FREEPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

ADOPTED: August 12, 2015

REVISED: November 14, 2018
February 13, 2019
August 13, 2020
August 12, 2021
March 13, 2024

249. BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

Purpose

The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by district students.

Definitions

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, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:[1]

1. Substantially interfering with a student's education.
2. Creating a threatening environment.
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.[1]

Authority

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by district students.[1]

The Board encourages students who believe they or others have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

	Students are encouraged to put the complaint in writing; however, oral complaints shall be accepted and documented. The person accepting the complaint shall handle the report objectively, neutrally and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor the student filing the complaint or those accused of a violation of this policy. The Board directs that verbal and written complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and appropriate corrective or preventative action be taken when allegations are substantiated. The Board directs that any complaint of bullying brought pursuant to this policy shall also be reviewed for conduct which may not be proven to be bullying under this policy but merits review and possible action under other Board policies. When a student's behavior indicates a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community or others, district staff shall report the student to the threat assessment team, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.[2][3] <u>Title IX Sexual Harassment and Other Discrimination</u> Every report of alleged bullying that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws against discrimination shall be handled as a joint, concurrent investigation into all allegations and coordinated with the full participation of the Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator. If, in the course of a bullying investigation, potential issues of discrimination are identified, the Title IX Coordinator shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of alleged discrimination as well as the incidents of alleged bullying.[4][5] <u>Confidentiality</u> Confidentiality of all parties, witnesses, the allegations, the filing of a complaint and the investigation shall be handled in accordance with applicable law, regulations, this policy and the district’s legal and investigative obligations. <u>Retaliation</u> Reprisal or retaliation relating to reports of bullying or participation in an investigation of allegations of bullying is prohibited and shall be subject to disciplinary action.
Delegation of Responsibility	Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying. The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

	The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students.[1] The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.[1] District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:[1] 1. Board's Bullying Policy. 2. Report of bullying incidents. 3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.
Guidelines	The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students.[1][6][7] This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the district website.[1] <u>Education</u> The district may develop, implement and evaluate bullying prevention and intervention programs and activities. Programs and activities shall provide district staff and students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting incidents of bullying.[1][8][9][10] <u>Consequences for Violations</u> A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include:[1][6][11] 1. Counseling within the school. 2. Parental conference. 3. Loss of school privileges. 4. Transfer to another school building, classroom or school bus. 5. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities. 6. Detention. 7. Suspension.

	8. Expulsion. 9. Counseling/Therapy outside of school. 10. Referral to law enforcement officials. **Legal References** 1. 24 P.S. 1303.1-A 2. 24 P.S. 1302-E 3. Pol. 236.1 4. Pol. 103 5. Pol. 103.1 6. Pol. 218 7. 22 PA Code 12.3 8. 20 U.S.C. 7118 9. 24 P.S. 1302-A 10. Pol. 236 11. Pol. 233 Pol. 113.1