

# *Targeting*

## *Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying*

### *Grades 6—12*



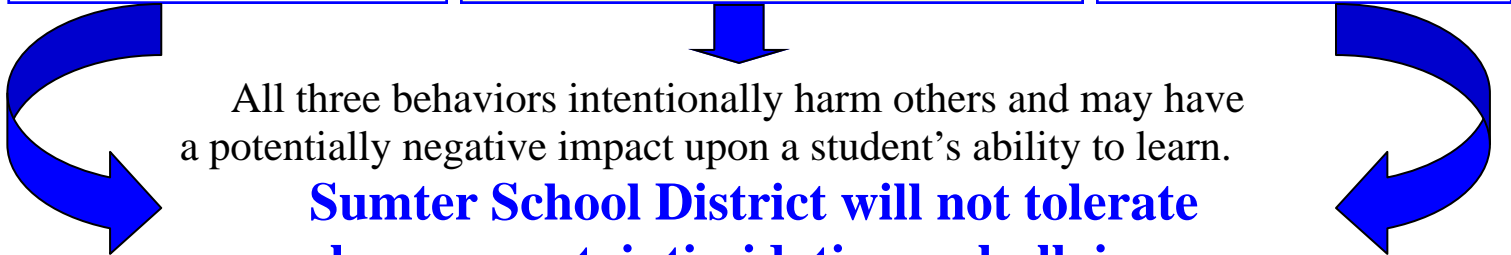
*“Harassment, intimidation or bullying* means a gesture, electronic communication, or a written, verbal, or physical or sexual act reasonably perceived to have the effect of either:

- harming a student physically or emotionally, damaging a student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of personal harm or property damage; or
- insulting or demeaning a student or group of students causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.” (Safe School Climate Section 59-63-120)

**What is Bullying?**  
Bullying is unwanted, mean behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time.

**What is Harassment?**  
Harassment is also unwanted acts of aggression towards others. Under federal civil rights laws, harassment is unwelcome conduct demonstrated to others that is based on race, national origin, color, sex, disability or religion that is severe, pervasive or persistent, and creates a hostile environment or an unsafe environment.

**What is Intimidation?**  
Intimidation is to create fear of harm in individuals for themselves, others or their personal properties.



All three behaviors intentionally harm others and may have a potentially negative impact upon a student’s ability to learn.


**Sumter School District will not tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying.**

If any student experiences or witnesses acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, **report it to an adult at home or school.**

**Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying are Serious Problems!**

**Reports can be made to school staff when the behaviors:**

- occur on school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, at an official school bus stop or at a school-sponsored activity or event;
- disrupt or could disrupt the school;
- interfere with a student’s right to an education; or,
- create an unsafe environment because of the bullying, harassment, or intimidation.



**Things to Know about Reporting**

- Reports may be made face-to-face, by phone, or by written report to any teacher, guidance counselor, or administrator. Report forms are on the Sumter School District’s web-page and are available upon request.
- Reports can be submitted anonymously which means that the investigator will not reveal who provided the information. The more details given about the bullying incident—the who, when, where, and how—the better the investigation will be.
- Your school prohibits retaliation or reprisals to the victim/target or to the witnesses.
- Notify staff if the bullying continues. Your school staff will take steps to correct the problem.
- False reporting is prohibited.

The **BULLY** has power or social support, but he or she is more likely to commit a criminal offense in the future if the bullying behavior continues.

The **VICTIM/TARGET** has less power and social support and may be harmed physically and/or emotionally. The victim/target may feel helpless, hopeless, ashamed, or even blame himself or herself.

**BYSTANDERS** are one or more students who witness the acts and might actively provide support to the bully. Bystanders might not intervene or seek help because they **fear for their safety**, think that they will lose friends, or become a bully's target.

## Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying is “Peer Abuse.”

### Signs That a Student Is Being Harassed or Bullied:

- Is easily distressed
- Shows drop in grades
- Becomes preoccupied and cannot seem to concentrate
- Appears unwilling, reluctant or afraid to attend school
- Has missing or damaged property
- Denies that bullying is happening
- Has few, if any, friends
- Prefers to be alone or withdraws from others
- Has unexplained bruises or cuts
- Complains of not feeling well
- Exhibits poor self esteem
- Seems depressed or sad



### Report to a counselor, administrator or parent immediately:

- If a student talks about suicide
- If a crime is committed
- If a student is in immediate risk of harm

### What Ways Can “Peer Abuse” Happen?

**Physical:** Examples include biting, kicking, pushing, pinching, hitting, tripping, or pulling hair.

**Verbal:** Examples include sarcasm, teasing, putdowns, name calling, phone calls, spreading rumors, or hurtful gossip.

**Emotional:** Examples include nasty notes, using hand gestures or facial expressions, saying mean things using e-mails, text messaging, social media, or other electronic communication.

**Sexual:** Examples include unwanted grabbing or touching parts of the body, sexual teasing, suggestions, rumors, jokes, threats, obscene gestures, displaying obscene sexual material, or unwanted sexual material electronically.

**Racial:** Examples include racial slurs, name-calling, making fun of skin color, customs, or accent.

**Disability:** Examples include teasing, name calling, or teasing a person because of a physical, educational, or psychiatric disability.

### POSITIVE ACTIONS

Stop and think before you say or do something that could hurt someone.

Think: “Would I want a family member or a friend treated in this manner?”

Find something else to do if you feel like being mean to someone. For example, play a game, listen to music, talk to a friend or an adult, etc.

Keep in mind that everyone is different, not better or worse. People are **different**.

Apologize to anyone whom you have bullied in the past. Everyone feels better.

### GET INVOLVED:

- Determine where and when bullying happens at your school.
- Decide what you can do to help.
- Discuss your ideas with the principal.
- Join the safety committee at your school.
- Write a blog or tweet about bullying.
- Write a letter for the school newspaper.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BULLIED:

- Make eye contact and tell the bully to stop in a clear, calm voice.
- Laugh or use humor if that is easier for you.
- Walk away and stay away.
- Do not fight back.
- Report the bullying behavior.

### TO STAY SAFE IN THE FUTURE:

- Make a plan to stop the bullying with the support of a wise friend or an adult.
- Avoid places where bullying happens or remain with a group that will support you.
- Stay in supervised areas.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU WITNESS BULLYING:

- Interrupt the dynamics of the incident. For example, tell the victim that a teacher is looking for him/her.
- Offer to go with the student to report the bullying.
- Treat the student who is being bullied with kindness. For example, include the target of the bullying in your activities and show you care.
- Do not remain silent because it could create more problems for everyone. The bully will think it is acceptable to treat others badly.

**Bullying and harassment are “contagious” if not confronted effectively. Reporting bullying is not tattling. When you report bullying, you are protecting others from harm.**