

# Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying

## A.R.S §15-341 Harassment – Intimidation – Bullying Policy:

Victim Rights In compliance with Arizona Revised Statute §15-341 regarding victim rights, all Buckeye Elementary School District students have the right to attend school without the fear of being harassed, intimidated or bullied. Harassment, intimidation or bullying is generally defined as making someone worry, feel tormented or troubled. Forms of bullying include verbal or physical harassment; sexual, ethnic, racial or religious harassment; and hazing of other students. Harassment, intimidation or bullying of any kind will not be tolerated in district schools. Students found guilty of harassment, intimidation or bullying are subject to disciplinary action, which may include warnings, parent communication, detention and in-school or out-of-school suspension. Students will not bother or annoy other students physically, verbally or visually; this includes language or gestures which insult, intimidate or negatively incite another person's feelings. Victim rights paperwork is available in the front office of each school site and reiterates the information included in this section of the District Parent Handbook.

Retaliation in any form for the filing of a harassment, intimidation or bullying complaint is expressly prohibited.

The Governing Board believes it is the right of every student to be educated in a positive, safe, caring, and respectful learning environment. The Board further believes a school environment inclusive of these traits maximizes student achievement, fosters student personal growth, and helps students build a sense of community that promotes positive participation as members of society. The District, in partnership with parents, guardians, and students, shall establish and maintain a school environment based on these beliefs.

The District shall identify and implement age-appropriate programs designed to instill in students the values of positive interpersonal relationships, mutual respect, and appropriate conflict resolution.

To assist in achieving a school environment based on the beliefs of the Governing Board, bullying, harassment or intimidation as defined by this policy will not be tolerated.

### **Definitions**

Bullying: Bullying may occur when a student or group of students engages in any form of behavior that includes such acts as intimidation and/or harassment that

A. has the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm or damage to property,

B. is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that the action, behavior, or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment in the form of physical or emotional harm,

C. occurs when there is a real or perceived imbalance of power or strength, or

D. may constitute a violation of law.

Bullying of a student or group of students can be manifested through written, verbal, physical, or emotional means and may occur in a variety of forms including, but not limited to

A. verbal, written/printed or graphic exposure to derogatory comments, extortion, exploitation, name calling, or rumor spreading either directly through another person or group or through cyberbullying,

B. exposure to social exclusion or ostracism,

C. physical contact including but not limited to pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, or spitting, and

D. damage to or theft of personal property.

*Cyberbullying:* Cyberbullying is, but not limited to, any act of bullying committed by use of electronic technology or electronic communication devices, including telephonic devices, social networking and other Internet communications, on school computers, networks, forums and mailing lists, or other District-owned property, and by means of an individual's personal electronic media and equipment.

*Harassment:* Harassment is intentional behavior by a student or group of students that is disturbing or threatening to another student or group of students. Intentional behaviors that characterize harassment include, but are not limited to, stalking, hazing, social exclusion, name calling, unwanted physical contact and unwelcome verbal or written comments, photographs and graphics. Harassment may be related, but not limited to, race, religious orientation, sexual orientation, cultural background, economic status, size or personal appearance. Harassing behaviors can be direct or indirect and by use of social media.

*Intimidation:* Intimidation is intentional behavior by a student or group of students that places another student or group of students in fear of harm of person or property. Intimidation can be manifested emotionally or physically, either directly or indirectly, and by use of social media.

### **Prohibitions and Discipline**

Students are prohibited from bullying, harassment, or intimidation on school grounds, school property, school buses, at school bus stops, at school-sponsored events and activities, and through the use of electronic technology or electronic communication equipment on school computers, networks, forums, or mailing lists.

Disciplinary action may result for bullying, harassment, or intimidation which occurs outside of the school and the school day when such bullying, harassment, or intimidation results in a substantial physical, mental, or emotional negative effect on the victim while on school grounds, school property, school buses, at school bus stops, or at school-sponsored events and activities, or when such act(s) interfere with the authority of the school system to maintain order. All suspected violations of law will be reported to local law enforcement.

## **Reporting Incidents of Bullying/ Harassment/ Intimidation**

A student who is experiencing bullying, harassment, intimidation or believes another student is experiencing bullying, harassment, or intimidation is to report the situation to the principal or another school employee. A school employee who becomes aware of or suspects a student is being bullied, harassed or intimidated shall immediately notify the school administrator. School personnel shall maintain confidentiality of the reported information.

The initial notification of an alleged incident may be provided verbally. A detailed written description of the incident and any other relevant information must be provided on form(s) made available by the school and submitted to the principal within one (1) school day of the verbal report. Should the principal be the employee who observes, is informed of, or suspects a student is experiencing bullying the principal shall document the incident or concern in writing. Failure by an employee to report a suspected case of bullying may result in disciplinary action up to suspension without pay or dismissal pursuant to Board Policies GCQF and GDQD.

Reprisal by any student or staff member directed toward a student or employee related to the reporting of a case of bullying or a suspected case of bullying, harassment, or intimidation shall not be tolerated, and the individual(s) will be subject to the disciplines set out in applicable District policies and administrative regulations.

At the time a student reports alleged bullying, harassment, or intimidation the principal shall provide to the student who has allegedly been bullied, harassed, or intimidated a written copy of student rights, protections and support services available to the student and shall notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of the suspected incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The principal shall investigate all reports of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. If the principal determines that bullying, harassment, or intimidation has occurred, discipline will be administered pursuant to Board Policies JK, JKD, and JKE. Regardless of the outcome of the investigation the principal will meet with the involved students to review the findings of the investigation. Subject to the restrictions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) set out in Policy JR, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the involved students shall also be informed of the findings of the investigation.

Documentation related to reported bullying, harassment, or intimidation and subsequent investigation shall be maintained by the District for not less than six (6) years. In the event the District reports incidents to persons other than school officials or law enforcement all individually identifiable information shall be redacted. Restrictions established by FERPA on disclosure of personally identifiable student information must be observed at all times.

The Superintendent shall establish procedures for the dissemination of information to students, parents and guardians. The information will include, but not be limited to, Governing Board policies, incident reporting, support services (proactive and reactive) and student's rights. The dissemination of this information shall

A. occur during the first (1st) week of each school year,

B. be provided to each incoming student during the school year at the time of the student's registration,

C. be posted in each classroom and in common areas of the school, and

D. be summarized in the student handbook and on the District website, and

the Superintendent shall establish procedures for the dissemination of information to District employees including, but not limited to

A. Governing Board policy,

B. preventive measures,

C. incident reporting procedures,

D. available support services for students (both proactive and reactive), and

E. student rights.

Information will be provided to staff members at the beginning of each instructional year and on the first day of employment for new employees.

The Superintendent shall establish procedures designed to protect the health and safety of students who are physically harmed as the result of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. These will include, when appropriate, procedures for contacting emergency medical services, law enforcement agencies, or both.

Knowingly submitting a false report under this policy shall subject the student to discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion. Where disciplinary action is necessary pursuant to any part of this policy, relevant District policies shall be followed.

Law enforcement authorities shall be notified any time District officials have a reasonable belief that an incidence of bullying is a violation of the law. (Board Policy JICK)