

## **Bullying/Harassment**

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of Sandridge School District and the policy of the of the non-sectarian nonpublic school and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this section [free exercise of religion]. No person, including a District employee or agent, or student, shall harass, intimidate, or bully a student. Nothing in this Section is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

Bullying is an intentional repeated act which may include verbal, physical, and/or emotional abuse committed by one or more individuals against another or others. Students who harass and/or bully other students, with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate or harm the other students or staff will be subject to disciplinary action.

Under Section 27-23.7 of the Illinois School Code, bullying includes cyber-bullying (bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication) and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including written or electronic communications, directed toward a student that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or property;
2. Causing a detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

The Act provides a non-exhaustive list of various forms of bullying. The list includes harassment, threats, intimidation, bullying whether verbal, physical, or visual, that affects the tangible benefits of education, and unreasonably interferes with a student's educational performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment, stalking, physical violence, dating violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, cyberbullying, destruction or property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, immigration status, ancestry, age, status of being homeless, actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, order of protection status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the above actual

or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic, is prohibited in all school districts.

It is the policy of the District that no student shall be subjected to bullying (1) during any school-sponsored education program or activity; (2) while in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities; (3) through the transmission or information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment; or (4) through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school.

Bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with students' ability to learn and participate in school activities. Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important school goals.

**Definition of Cyber-Bullying:** Cyber-bullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by wire, radio, electromagnetic Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyber-bullying" includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. Cyber-bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in [105 ILCS 5/27-23/7(b)].

**Prohibition on Cyber-Bullying:** Bullying is prohibited through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school.

Some examples of bullying include:

- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, pushing, or spitting.
- Interfering with, threatening, or actual destruction of another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it.
- Using offensive names, teasing, or spreading rumors about others or their families.
- Using put-downs, belittling others abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes, emails or graffiti about others.
- Making degrading comments about another's culture, religious or social background.
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group.
- Making suggestive comments or other forms of sexual harassment ridiculing another's appearance.
- Forcing others to act against their will.
- Tormenting, threatening, harassing, humiliating, embarrassing or otherwise targeting another student using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones (cyber-bullying).
- Dating violence
- Sexual violence
- Stalking
- Threatening or causing physical harm
- Wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice of one of the characteristics stated above.
- Derogatory slurs
- Causing psychological harm
- Name calling

**Sandridge Elementary School recommends that parents and teachers:**

- Watch for signs of distress in their children (unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment/belongings, requests for extra money, damaged clothes, or bruising).
- Take an active interest in your children's social life and acquaintances. Advise your child to tell a staff member about the incident. If possible allow him/her to report and deal with the problem himself/herself.
- Inform the school if bullying is suspected.
- Keep a written record (who, what, when, where, why and how).
- Do not encourage your child to retaliate.

- Be willing to inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying, even if your own child is not directly affected.

## **Report Bullying**

Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the district complaint manager or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. All school staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anyone, including staff members and parent/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the district complaint manager or any staff member. You may call 708-895-2450, complete the anonymous form on our website or email the principal at [kpolk@sandridgesd172.net](mailto:kpolk@sandridgesd172.net) or the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at [jkosina@sandridgesd172.net](mailto:jkosina@sandridgesd172.net). You may also call either the Principal or Director directly at 708-895-2450.

Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying are prohibited. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

Students and parent/guardians are also encouraged to read the following school district policies: 7:20, *Harassment of Students Prohibited* and 7:180, *Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation and Harassment*. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. "Restorative measures" means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.

(vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

Upon receiving a report of bullying, Sandridge Elementary School District will promptly investigate and address reports of bullying, including the following:

- (A) Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
- (B) Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- (C) Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- (D) Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

### **Bullying Interventions:**

Sandridge Elementary will provide interventions whenever possible to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

### **Sandridge Bullying Policy**

The Sandridge Bullying policy is consistent with the policies of the school board, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school. This policy has and will continue to be reviewed annually by a range of stakeholders, including students, parents, and guardians to ensure schoolwide engagement on issues of bullying.

As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating the policy under subsection (d) of this Section, contains a policy evaluation process to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy that includes, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The non-sectarian nonpublic school may use relevant data and information it

already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation must be made available on the Internet website of the school. If an Internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

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