

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS POLICY 215: **Prohibition Against Bullying/Harassment**

DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING:

Bullying is an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act directed at another student, when the student is teased, harassed or treated disrespectfully. Bullying includes “cyber-bullying,” which involves the use of an electronic device to intimidate, threaten, spread rumors, or create a hostile or unsafe environment that can interfere with a student’s education.

Harassment occurs when verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relates to the student’s race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other inappropriate verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

The School District does not allow bullying or harassment in any form.

The School District prohibits bullying and harassment of all kinds in the school setting. Bullying may include acts that occur outside of school if those acts are severe, persistent or pervasive, and have the effect of:

- 1.** Substantially interfering with a student’s education;
- 2.** Creating a threatening environment; or
- 3.** Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of school.

Students who have experienced bullying or harassment should promptly tell a teacher, counselor or school principal. Also, students, employees and others who have observed bullying or harassment are encouraged to inform a teacher, counselor or school principal.

All complaints of bullying and harassment will be investigated promptly and the school will take corrective action to ensure that bullying/harassment, if occurring, is stopped. The detailed procedures each school must follow when completing a bullying or harassment investigation can be found in the administrative rules and procedures attached to the Bullying/Harassment policy.

No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith charges of bullying or harassment.

A complete copy of the Bullying/Harassment Policy can be found on the reverse side of this poster. Copies of the Policy and all administrative regulations are also available in the Main Office of each school, from your child’s teacher, or on the District’s website.



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PITTSBURGH

POLICY 215. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING/HARASSMENT

SECTION: Pupils
ADOPTED: November 21, 2006
REVISED: April 25, 2012

1. Purpose

The Board of Education is committed to providing all students and employees with the right to a safe, positive and civil educational environment, free from harassment and/or bullying. The Board recognizes that bullying and harassment create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detract from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the District to maintain an educational environment in which bullying and harassment in any form is neither tolerated nor permitted.

The Board recognizes that some conduct that qualifies as bullying may also trigger responsibilities under one or more federal anti-discrimination laws. Peer harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion is specifically prohibited.

2. Definition SC 1303.1-A

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 intent or effect of:

1. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's education; or
2. Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a student; or
3. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm; or
4. Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property.

Bullying, as defined in this Policy, includes cyber-bullying.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, time traveling to and from school, or any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school. Bullying or cyber-bullying shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.

Bullying may include acts that occur outside of school if those acts are intentional, electronic, verbal or physical, are directed at another student or students, are severe, persistent or pervasive, and have the effect of (i) substantially interfering with a student's education; (ii) creating a threatening environment; or (iii) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Harassment shall consist of verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion when such conduct:

1. Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance.
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's learning opportunities.

For purposes of this policy, **sexual harassment** shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other inappropriate verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's academic status.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for academic or work decisions affecting the individual.
3. Such conduct deprives a student of educational aid, benefits, services or treatment.
4. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's school performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

Examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include but are not limited to sexual flirtations, advances, touching or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body; sexually degrading words to describe an individual; jokes; pin-ups; calendars; objects; graffiti; vulgar statements; abusive language; innuendos; references to sexual activities; overt sexual conduct; or any conduct that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's ability to work or learn or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning or working environment.

3. Authority SC 1303.1-A, Title IX, 20 U.S.C., Sec. 1681, 43 P.S., Sec. 951 et seq, 29 CFR, Sec. 1606.8 (a)

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying and harassment of students and third parties by all district students and staff members, contracted individuals, vendors, volunteers, and third parties in the schools.

The Board encourages students and third parties who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to designated employees.

The Board directs that complaints of bullying and/or harassment shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are substantiated.

Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the District's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying or harassment.

4. Delegation of Responsibility

Bullying: The Superintendent shall promulgate rules and regulations which prohibit bullying in accordance with this policy and the Code of Student Conduct, and which:

1. Ensure compliance with mandatory bullying incident reporting requirements;
2. Include complaint/investigation procedures; and
3. Ensure compliance with mandatory annual notification and posting of the District's bullying policy.

The Superintendent, and other appropriate administrators, shall review the District's bullying policy and administrative rules and regulations every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.

Harassment: Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of their fellow students and District employees and to ensure an atmosphere free from all forms of harassment.

Each staff member shall be responsible to maintain an educational environment free from all forms of harassment.

The administration shall be responsible to provide training for students and employees regarding all aspects of harassment.

In order to maintain an educational environment that discourages and prohibits harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion, the Board designates the Superintendent or designee as the District's Compliance Officer.

The Compliance Officer shall promulgate rules and regulations which ensure compliance with this policy, and shall include definitions of relevant terms and set forth complaint/investigative procedures to address claims of harassment.

The Compliance Officer shall publish and disseminate this policy and corresponding administrative regulations, including the complaint procedure, at least annually to students, parents/guardians, employees, independent contractors, vendors, and the public. The publication shall include the position, office address and telephone number of the Compliance Officer.

References:

School Code: 24 P.S. Sec. 1302-A, 1303.1-A

State Board of Education Regulations: 22 PA Code Sec. 12.3

Pennsylvania Human Relations Act: 43 P.S. Sec. 951 et seq.

Federal Anti-Discrimination Law: 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1681 et seq. (Title IX)

Harassment Regulations and Guidelines, Code of Federal Regulations: 29 CFR Sec. 1604.11(a), 1606.8(a)

A copy of this policy can be found at www.pps.k12.pa.us/bullying.