

## BULLYING

### Definitions

"Bullying" means

1. intimidation, unwanted aggressive behavior, or harassment
2. is repetitive or is substantially likely to be repeated
3. causes a student to fear for his or her physical or personal safety or property
4. substantially interferes with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of any student without exception or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school, and
5. is characterized by a real or perceived imbalance of physical or social power between the perpetrator and the target.

Bullying may consist of

1. physical actions, including violence, theft, property damage, or gestures,
2. oral, electronic, or written communication, including name-calling, put-downs, extortion, or threats
3. any threat of reprisal or retaliation for reporting of such acts.

"Cyberbullying" means

1. bullying through the transmission of a communication including, but not limited to,
  - a. a message, text, sound, or image by means of an electronic device including, but not limited to,
  - b. a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager.

"Cyber threats" means

1. online materials that threaten or raise concerns about violence against others, suicide or self-harm.

"District Anti-bullying Coordinator"

1. is appointed by the Superintendent
2. will receive all completed investigative reports from all buildings
3. analyzes the reports to identify any information that would inform the District's antidiscrimination and antibullying education and training programs
4. assists in making any relevant reports as required by state and federal law.

### Prohibition

1. The District prohibits all forms of bullying and threats, at any time on school property, on a school bus, or during/at any school function.
2. District staff, coaches, sponsors and volunteers are prohibited from permitting, condoning or tolerating any form of bullying; or planning, directing, encouraging, assisting, engaging in, or participating in any activity that involves bullying.

3. The District has jurisdiction over and prohibits cyberbullying that uses the District's technology resources or that originates on District property, at a District activity or on District transportation.
4. The District prohibits cyberbullying that does not involve District property, activities or technology resources. The District will impose consequences and discipline for those who engage in cyberbullying if
  - a. there is a sufficient nexus to the educational environment,
  - b. the behavior materially and substantially disrupts the educational environment,
  - c. the communication involves a threat as defined by law, or
  - d. the District is otherwise allowed by law to address the behavior.
5. The District prohibits retaliation against a student or employee for reporting bullying or hazing. Any student or employee who retaliates will be subject to discipline according to the appropriate Board Policy.

### Reporting

1. The principal of each building is the individual to receive and investigate reports of bullying.
2. Each principal shall designate at least two teachers or administrators in the building who are authorized to receive and investigate reports of bullying in the principal's absence or at the principal's discretion.
3. School employees, substitutes or volunteers are expected to intervene to prevent student bullying, assist the victim and report the incident to the building principal or designee for further investigation and action.
4. Students who have been subjected to bullying or threats or their parents/guardians will promptly report, when possible, such incidents to a school official. Any school employee receiving such a report shall promptly transmit the report to the building principal or designee.
5. Any District employee aware of or suspecting bullying or threats must report the incident(s) to the designated administrator (school principal or assistant principal) within two (2) school days of becoming aware. The report may be in written form or verbal (in the course of the subsequent investigation, the employee may be expected to give a written statement.)
6. Any employee becoming aware of or suspecting bullying must take steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim.
7. The principal will promptly investigate all complaints of bullying and will administer appropriate discipline to all individuals who violate this policy.
8. Violation of this policy by District staff may result in disciplinary action for those staff up to and including termination.

### Investigation

Within two working days of receiving the report, the principal, assistant principal, and/or designee will initiate an investigation of the report. Reports that involve students from multiple buildings will be investigated cooperatively by the principals of each building involved. If at any time during the investigation the investigator determines that the bullying involves illegal discrimination, harassment or retaliation as described in policy AC, the principal will report the incident to the compliance officer designated in that policy, who will assist in the investigation.

