NO. 249

A. W. BEATTIE CAREER CENTER

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: BULLYING/CYBER-BULLYING

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249 BULLYING/CYBER-BULLYING

1. Purpose

The A. W. Beattie Career Center Joint Operating Committee (JOC) recognizes that bullying/ cyber-bullying and intimidation have a negative effect on school climate. Students who are bullied, cyber-bullied, intimidated or fearful of other students may not be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered by A. W. Beattie Career Center. Bullying/Cyber-bullying of a student by another student is strictly prohibited on Career Center property, in Career Center buildings, on school buses and at Career Center-sponsored events and/or activities whether occurring on or off campus, directly or through any form of digital/electronic messaging or social media.

2. Definitions

Bullying/Cyber-bullying is when unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths that involves an observed or perceived imbalance of power is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying/Cyber-bullying may inflict or distress the targeted youth with and including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm. Bullying/Cyber-bullying has the intent and effect of:

a. Reducing the dignity of that individual with respect to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender identity, gender expression, age or disability.
b. Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a student.
c. Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of a student's personal property.
d. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm.
e. Placing a student in emotional unrest by spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships or environment, engaging in social exclusion, extortion, intimidation or ridicule.

f. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities.

g. Creating verbal statement(s) or written remark(s) that are taunting, malicious, threatening or sexual.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, shall include cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying is a form of verbal and psychological bullying that may occur through the use of electronic technology or communication, including data, computer software or online platforms regardless of their origin, using a device, system, network, internet service, email, social media or other digital means, including artificial intelligence generated or modified media , when the conduct meets criteria and definition of bullying.

Artificial intelligence generated or modified media may include text, code, images, audio or video data that has been created or modified from its original source data through the use of artificial intelligence technology, programs, or platforms.

Responding party is defined at the person identified by the report.

The term Bullying/Cyber-bullying shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.

3. Authority
School Code
24 P.S.
13-1303.1A

A. W. Beattie Career Center will not tolerate known acts of Bullying/Cyber-bullying occurring on Career Center property, at Career Center-sponsored activities scheduled on or off Career Center grounds or during the time students necessarily spend traveling to and from the Career Center or Career Center-sponsored activities.

Prevention/Intervention

A.W. Beattie Career Center utilizes a number of positive preventions and interventions to facilitate a positive student climate. This includes, but is not limited to, BAT Student Voices, Beattie 360, PNC Partner Up, and Student CTSO Organizations.

4. Delegation of Responsibility

It shall be the responsibility of staff members who observe or become aware of an act of Bullying/Cyber-bullying to take immediate appropriate steps to intervene.

If a staff member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the Bullying/Cyber-bullying persists, he/she shall report the Bullying/Cyber-bullying to the administration for further investigation.

The Director or designee shall develop and maintain administrative regulations to implement this policy. The Director or designee shall ensure that this policy and Administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students. The Director or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Joint Operating Committee.

	Career Center administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report: 1. Joint Operating Committee's Bullying/Cyber-Bullying Policy. 2. Report of Bullying/Cyber-bullying incidents. 3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs. 4. Inclusion in Code of Student Conduct and Annual Review/Posting.
5. Guidelines	The Code of Student Conduct shall contain this policy and be disseminated annually. This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on A. W. Beattie's website. The Assistant Director or designee is responsible for notifying parents/guardians of Bullying/Cyber-bullying reports <u>Student, Parent/Guardian and Employee Reporting</u> A.W. Beattie Career Center encourages all students and parents/guardians who become aware of any act of bullying/cyber-bullying to immediately report that conduct. Students may report acts of bullying/cyber-bullying to their instructors, administration or other employees who will refer them to the Assistant Director or designee. A report may also be made to Safe2Say. A prompt investigation will be conducted by administration and a prompt notification of parents/guardians of all students involved will occur once a determination is made. Please note that AWBCC administrators are not responsible for policing student's social media. This is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. All AWBCC administrators receiving a complaint shall handle the report objectively, neutral and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor any person involved. AWBCC staff who observe bullying/cyber-bullying or receive a report shall not conduct an independent investigation but shall take appropriate action to protect the safety of the involved students and promptly provide a summary of the observed or reported conduct. For the purposes of this policy, a reporter is an individual, other than Career Center staff, who reports alleged bullying/cyber-bullying directed at one or more students. A complainant is the alleged victim or target of the conduct. In some circumstances, the same individual may serve as both the reporter and the complainant. The AWBCC Executive Director or designee shall encourage the complainant or reporter to complete the designated report form. If, due to age, disability, or other incapacity, the complainant or reporter is unable to complete the form, the Executive Director or designee shall document the report and compete the form on the individual's behalf. If the report is made by someone other than the complainant, the complainant shall be notified promptly, informed of the report, and encouraged to complete the Career Center reporting form.

