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Bullying Prevention and Education

Statement of Purpose

The Board of Education supports a secure and positive school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment, and any type of bullying behavior. The purpose of this policy is to promote consistency of approach and to help create a climate in which all types of bullying are regarded as unacceptable.

Bullying and other behaviors as defined below are prohibited on district property, at district or school-sanctioned activities and events, when students are being transported in any vehicle dispatched by the district or one of its schools, or off school property when such conduct has a nexus to school or any district curricular or non-curricular activity or event.

Prohibited Behavior

- Bullying
- Retaliation against those reporting bullying and/or other behaviors prohibited by this policy
- Making knowingly false accusations of bullying behavior

Definitions

Bullying is the use of coercion or intimidation to obtain control over another person or to cause physical, mental, or emotional harm to another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal, or electronically transmitted expressions (i.e., cyberbullying) or by means of a physical act or gesture. Bullying is prohibited against any student for any reason, including but not limited to any such behavior that is directed toward a student on the basis of their academic performance, on the basis of their weight, height, or body size, or any basis protected by federal and state law, including disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, , family composition, national origin, religion, ancestry, or the need for special education services, whether such characteristic(s) is actual or perceived.

Note: At the Board's discretion, the policy may state "or against whom federal and state laws prohibit discrimination upon the bases described in C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1)(ll)(I)" instead of listing the specific classes protected by federal and state discrimination laws.

Retaliation is an act or communication intended as retribution against an individual who reports an act of bullying. Retaliation can also include knowingly making false accusations of bullying or acting to influence the investigation of, or the response to, a report of bullying.

False Accusations of bullying are those made knowingly by an individual or group of individuals with the purpose of causing harm to another individual and which are false.

Prevention and Intervention

The superintendent will develop a comprehensive program to address bullying at all school levels and will ensure that the program is consistently applied across all students and staff. The program will be aimed toward accomplishing the following goals:

1. To send a clear message to students, staff, parents, and community members that bullying and retaliation against a student who reports bullying will not be tolerated.

2. To train staff on an annual basis in taking proactive steps to prevent bullying from occurring, which includes but is not limited to, training on the bullying prevention and education policy, how to recognize and intervene in bullying situations, and positive school climate practices.

3. To implement procedures for immediate intervention, investigation, and confrontation of students engaged in bullying behavior.

4. To initiate efforts to change the behavior of students engaged in bullying behaviors through re-education on acceptable behavior, discussions, counseling, and appropriate negative consequences.

5. To foster a productive partnership with parents and community members in order to help maintain a bullying-free environment across settings.

6. To support targets of bullying through a layered continuum of supports that includes, but is not limited to, individual and peer counseling.

7. To help develop peer support networks, social skills, and confidence for all students.

8. To support positive school climate efforts that clearly define, teach, and reinforce prosocial behavior. This includes intentional efforts to promote positive relationships between staff and students as well as students with other students.

9. To designate a team of persons at each school who advise the school administration on the severity and frequency of bullying. The team of persons at the school may include, but need not be limited to, school resource officers, social workers, school psychologists, health professionals, mental health professionals, members of bullying prevention or youth resiliency community organizations, counselors, teachers, administrators, parents, and students.

10. To survey students' impressions of the severity and frequency of bullying behaviors in their school.

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11. To include students in the development, creation, and delivery of bullying prevention efforts as developmentally appropriate.

12. To provide character building for students that includes, but is not limited to, age-appropriate, evidence-based social and emotional learning as well as information on the recognition and prevention of bullying behaviors.

Reporting
Any student who believes they have been a victim of bullying and/or other behaviors prohibited by this policy, or who has witnessed such bullying and/or other prohibited behaviors, is strongly encouraged to immediately report it to a school administrator, counselor, or teacher.

Investigating and Responding
As part of the superintendent's comprehensive program to address bullying, procedures will be developed with the goal of immediate intervention and investigation in response to reports of students engaged in bullying and/or other behaviors prohibited by this policy. Procedures will include, to the extent appropriate as determined by the investigator and designated administrator, and in accordance with applicable law and local school board policy and procedures, notification to parents/guardians of the results of bullying investigations and their right to appeal investigatory findings to the district.

Supports and Referrals
As part of the superintendent's comprehensive program to address bullying, procedures will be developed with the aim toward accomplishing the following goals:

- Initiate efforts to change the behavior of students engaged in bullying behaviors.
- Support targets of bullying in ways that avoid increasing their likelihood of discipline.
- Support witnesses of bullying.

A student who engages in any act of bullying, retaliation, and/or other behaviors prohibited by this policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the bullying behavior will be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made. Bullying behavior that constitutes discrimination or harassment will be subject to investigation and discipline under related Board policies and procedures. Students targeted by bullying when such bullying behavior may constitute unlawful discrimination or harassment also have additional rights and protections under Board policies and procedures regarding discrimination and harassment.

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LEGAL REF.: C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (2)(a)(I)(K) *(policy required as part of safe schools plan)*

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity
JB, Equal Educational Opportunities
JBB*, Sex-based Harassment
JICDA, Code of Conduct
JICDD*, Violent and Aggressive Behavior
JICDE*-E-1, Bullying Report Form – Exhibit
JICDE*-E-2, Bullying Investigation Form – Exhibit
JICJ, Student Use of Cell Phones and Other Personal Technology Devices
JK, Student Discipline
JKD/JKE, Suspension/Expulsion of Students (and Other Disciplinary Interventions)
JLDAC, Screening/Testing of Students (And Treatment of Mental Disorders)

NOTE: For purposes of this policy, these terms have the following meanings:

- *"Race" includes hair texture, hair length, hair type, or a protective hairstyle that is commonly or historically associated with race. C.R.S. 22-32-110 (1)(k).*
- *"Protective Hairstyle" includes such hairstyles as braids, locs, twists, tight coils or curls, cornrows, bantu knots, afros, and head wraps. Id.*
- *"Sexual Orientation" means an individual's identity, or another individual's perception thereof, in relation to the gender or genders to which the individual is sexually or emotionally attracted and the behavior or social affiliation that may result from the attraction. C.R.S. 2-4-401 (13.5) and C.R.S. 24-34-301 (24).*
- *"Gender Expression" means an individual's way of reflecting and expressing the individual's gender to the outside world, typically demonstrated through appearance, dress, and behavior. C.R.S. 2-4-401 (3.4) and C.R.S. 24-34-301 (9).*
- *"Gender Identity" means an individual's innate sense of the individual's own gender, which may or may not correspond with the individual's sex assigned at birth. C.R.S. 2-4-401 (3.5) and C.R.S. 24-34-301 (10).*