

## **Bully Behavior Prevention, Intervention and Discipline Plan**

The Mt. Pleasant School District believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The district, schools, and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

The Mt. Pleasant School District Staff will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate or harass another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation exclusion or manipulation.

The Mt. Pleasant School District expects students and/or staff to immediately address and report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee. Staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur or are made aware of such an incident. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated according to site procedures. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while they are traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity. This policy also applies to incidents of cyberbullying.

To ensure bullying does not occur on school campuses, the Mt. Pleasant School District will provide staff development training in prevention of bullying and help cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff to develop each school's ability to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

The Mt. Pleasant School District teachers will discuss this policy with students in ways appropriate to their ages. Teachers will assure all students that they need not endure any form of bullying or harassment and should not be either victims or bystanders to bullying. Students who bully others are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Each school will adopt a Student Code of Conduct to be followed by every student while on school grounds, or when traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, and during lunch period, whether on or off campus.

The Student Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Any student who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee.
- Students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.

- If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the student or the parent of the student should contact the principal or the Office of Student Services. The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, students and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting bullying: at the beginning of the school year, as part of the District handbook and/or information packet
- The school will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of investigation confidential.
- Staff are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur.
- People witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the victim or witnesses in any way.

## **Procedures for Investigating and Responding to Bullying Incidents**

### **Reporting**

The Site Principal shall establish and publicize to students, staff, and community how to report incidents of bullying and actions that may be taken.

The process for receiving and investigating instances of bullying of any kind, as defined within this policy, includes complaints of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on actual or perceived characteristics.

School personnel who witness such acts of bullying as defined within this policy shall take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Complaints of bullying shall be investigated and resolved in accordance with site-level compliant procedures.

Reporting any act of bullying:

1. The principal/designee is responsible for receiving oral or written complaints alleging bullying or harassment.

2. Students may report complaints of bullying to any school employee. Any such reports of bullying allegations must be forwarded, in writing, to the principal/designee.
3. Any member of the school community who may have credible information about an act of bullying that may have taken place may file a report of bullying either as a witness or a victim.
4. Any student (or a parent or guardian on behalf of the complainant who is a minor) who believes he/she is a victim of bullying, has witnessed an act of bullying, or has knowledge of any incidents involving acts of bullying are strongly encouraged to report the incidents to a school official.
5. The Principal/designee(s) shall document in writing all complaints regarding bullying to ensure that incidents of bullying, or any other infractions, are appropriately addressed in a timely manner, whether the original report of bullying is made verbally or in writing.
6. Anonymous reports of bullying may be made to the appropriate school official. School officials should develop and publicize a system in which students, employees, volunteers, parents/guardians can make an anonymous report of bullying.

### **Investigation of Complaints**

The principal/designee and/or Investigative Designee shall document all complaints in writing and/or through the appropriate data system to ensure that problems are addressed in a timely manner. This process is to be followed with all anonymous complaints as well. School officials should investigate all complaints and reports of harassment, whether or not the complaint is in writing.

The principal/designee has been trained in conducting comprehensive investigations.

1. The principal/designee or appropriate administrator shall begin a thorough investigation with the alleged victim and accused within two (2) school days of receiving a notification of complaint. The school administrators/designees will provide immediate notification to the parents of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator of an act of bullying or harassment upon completion of the investigation. Any act of suspected disability based harassment or bullying will also be reported to the Director of Student Support Services.
2. During the investigation, the principal/designee or appropriate administrator may take any action necessary to protect the complainant,

- alleged victim, other students or employees consistent with district policy and procedures.
3. Documented interviews of the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses are conducted privately, separately, and are confidential. Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses) will be interviewed separately and at no time will the alleged perpetrator and victim to be interviewed together.
  4. Interviews will be conducted objectively with the student and witnesses safety in mind.
  5. In general, student complainants and/or alleged victims will continue attendance at the same school and pursue their studies as directed while the investigation is conducted and the complaint is pending resolution. Any legal order of a court will prevail.
  6. When necessary to carry out the investigation or for other good reasons, and consistent with federal and state privacy laws, the principal/designee or appropriate administrator also may discuss the complaint with any school district employee, the parent of the alleged victim, the parent of the complainant or accused, and/or child protective agencies responsible for investigating child abuse.
  7. Within ten (10) school days of the notification as to the filing of the complaint, there shall be a written decision by the Principal/Designee or appropriate administrator regarding the completion and determination of the investigation. The principal/designee shall make a decision about the validity of the allegations in the complaint and about any corrective action.
  8. The Principal/Designee or appropriate administrator will inform all relevant parties of the outcome of the investigation. A written copy of findings of the investigation and any applicable discipline will be placed in the student's cumulative file and noted in all relevant data tracking systems.
  9. No retaliation of any kind is permitted in connection with an individual's having made a bullying complaint and if it occurs, it shall be deemed an additional act of bullying subject to further discipline.

### **Informal Resolution**

The administrator, along with the alleged victim and the accused/student, may agree to informally resolve the complaint. Documented interviews of the victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses are conducted privately and are confidential. Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses) will be interviewed separately, and at no time will the alleged perpetrator and victim be interviewed together.

**Formal Resolution**

Based on the level of infraction, parents will be promptly notified of any actions being taken to protect the victim via written notice, telephone or personal conference; the frequency of notification will depend on the seriousness of the bullying incident.

The resolution, all interviews and interventions that take place and the corresponding dates shall be documented in writing and/or noted in a specified data system.

**External Investigation**

If the act is outside the scope of the District and determined a criminal act, referral to appropriate law enforcement shall be made immediately, the parent will be notified, and the referral documented by the principal/designee in the specified format.