The investigation will include, but not be limited to,

1. interviewing witnesses, the alleged victim, and the alleged perpetrator
2. obtaining written statements from the witnesses, alleged victim, alleged perpetrator, and person reporting the bullying
3. in the case of alleged cyberbullying, determining whether the electronic communication was made with District technology, with personal technology on District property or during a District function, or with personal technology off school grounds
4. contacting the parent/guardian of the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator to inform them of the reported incident and to ask for any related information about the involved parties and the incident
5. determining whether bullying occurred according to the District's definition and the evidence gathered
6. a written report of the investigation and findings with a copy of the completed report provided to the District's antibullying coordinator

The investigation will be completed in no more than 10 school days from the date of the report unless good cause exists to extend the investigation. "Good Cause" may include but not be limited to absences from school or other inability to obtain information necessary for the investigation.

Staff employed in partner district schools will follow the policy of that partner district and will report the bullying or hazing to their Special School District area coordinator or supervisor who will collaborate with the appropriate partner district staff regarding the report.

#### Response to the Investigation

Three outcomes of the investigation are possible:

1. Bullying did occur – the principal/assistant principal will
  - a. Notify the parent/guardian of the victim and the perpetrator
  - b. Take steps to provide supports to the student to deal with negative effects of bullying
  - c. Implement steps to minimize future occasions of bullying
  - d. Administer discipline to the bully according to District Policy
2. Inappropriate but non-bullying behavior occurred – the principal/ assistant principal will
  - a. Notify parent/guardian of involved students
  - b. Administer appropriate discipline according to District Policy
  - c. Provide students an opportunity to mediate or resolve any issue or conflict that may have caused the incident
3. No inappropriate or prohibited behavior occurred- the principal/ assistant principal will
  - a. Notify parent/guardian of involved students
  - b. Provide students an opportunity to mediate or resolve any issue or conflict that may have caused the incident

If bullying did occur, the principal/administrator will instruct the school social worker, counselor, victim's teacher, or other staff member to provide the victim support to overcome negative effects of bullying. These supports may include

- a. Activities to help the student cultivate positive self-worth and self-esteem
- b. Teaching the student to defend her/himself assertively, effectively, and appropriately
- c. Teaching the student to develop social skills
- d. Teaching the student to develop an internal locus of control

If the bullying takes place off-campus/on campus and there is an insufficient connection to the District, the principal or designee will take appropriate actions to assist student victims. Such actions may include, but are not limited to,

- a. contacting the parents/guardians of the victim and the alleged perpetrators,
- b. communicating that this behavior is not allowed on District grounds or at District activities,
- c. notifying the appropriate District staff to assist the victim, and
- d. taking additional action when appropriate, such as notifying law enforcement or social media companies of inappropriate online activity.

For perpetrators of bullying, staff will provide supports to minimize the use of bullying in the future, including

- a. Teaching the student to develop social skills
- b. Teaching the student to learn to interact in a positive manner with others
- c. Teaching the student to develop appropriate conflict resolution and problem-solving skills

### Prevention

The District will provide appropriate training designed to assist staff, coaches, sponsors, volunteers, and students in building social networks and developing relationships in identifying, preventing and responding to incidents of bullying.

### Dissemination

The District shall annually inform students, parents, District staff, substitutes, and volunteers of this policy and regulation. This notification may occur through

1. distribution of the written policy and regulation,
2. publication in handbooks,
3. presentations at assemblies or
4. verbal instructions by the coach or sponsor at the start of the season or program.

In addition to educating students about content of this policy, the District will inform students of:


1. The procedure to report bullying.

2. The harmful effects of bullying.
3. Any initiatives the school or District has created to address bullying, including student peer-to-peer initiatives.
4. The consequences for those who participate in bullying or engage in reprisal or retaliation against those who report bullying.

School counselors, social workers, mental health professionals, school psychologists or other appropriate District staff will educate students who are victims of bullying about how to overcome the negative effects of bullying including, but not limited to:

1. Cultivating the student's self-worth and self-esteem.
2. Teaching the student to defend him- or herself assertively and effectively without violence.
3. Teaching the student to develop social skills.
4. Encouraging the student to feel they have control over events.

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Superintendent of Schools