As soon as practicable after the receipt of the report of bullying/cyber-bullying, the Career Center shall notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any student involved in the incident.

If the complainant, staff, or other professionals with knowledge of the complainant's health and well-being indicate that notifying a parent/guardian could place the complainant or another person at risk of abuse, neglect or other imminent harm, the building principal , in consultation with the Executive Director and legal counsel, and as appropriate, law enforcement, child welfare authorities, or other qualified professionals, may determine whether parental notification should be delayed as is permitted by law. The basis for the delay must be documented, and parent/guardian notification shall occur as soon as legally and safely practicable.

Threat Assessment

When a student's behavior indicates a threat to the safety of the student, other students, Career Center employees, Career Center facilities, the community or others, Career Center staff shall make a referral to the threat assessment team in accordance with applicable law and JOC policy.

Discrimination/Harassment

If, at the time of the report or at any time during the investigation of the alleged bullying/ cyber-bullying, there is reason to believe that the conduct may fall within the provisions of the JOC's discrimination/harassment policies, the Title IX Coordinator must be promptly notified. Upon notification, the Title IX Coordinator will immediately initiate steps to comply with appropriate policies and procedures. The investigation will be handled as a joint and concurrent investigation to address all applicable allegations and legal requirements.

Investigation Procedures

The Joint Operating Committee directs that all complaints of Bullying/Cyber-Bullying shall be promptly investigated and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Each administrator or designee is authorized to investigate reports of Bullying/Cyber-Bullying brought to their attention by students, parents/guardians, school employees or bus drivers. Any investigation of a report may include meetings with complainant, the individual accused of the conduct, students, parents/guardians or employees, other witnesses, a review of physical, electronic or documentary evidence, student records, other relevant information provided during the investigation and other reasonable efforts to understand the facts surrounding a reported incident. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with A. W. Beattie's legal and investigative obligations. Investigation must occur promptly and be impartial, thorough and comprehensive.

Investigative Findings

The investigation shall prepare findings that summarize the investigation, determine whether the allegations have been substantiated, identify any violation of JOC policy or

applicable law, and recommend appropriate corrective action. As soon as practicable after determining that an incident of bullying or cyber-bullying has occurred, AWBCC shall notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any student involved in the incident of the determination of the investigation. The complainant/reporter and the accused shall be informed of the outcome of the investigation within a reasonable period of time, consistent with the Family Educational and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other applicable policies and laws. The accused shall not be informed of any individual remedies provided to the complainant.

Consequences/Discipline

Students who violate this policy will be subject to discipline consistent with the Code of Student Conduct. Consequences for students who are found to have bullied others may include counseling, Student Assistance Program (SAP) referral, a parent/guardian conference, suspension, expulsion, a loss of school privileges and/or exclusion from school-sponsored activities as defined in the Student Discipline Policy. Depending upon the severity of a particular situation, the administrator may also take the appropriate steps to ensure students' safety. Such steps may include separating and supervising the students involved, providing employee support for students as needed, reporting incidents to law enforcement, if appropriate, and the implementation of a safety plan and/or a supervision plan with parents/guardians.

Interplay With Other School District Policies

Nothing in this policy shall prevent school employees from enforcing, imposing discipline or fulfilling their professional responsibilities under other school district policies or student disciplinary rules.

This policy shall not be interpreted as preventing a student or parent/guardian from filing a complaint under the school's harassment policy (#248).

Reprisal

No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of Bullying/ Cyber-bullying. Any student who retaliates against another student for reporting Bullying/ Cyber-bullying or for assisting or testifying in the investigation or hearing will be subject to a disciplinary consequence under the Student Discipline Policy.

References:

School Code - 24 P.S. Sec. 1301.B, 1302-A, 1303.1-A
State Board of Education Regulations - 22 PA Code Sec. 12.3
Board Policy - 000, 218, 233, 236, 247, 248, 815