
ANTI-HARASSMENT/ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It is the policy of the State College Area School District to provide a safe and orderly educational environment that is free from harassment and/or bullying and conducive to the mission of the school district to provide each and every student the best opportunity to receive the education to which s/he is entitled under state and federal law. The school district asserts that it has a compelling interest in promoting an educational environment that is safe and conducive to learning.

It is the intention of the school district, consistent with state and federal law, to strive to maintain a learning environment which is free of harassment and/or bullying since the school district finds that incidents of harassment and/or bullying prevent students from receiving the education to which they are entitled, materially disrupt the mission of the school district to educate the children of the school district, substantially interfere with a student's educational performance and foster incidents of violence.

It is the purpose of this policy to prohibit and prevent acts of harassment and/or bullying and violence. The school district does recognize that students retain certain rights under state and federal law, including freedom of expression, although such rights are not necessarily co-extensive with the rights of adults in society at large. It is not the purpose of this policy to impinge upon the legitimate rights of students or school personnel under state and federal law in the school environment.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. HARASSMENT: The term "harassment" as used in this Policy means verbal, written, electronic, graphic, physical conduct, or instigation of such acts, which does or is reasonably believed under the totality of the circumstances to:

1. substantially or materially interfere with a student's or student's' educational performance; and/or
2. deny any student or students the benefits or opportunities offered by the School District; and/or
3. substantially disrupt school operations or activities; and/or
4. create a hostile or abusive environment which is of such pervasiveness and severity that it materially and adversely alters the condition of a student's or student's' educational environment, from both an objective viewpoint and the subjective viewpoint of the student at whom the harassment is directed

The term "harassment" for purposes of the Policy does not mean merely offensive expression, rudeness or discourtesy; nor does the term "harassment" mean the legitimate exercise of constitutional rights within the school setting. The School District recognizes there is a right to

express opinions, ideas and beliefs so long as such expression is not lewd or profane or materially disruptive of school operations or the rights of others.

B. BULLYING: The term “bullying” means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting that is severe, disrupts the school day (cyber bullying), is persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantial interference with a student’s education.
2. Creation of a threatening environment.
3. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

C. SCHOOL PERSONNEL: The term “school personnel” as used in this Policy means school board members, school employees, agents, volunteers, contractors and/or persons subject to the supervision and control of the School District.

D. SCHOOL SETTING: means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school or within any of the school’s electronic systems.

III. PROHIBITIONS

- A. It shall be a violation of this Policy for any student or school personnel of the State College Area School District to engage in harassment and/or bullying of a student on school property, during the use of school facilities or during school-sponsored activities, services and/or events.
- B. It shall also be a violation of this Policy for any school personnel to tolerate harassment and/or bullying, as defined by this Policy, by any student or school personnel or third parties who are participating in, observing or otherwise engaged in activities, including extracurricular activities, on school property or at school related activities, services or events.
- C. Harassment and/or bullying such as is prohibited under this Policy includes, but is not limited to, harassment/intimidation based on race, gender, gender identity, color, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and/or disability.

The determination of whether harassment and/or bullying, as defined herein, has occurred will require the reasonable assessment of the totality of surrounding circumstances attendant to a given situation which may include the frequency of the conduct at issue, the physical surroundings, the ages and maturity of those involved, the activity or program within which the situation occurs, the forum in which the alleged harassment and/or bullying occurs, and the nature and severity of the alleged harassment and/or bullying at issue.

D. When harassment and/or bullying, as defined in III. A/B of this Policy, occurs it may include instances or a series of instances involving;

- unwelcome sexual advances
- touching, patting, grabbing another's intimate parts
- coercing or forcing physical contact with another
- demands for sexual favors
- slurs
- dissemination of lewd, profane or obscene materials
- lewd, vulgar or profane language
- threatening or intimidating conduct, writing or expression
- degrading name-calling, remarks, notes, gestures or actions
- damage to property or person
- assault
- bullying
- stalking
- extortion

The School District recognizes that the foregoing list includes items which vary in nature and severity, and that, as such, the totality of all surrounding circumstances must be considered in making the determination as to whether harassment and/or bullying has occurred. If any activity described in the foregoing list does not rise to the level of harassment and/or bullying as defined in III. A/B. of this Policy, harassment and/or bullying shall not be deemed to have occurred. If a student feels as if he/she has been or is being harassed and/or bullied, the student should immediately report the incident(s) to a staff member, to security, to a counselor, to the School Resource Officer, or to an administrator.

ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

THERE IS A CORRELATION BETWEEN REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT. STUDENTS ARE, THEREFORE, ENCOURAGED TO AVOID ANY UNNECESSARY ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL.

A student may be legally absent from school due to sickness or other "urgent" reasons such as impassable roads, quarantine, or death in the family. When a student has been to the doctors for an illness, **please bring a doctor's note to the attendance secretary so that the absence does not count against the student's 10-day limit.** When a student is absent from school without a medical/mental health appointment parents should provide a written parental note verifying the absence. **All excuses need to be turned in within 72 hours of absence or the absence will be considered unexcused.** An unexcused absence for a student is considered an illegal absence. When three such absences have accumulated, the parents or guardians are notified and additional