

# **BULLYING, HARRASSMENT OR INTIMIDATION**

**Regulation SS - 23**

**Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying**

**September, 2015**

## **I. Purpose and Introduction**

- A. To establish the basic structure for maintaining a safe, positive environment within the Beaufort County School District ("BCSD") for students and staff that is free from harassment, intimidation or bullying.
- B. The BCSD believes that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards.
- C. Harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Accordingly, the BCSD prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying on school property, at BCSD or school sponsored functions, on school buses or other BCSD vehicles and at school bus stops.
- D. The BCSD expects students to conduct themselves at all times in an orderly, courteous and dignified manner and to respect the rights and welfare of other students, school staff members, parents/legal guardians and volunteers.

## **II. Definitions**

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" is defined as

- A. a gesture, an electronic communication or a written, verbal, physical or sexual act that a reasonable person should know will have the effect of either of the following: A. harming another person, physically or emotionally or damaging another person's property or placing a student in reasonable fear of personal harm or damage to his/her property.
- B. insulting or demeaning a student or group of persons in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in or substantial interference with the orderly operation of the school.

## **III. Reporting**

- A. Anyone who feels he/she has been subject to harassment, intimidation or bullying is encouraged to notify the Principal, an Assistant Principal or other school official. Such a notification may also be made by a student's parent/legal guardian. If a BCSD employee, other than the Principal or an Assistant Principal receives a complaint of harassment, intimidation or bullying or observes any behavior which could amount to harassment, intimidation or bullying, the employee must notify the school Principal or an Assistant Principal as soon as practicable under the circumstances. A Principal or Assistant Principal who receives a complaint regarding harassment, intimidation or bullying, whether from a student, Parent/Guardian, employee or otherwise, or witnesses such shall investigate and respond appropriately.
- B. Although reports by students or employees may be made anonymously, formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- C. The BCSD will be responsible for ensuring that reasonable efforts are made to prevent public disclosure of the names of all parties involved in harassment, intimidation or bullying allegations, except to the extent necessary to carry out an investigation, enforce the Student Code of Conduct, and comply with statutory obligations.

## **IV. Investigations**

All complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and confidentially. The investigation will include appropriate steps to determine what occurred and to take actions reasonably calculated to end the harassment, intimidation or bullying and prevent such misconduct from occurring again. The student and his/her parent/legal guardians will be informed that appropriate actions were taken and will be advised how to report any subsequent problems.

**V. Consequences for Engaging in Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying**

- A. If the investigation determines that harassment, intimidation or bullying has occurred, the school Principal or Assistant Principal will take reasonable, timely, age-appropriate and effective corrective action in accordance with Administrative Regulation SS-18, Student Code of Conduct. Examples of corrective action include, but are not limited to, disciplinary action against the aggressor, up to and including termination of an employee or expulsion of a student, special training or other interventions, apologies, dissemination of statements that the school does not tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying, independent reassessment of student work, and/or tutoring.
- B. Individuals, including students, employees, parents/legal guardians and volunteers, may also be referred to law enforcement officials. The BCSD will take other appropriate steps in an attempt to correct or rectify the situation.

**VI. Consequences for Retaliation or False Accusations**

The BCSD prohibits retaliation or reprisal in any form against a student or employee who has filed a complaint or report of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The BCSD also prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for such conduct will be determined by the Principal and/or an Assistant Principal and may range from positive behavioral interventions to disciplinary actions, up to and including suspension or expulsion for students and termination for employees.

**VII. Notification to Students and Distribution of District Expectations**

The school Principal annually will ensure that appropriate staff members review this Administrative Regulation regarding harassment, intimidation and bullying with all students. Information on these topics should be shared in an age-appropriate manner and may occur during student assemblies, in the classroom setting or in group or individual sessions with a School Counselor or school resource officer.

**VIII. Notification to School Staff**

Annually, each school Principal shall review this Administrative Regulation with his/her school staff and faculty. Further, this policy shall be made available to all staff members, students and parents/legal guardians along with a statement explaining its applicability to all acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying occurring on school property, at district or school sponsored functions, on school buses or other district vehicles and at school bus stops.

Adopted: July 18, 2001

Revised: July, 2010; September, 2015

Legal references:

- A. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:
  - 1. Section 16-3-510 - Organizations and entities revised.
  - 2. Section 59-19-90 - General powers and duties of school trustees.
  - 3. Sections 59-63-210 through 270 - Grounds for which trustees may expel, suspend or transfer pupils; petition for
  - 4. readmission; notices and parent conferences; expulsion for remainder of year and hearings; transfer of pupils;
  - 5. corporal punishment; regulation or prohibition of clubs or like activities.
  - 6. Section 59-63-275 - Student hazing prohibited.
  - 7. Section 59-67-240 - Other duties of bus driver; discipline of students for misconduct.
  - 8. Section 59-63-110, et. seq. - Safe School Climate Act.
- B. State Board of Education Regulations:
  - 1. R-43-279 - Minimum standards of student conduct and disciplinary enforcement procedures to be implemented by local school districts.