracted vehicles, or any other vehicles approved for school district purposes, the area of entrance or departure from school grounds, premises, or events, and all school-related functions, school-sponsored activities, events, or trips. School district property also may mean a student's walking route to or from school for purposes of attending school or school-related functions, activities, or events. While prohibiting bullying at these locations and events, the school district does not represent that it will provide supervision or assume liability at these locations and events.

### **III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

A. An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school district property or at school-related functions. This policy applies not only to students who directly engage in an act of bullying but also to students who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another student's act of bullying. This policy also applies to any student whose conduct at any time or in any place constitutes bullying that interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school district or the

1 safety or welfare of the student, other students, or employees. The  
2 misuse of technology including, but not limited to, teasing,  
3 intimidating, defaming, threatening, or terrorizing another student,  
4 teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of  
5 the school district by sending or posting e-mail messages, instant  
6 messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website  
7 postings, including blogs, also may constitute an act of bullying  
8 regardless of whether such acts are committed on or off school  
9 district property and/or with or without the use of school district  
10 resources.

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12 B. No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee  
13 of the school district shall permit, condone, or tolerate bullying.

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15 C. Apparent permission or consent by a student being bullied does not  
16 lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

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18 D. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of  
19 bullying is prohibited.

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21 E. False accusations or reports of bullying against another student are  
22 prohibited.

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24 F. A person who engages in an act of bullying, reprisal, or false  
25 reporting of bullying or permits, condones, or tolerates bullying  
26 maybe subject to discipline for that act in accordance with school  
27 district's policies and procedures. The school district may take into  
28 account the following factors in determining whether discipline is  
29 required and if so, the type and extent of discipline:

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31 1. The developmental and maturity levels of the parties  
32 involved;

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34 2. The levels of harm, surrounding circumstances, and nature  
35 of the behavior;

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37 3. Past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior;

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39 4. The relationship between the parties involved; and

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41 5. The context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

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43 Consequences for students who commit prohibited acts of bullying  
44 may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and  
45 including suspension and/or expulsion. Consequences for  
46 employees who permit, condone, or tolerate bullying or engage in  
47 an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of bullying may result  
48 in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge.  
49 Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of  
50 bullying may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school

- 1 district property and events and/or termination of services and/or  
2 contracts.  
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4 G. The school district will act to investigate all complaints of bullying  
5 and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student,  
6 teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of  
7 the school district who is found to have violated this policy.  
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12 **IV. REPORTING PROCEDURE**  
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- 14 A. Any person who believes they have been the victim of bullying or  
15 any other person (e.g. witness, parent, colleague) with knowledge  
16 or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying is encouraged to  
17 report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school district  
18 official designated by this policy. A person may report conduct they  
19 believe to be bullying even if more than 24 hours have passed. A  
20 person may report bullying anonymously. However, the school  
21 district's ability to take action against an alleged bully based solely  
22 on an anonymous report may be limited.  
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24 B. The school district encourages the reporting party or complainant  
25 to use the report form available from the principal of each building  
26 or available from the school district office, but oral reports shall be  
27 considered complaints as well.  
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29 C. The building principal, the principal's designee, or the building  
30 supervisor (hereinafter Building Report Taker) is the person  
31 responsible for receiving reports of bullying at the building level.  
32 Any person may report bullying directly to a school district human  
33 rights officer or the superintendent. If the complaint involves the  
34 Building Report Taker, the complaint shall be made or filed directly  
35 with the superintendent or the school district human rights officer  
36 by the reporting party or complainant.  
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38 D. A teacher, school administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other  
39 school employee shall be particularly alert to possible situations,  
40 circumstances, or events that might include bullying. Any such  
41 person who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge  
42 or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall inform the  
43 Building Report Taker immediately. School district personnel who  
44 fail to inform the Building Report Taker of conduct that may  
45 constitute bullying in a timely manner may be subject to disciplinary  
46 action.  
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48 E. Reports of bullying are classified as private educational and/or  
49 personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be  
50 disclosed except as permitted by law.

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- F. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying will not affect the complainant's or reporter's future employment, grades, or work assignments, or educational or work environment.
- G. The school district will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school district's obligation to investigate, take appropriate action, and comply with any legal disclosure obligations.

**V. STAFF EXPECTATIONS**

Teachers and staff at Richfield Public Schools are expected to take the following actions in order to prevent bullying and help students feel safe at school:

- A. Closely supervise students in all areas of the school and playground;
- B. Watch for signs of bullying and stop it when it happens;
- C. Respond quickly and sensitively to bullying reports using an appropriate response process;
- D. Report bullying to the Building Report Taker;
- E. Notify the Building Report Taker when efforts to address the bullying prove unsuccessful;
- F. Help create a school culture of respect and kindness by modeling and fostering these traits.

