

Bartlett City Board of Education		6002
Descriptor Term: STUDENT DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, BULLYING, AND CYBER-BULLYING AND INTIMIDATION	Descriptor Code: Student Services	Issue Date: 06/23/2014
	Rescinds:	Revised: 05/24/2018; 07/23/2020; 07/23/2026

The Bartlett City Board of Education has determined that a safe, civil, and supportive environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. In order to maintain that environment, acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination, harassment, hazing or any other victimization of students, based on any actual or perceived traits or characteristics, are prohibited.¹

This policy shall cover behaviors of students and employees while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, engaged in any online or virtual learning activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation, or at any official school bus stop. If the act takes place off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, this policy is in effect if the conduct is directed specifically at a student or students and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying, Intimidation, or Harassment - An act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, and:

- A. If the act takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation or at any official school bus stop, the act has the effect of:
 1. Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property;
 2. Knowingly placing a student or students in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
 3. Causing emotional distress to a student or students; or
 4. Creating a hostile educational environment; or
- B. If the act takes place off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, it is directed specifically at a student or students and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process.

Bullying may be further described as unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another student who is not a sibling or current dating partner that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is ongoing or highly likely to be repeated.²

¹ T.C.A. §49-6-4504

² *Bullying Surveillance Among Youths: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements, Version 1.0.* Atlanta, GA; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Department of Education; 2014.

1 *Cyber-bullying* - A form of bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices.
2 Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones or other wireless
3 telecommunication devices, personal digital assistants, computers, electronic mail,
4 instant messaging, text messaging, social networking sites, videos, and websites.

5 *Hazing* - An intentional or reckless act by a student or group of students that is directed
6 against any other student(s) that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of the
7 student(s) or that induces or coerces a student to endanger his/her mental or physical health
8 or safety. Coaches and other employees of the school district shall not encourage, permit,
9 condone or tolerate hazing activities.³ "Hazing" does not include customary athletic events or
10 similar contest or competitions and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in
11 connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization.

12 REPORTING COMPLAINTS

13 Alleged victims of the above-referenced offenses or any student who has witnessed an act of
14 harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying shall report these incidents immediately to a
15 teacher, school counselor, or school building administrator.⁴ All other members of the school
16 community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any
17 act that may be a violation of this policy to a school teacher, school counselor, or building
18 administrator. All reports to teachers, school counselors, or school administrators other than the
19 Principal shall be immediately reported to the Principal.

20 Any BCS employee who witnesses an act of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying
21 shall report the conduct to the Principal.

22 Reports of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying may be made anonymously to any
23 teacher, school counselor, school administrator, or member of Student Services. All such reports
24 shall be immediately communicated to the Principal. Formal disciplinary action may not be taken
25 against a student based solely upon an anonymous report.

26 INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS⁵

27 The Principal or Assistant Principal at each school shall be responsible for investigating and
28 resolving complaints of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying including but not
29 limited to, reports that a student or school employee has transmitted by an electronic device any
30 comments containing a credible threat to cause bodily injury or death to a student or school
31 employee.

32 The Principal or Assistant Principal shall commence the investigation within forty-eight (48) hours
33 of receipt of the report, unless the need for more time is appropriately documented. The Principal
34 or Assistant Principal shall initiate an appropriate intervention within twenty (20) calendar days
35 from the receipt of the initial report, unless the need for more time is appropriately documented.
36 Within forty-eight (48) hours of the findings being complete, the Principal or Assistant Principal
37 shall inform the parent/guardian of the student(s) involved in any act of harassment, intimidation,
38 bullying, or cyberbullying of the investigation findings and whether corrective action was taken.

³ T.C.A. §49-2-120

⁴ T.C.A. §49-6-4505(b)

⁵ T.C.A. 49-6-4503

1 Upon the determination of a violation of this Policy, the Principal or Assistant Principal shall
2 immediately inform the parent/guardian of the student's involvement in an act of harassment,
3 intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying. The Principal or Assistant Principal shall inform the
4 parent/guardian of the availability of counseling and support services by school counselors if
5 necessary.

6 Following any investigation, the Principal or Assistant Principal shall report the findings of the
7 investigation along with disciplinary action taken to the Superintendent and Board Chairman.

8 9 RETALIATION AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS

10
11 Retaliation against any person who reports or assists in any investigation of an act alleged
12 in this policy is prohibited. An employee found to have engaged in retaliation shall be
13 subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. A student found to have
14 engaged in retaliation shall be disciplined in accordance with Bartlett City Schools
15 discipline policies and procedures.

16
17 Falsely accusing another person of having committed an act prohibited under this Policy as a
18 means of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying is prohibited and is itself a violation
19 of this Policy. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have
20 knowingly falsely accused another may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and
21 including suspension and expulsion. The consequences for an employee found to have knowingly
22 falsely accused another include employee discipline up to and including termination.

23 CONSEQUENCES

24 School administrators shall consider the nature and circumstances of the incident, the age of
25 the violator, the degree of harm, previous incidences or patterns of behavior, or any other
26 factors, as appropriate to properly respond to each situation.

27 A substantiated charge against an employee shall result in disciplinary action up to and including
28 termination. A substantiated charge against a student may result in corrective or disciplinary
29 action consistent with Bartlett City Schools discipline policies and procedures.

30 An employee disciplined for violation of this Policy may appeal the decision by contacting the
31 Federal Rights Coordinator or the Superintendent. Any student disciplined for violation of this
32 policy may appeal the decision in accordance with Bartlett City Schools disciplinary policies and
33 procedures.

34 NOTIFICATION AND TRAINING

35
36 This policy shall be disseminated annually to all school staff, students, and parents via employee
37 and student handbooks and the BCS website. The Federal Rights Coordinator shall be
38 responsible for ensuring that all school staff, students, parents are notified of this Policy. Further,
39 the Federal Rights Coordinator shall be responsible for ensuring the education of students and
40 parents and the training of school staff as to the definition, prevention, intervention, and
41 recognition of harassment, intimidation, bullying, and cyber-bullying.

42 At the beginning of each school year, the Federal Rights Coordinator shall make available to
43 students and parents information relative to bullying prevention programs which promote
44 awareness of the harmful effects of bullying and to permit discussion with respect to prevention

1 policies and strategies.⁶ Additionally, the Federal Rights Coordinator shall provide teachers and
2 counselors a copy of this Policy along with information on its implementation, bullying prevention,
3 and strategies to address bullying and harassment when it happens.

⁶ T.C.A. 49-6-4503