

BULLYING PREVENTION AND EDUCATION: PUBLICATIONS, REPORTING, AND INVESTIGATIONS

The Board of Education prohibits bullying, retaliation, and reporting bullying in bad faith as defined in policy JICDE, Bullying Prevention and Education.

Publication to Students and Parents

To ensure notification to students and parents, student handbooks will contain a statement incorporating the definition of bullying as set forth in Board Policy JICDE and a statement of how and where parents and students can access a copy of the policy. Handbooks will also state that any person found to have engaged in bullying, retaliation against anyone participating in an investigation of alleged bullying or any related disciplinary proceeding, or reporting bullying in bad faith as further defined in Board policy JICDE, will be subject to disciplinary action.

In addition, each student handbook will provide information regarding the procedures a student who believes they have been the target of bullying or retaliation (or any other person, including parents/guardians on behalf of a target of bullying) may use to report the matter, orally or in writing, to any teacher, counselor, or member of the school administration. JICDE-E-1, Bullying Report Form, is available to support reporting of incidents of alleged bullying. Reports of bullying may also be made through Safe2Tell. These procedures will provide that any person, including the student targeted by the alleged bullying or the student's parents/guardians, may anonymously report acts of bullying or retaliation to teachers, counselors, and administrators.

Informing Staff

Building principals will be responsible for informing teachers and other school staff of their responsibility to report to administrators any acts of bullying or retaliation they witness or any reports of bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE they receive. Information provided to teachers and staff will include a requirement that acts and reports of bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE be reported to administrators as soon as possible, but in no event later than twenty-four hours after the teacher or other staff member witnessed or received a report of any act of bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE. Teachers and other staff will be advised that they are required to be knowledgeable of Board Policy JICDE regarding bullying and retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE.

Investigation of Complaints or Reports of Bullying

All reports of bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE must be promptly forwarded to the building principal. The building principal or designee will take appropriate action to promptly investigate all complaints or reports received. When appropriate, the district will take interim measures during the investigation to protect against further bullying or other prohibited behavior.

The investigation process will include interviews with the person reporting the alleged bullying or other prohibited behavior, the alleged target of the bullying, the alleged perpetrator or perpetrators, and any witnesses. The statements of the alleged target, the alleged perpetrator,

and witnesses, if any, will be recorded and the person interviewed will be asked to read and sign the statement unless the person's age makes such a request for a signature inappropriate. Where anonymity is requested, the statements of persons interviewed will be recorded without reference to the person's name. Where the alleged target of bullying or retaliation requests anonymity they, and their parent/guardian, will be advised that such a request may hinder the ability of the administration to take appropriate disciplinary action if bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE is substantiated.

The information collected and evaluated as part of the investigation and determination of responsibility for any policy violation may include, but is not limited to:

- A description of the alleged incident(s), including the nature of the conduct, context in which the conduct occurred, the date(s), time(s), and location(s), etc.;
- Identity of all individuals involved, including any witnesses;
- Relationships among the involved individuals;
- The frequency of the conduct;
- Whether there were previous incidents or continuing patterns of behavior involving some or all of the involved individuals; and
- Whether, and if so, how, the conduct adversely affected any of the involved student's education or educational environment.

Reporting and Notification Obligations

Each school will notify the parents/guardians of students who have engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE and students targeted by bullying behavior of the findings of the investigation. Building administration will meet with parents/guardians upon request. The notification will include a description of the response of school staff to such acts and possible consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE.

The notification will be made by a member of the school administration designated by the superintendent to provide such notification and in a manner that is consistent with the confidentiality of personally identifiable information contained in student records and student due process rights. This means that, unless otherwise authorized by applicable law, the notice will not disclose to the parents/guardians of the target of the bullying behavior either the name of the perpetrator or the specific disciplinary consequences imposed upon the perpetrator, nor will it disclose to the parents/guardians of the students who have engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE the name of the target of the bullying behavior. The notification will also not include any reference to the specific consequences that a student may face for further acts of bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE since as a matter of due process such consequences cannot be determined in advance. Rather, such notification will advise the parents/guardians that further acts of bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE may lead to additional discipline, such as suspension or expulsion, in accordance with Board policy and other relevant policies that govern student conduct.

Post Investigation Intervention and Actions

Bullying behavior can take many forms and may vary in severity. Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance and must be consistent with the Board of Education's approved student conduct and disciplinary code. As a result, the extent of discipline, if any, to be imposed where bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE is substantiated cannot be prescribed in advance.

Substantiated acts of bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE committed by students will be met with imposition of some form of disciplinary action up to, and including, expulsion. In all cases where bullying or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE is substantiated, the building administration will determine the appropriate level of disciplinary action in accordance with the Thompson School District discipline matrix, factors such as the severity of the behavior, the student perpetrator's conduct and disciplinary history, the developmental age of the students involved, the motivation of the problem behavior, and the availability of support for the target of the bullying behavior, as well as consideration of other relevant policies that govern student conduct and discipline.

School administration will take reasonably prompt measures to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation as prohibited by Policy JICDE. School administration will refer to the Comprehensive Bullying Prevention Program section of Policy JICDE for guidance, as well as JICDE-R (*Bullying Prevention and Education*). To support the target(s) of bullying behavior or retaliation, school administration will employ best practice strategies such as those outlined in JICDE-E-2 (*Supporting Students Who Have Been Targets of Bullying Behaviors*). School administration will also employ a range of disciplinary actions and supportive measures, as appropriate, for the student(s) found to have engaged in acts of bullying behavior or retaliation in violation of Policy JICDE, including but not limited to:

- School personnel and parent communication
- Social skills instruction
- Restorative practices
- Increased check-in and feedback opportunities with adults
- Supports focused on increasing empathy, communication skills, and the impact of bullying
- Targeted training or other education related to the incident
- Additional adult supervision
- Implementation of a safety plan outlining safety accommodations
- Behavioral contracts, including a written statement of the student's expected behavior and how school staff and/or families will provide support
- Seat reassignment in a classroom, the lunchroom, or on a mode of transportation offered by the the district or school placement
- Daily behavior report cards: adherence to expected behaviors is scored for each school period

- Referral to school counselor, social worker, school psychologist, or other support staff
- School/community service
- Restricted participation in extracurricular or school-sponsored activities or events
- Loss of privileges during lunch, recess, before, during, and after school
- In-School suspension for one-half day or more with a family member contacted
- Restrictions to the timing and route of travel through certain areas of school while target of bullying is present in same location
- Reassignment of classes or mode of transportation offered by the district, or school placement
- Out-of-school suspension including a conference with the family and re-entry plan
- Schedule modifications for classes, extracurricular activities or working arrangements
- Reassignment to another school or mode of transportation
- Other alternatives to suspension and expulsion where the school, student, and family agree to a set of requirements that, while in good standing, prevent removal.

In addition, bullying or retaliation will be referred to law enforcement if necessary to intervene in a case of possible criminal misconduct or where immediate safety assistance is needed.

Adopted June 15, 2011

Revised April 7, 2021