

## **BULLYING POLICY:**

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying have a negative effect on the social environment of schools, create a climate of fear among students, inhibit the ability to learn, and lead to other antisocial behavior. The purpose of this policy is to create an environment free of unnecessary disruption and create a safe climate conducive to the learning process.

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, in school vehicles, at designated bus stops, at school-sponsored activities, or at school-sanctioned events. Bullying directed at students or school personnel by electronic communication is prohibited whether or not such communication originated at school or with school equipment.

Bullying means any pattern of harassment, intimidation, threatening behavior, physical acts, verbal or electronic communication that a reasonable person should know will:

- A. Harm another student;
- B. Damage another student's property;
- C. Place another student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or damage to the student's property; or
- D. Insult or demean any student or group of students.

Definitions:

- A. Electronic Communication-the communication of any written, verbal, pictorial information or video content by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, a cellular telephone or other wireless telecommunication device, or computer.
- B. Threatening Behavior-any pattern of behavior or isolated action, whether or not it is directed at another person, that a reasonable person would believe indicates potential for future harm to students, school personnel or school property.

Investigative Procedures: Incidents of harassment, intimidation, bullying or threatening behavior are to be reported to the campus administrator, or designee. Reports may be made anonymously but no formal disciplinary action will take place solely on the basis of an anonymous report. All school employees are to make an immediate report, if he/she has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect an act of bullying, to the principal or designee. The administrator will take a statement from the one reporting the incident which details which part of the policy is being violated, who the person(s) are that are violating the policy, witnesses to the violation(s) and times and dates of the violation(s).

After taking the statement, the administrator will begin questioning witnesses and the person being harassed, intimidated, bullied or threatened (if different from the one reporting the violation(s)). Next, the administrator will question the person or persons accused of violating this policy to determine the extent of the violation. If it is determined that a violation of policy has occurred, and before appropriate disciplinary measures have been taken, the parents of both the victim and perpetrator will be notified of the occurrence and the action to be taken. Action will be taken in keeping with written procedures concerning violations of The Code of Student Behavior. The Principal or site administrator will be responsible for determining the severity of the incident, the potential for future violence and the administration of the policy. Such violations and the extent of punishment are listed on the following page.

In addition to any punitive measures taken by the administration, the bully, the victim and any other

students affected by the prohibited behavior may be referred to any available community mental health care. Professional Development will be provided for all teachers to explore various methods for prevention of and education about threatening behavior, harassment, intimidation, and bullying as designed and developed by the State Department of Education and the Office of Juvenile Affairs. This Professional Development will be made available to all parents and students who wish to be informed as to prevention and reporting of bullying.

After consultation between the administrator, counselor, and other school officials that may have the necessary expertise, the student committing the act of bullying may be referred to a delinquency prevention and diversion program administered by the Office of Juvenile Affairs. Additionally, the specific incident may be reported to a law enforcement agency if it constituted criminal activity or could have the potential to endanger school safety. When a student is required to attend one of the counseling options available within the community, the administration may request the disclosure of any information concerning an explicit threat to the safety of students or school personnel. A generic State form is available for making this request.

If it is determined that no violation took place and that the student reporting the incident made a false report as a means of retaliation, reprisal or as a means of bullying, that student will be suspended from school for up to 5 days, parents or guardians will be called and the student referred to community agencies providing mental health care or to a program administered by the Office of Juvenile Affairs.

This policy will be posted on each campus in the cafeteria, school bulletin boards and administrative offices. Further, it will be in the student handbook, employee handbook, on the school internet website and each school site that has an internet website. Parents and guardians will be informed that a policy exists, through forms given to them in enrollment packets, and that a copy will be given to them upon request.

An accounting of the number of bullying incidents shall be kept by the appropriate administrator/designee at each school site and make that report available to the superintendent or his/her designee at the completion of each school year.

**BULLYING** The act of bullying, in any form, including harassment, intimidation, threatening behaviors, physical acts, verbal or electronic communication, will not be tolerated and is punishable according to discipline guidelines. This infraction may fall under various disciplinary categories including, but not limited to: Harassment/Verbal Abuse, Sexual Harassment, Assault or Battery.

| Examples of conduct which violate expectations | Definitions  | Discipline Action Level |         |
|--|--|-------------------------|---------|
|  |  | Minimum                 | Maximum |
| <b>HARASSMENT/VERBAL ABUSE</b>                 | Disturb consistently or torment through actions, and/or words, both physically or electronically   | 3                       | 5       |
| <b>SEXUAL HARASSMENT</b>                       | Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other unwelcome sexual conduct; i.e. verbal, physical or through use of texts or electronic media.          | 1                       | 5       |
| <b>BATTERY</b>                                 | Any willful and unlawful use of force or violence upon the person of another.  | 3                       | 5       |
| <b>AGGRAVATED ASSAULT AND BATTERY</b>          | Bodily injury is inflicted upon the person assaulted and battered.   | 5                       | 6       |
| <b>EXTORTION</b>                               | Obtaining property from another with his consent induced by a wrongful use of force or fear.   | 3                       | 5       |
| <b>GANG BEHAVIOR</b>                           | Disruption and/or intimidation caused by gesturing of any signs use of language, or confrontations identified or associated with gangs which could lead to violence. | 3                       | 5       |
| <b>RACIAL/HANDICAP HARASSMENT</b>              | Epithets, slurs, gestures or graffiti, even in jest, which are targeted toward an individual because of race, national origin or handicap.                           | 2                       | 5       |