**VI. INVESTIGATION**

- A. Upon receipt of a complaint or report of bullying, the school district shall undertake or authorize an investigation by school district officials or a third party designated by the school district within three school days of the report. This process is overseen by the Building Report Taker.
- B. The Building Report Taker may take immediate steps, at their discretion, to protect the complainant, reporter, students, or others pending completion of an investigation of bullying, consistent with applicable law.

**VII. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION**

- A. Upon completion of the investigation, the school district will take

1 appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to,  
2 warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation,  
3 termination, or discharge. The primary purpose of such action is to  
4 protect the student(s) who have been the target of bullying behavior  
5 and to deter the prohibited behavior in the future. School district  
6 action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the  
7 requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements;  
8 applicable statutory authority, including the Minnesota Pupil Fair  
9 Dismissal Act; school district policies; and regulations.

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11 B. The school district is not authorized to disclose to a victim private  
12 educational or personnel data regarding an alleged bully who is a  
13 student or employee of the school district. School officials will  
14 notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students involved in a bullying  
15 incident of the incident and of action taken, to the extent permitted  
16 by law.

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18 C. Referral to Professional School Support Staff. A student who  
19 violates this policy may be asked to meet with a school counselor  
20 or other staff to work on positive behavioral interventions to help  
21 prevent future violations.

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23 D. Referral to available community resources. The involved students  
24 and their parents will be given references to community resources  
25 and support, as it is appropriate.

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27 E. Individualized Education Plans or Section 504 Plans may address  
28 the skills and proficiencies needed for students with disabilities to  
29 engage in positive behaviors and respond appropriately to  
30 prohibited conduct.

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32 F. Staff Consequences. A Richfield Public School employee who fails  
33 to immediately and appropriately address bullying may be asked to  
34 participate in additional staff training, may be mentored, or may be  
35 disciplined. A staff member's repeated failure to address bullying  
36 behavior may result in discipline up to and including termination or  
37 discharge.

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39 **VIII. REPRISAL**

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41 The school district will discipline or take appropriate action against any  
42 student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee  
43 of the school district who retaliates against any person who makes a good  
44 faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists,  
45 or participates in an investigation, or against any person who testifies,  
46 assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying.  
47 Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal,  
48 harassment, or intentional disparate treatment.

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50 **IX. TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

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- A. The school district annually will provide information and any applicable training to school district staff regarding this policy.
- B. The school district annually will provide education and information to students regarding bullying, including information regarding this school district policy prohibiting bullying, appropriate reporting procedures for reporting bullying, the harmful effects of bullying, and other applicable initiatives to prevent bullying.
- C. The administration of the school district is directed to implement programs and other initiatives to prevent bullying, to respond to bullying in a manner that does not stigmatize the victim, and to make resources or referrals to resources available to victims of bullying.
- D. The school district may implement violence prevention and character development education programs to prevent and reduce policy violations. Such programs may offer instruction on character education including, but not limited to, character qualities such as attentiveness, truthfulness, respect for authority, diligence, gratefulness, self-discipline, patience, forgiveness, respect for others, peacemaking, and resourcefulness.

**X. NOTICE**

The school district will give annual notice of this policy to students, parents or guardians, and staff, and this policy shall appear in the student handbook.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 120B.232 (Character Development Education)  
Minn. Stat. § 121A.03 (Sexual, Religious and Racial Harassment and Violence)  
Minn. Stat. § 121A.0695 (School Board Policy; Prohibiting Intimidation and Bullying)  
Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)  
Minn. Stat. § 121A.69 (Hazing Policy)  
Minn. Stat. §121A.031 (School Student Bullying Policy)

**Cross References:** Policy 103 (Racial, Religious and Sexual Harassment and Violence)  
Policy 108 (Hazing Prohibition)  
Policy 111 (Weapons on School Premises)  
Policy 409 (Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse)  
Policy 410 (Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults)  
Policy 505 (Student Disability Nondiscrimination)

- 1 Policy 506 (Student Sex Nondiscrimination)
- 2 Policy 541 (Student Behavior)
- 3 Policy 581 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)
- 4 Policy 582 (Staff Notification of Violent Behavior by
- 5 Students)
- 6 Policy 742 (Student Transportation Services)
- 7 Policy 783 (Video Surveillance)
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10 RATIFIED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION: July 16, 2007

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12 REVISED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION: September 4, 2007; August 18,

13 2014; January 19, 2021

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15 REVIEWED AND REAFFIRMED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION: August 16,

16 2021