

443.92 – BULLYING

The intent of this anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring, and safe environment without fear of being bullied at school or school related activities. Bullying is anti-social behavior and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Bullying behavior is prohibited in all schools, buildings, property and educational environments, including any property or vehicle owned, leased, contracted or used by the school district. Educational environments include, but are not limited to, every activity under school supervision.

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-age children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time. The three main types of bullying are:

- Physical - Physical bullying involves harmful actions against a person's body. Some examples are hitting, pinching, kicking, tripping, spitting, touching inappropriately. It also involves interfering with another person's property and stealing.
- Verbal - Verbal bullying is speaking to a person or about a person in a way that is unkind and hurtful to that person e.g. teasing, name calling, insulting, threatening, spreading rumors, and making racist remarks.
- Non verbal - Non verbal bullying refers to the types of behaviors that upset, exclude or embarrass another person e.g. leaving a person out of a game or activity on purpose, making rude gestures such as poking out tongue, writing hate notes about a person that will be upsetting to that person, using technology in a hurtful manner, cyber bullying, etc.

Cyber bullying is the use of any electronic communication device to convey a message in any form (text, image, audio or video) that defames, intimidates, harasses or is otherwise intended to harm, insult or humiliate in a deliberate, repeated or hostile and unwanted manner under a person's true or false identity. Any communication of this form which disrupts or prevents a safe and positive educational environment may be considered cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is unacceptable and a violation of the district's technology acceptable use policy and procedures.

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behavior, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences, or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lack of concentration, or truancy from school. Students must be encouraged to report bullying in schools. There shall be no retaliation against the complainant. Any person who engages in retaliatory conduct against a complainant shall be disciplined.

Teaching and support staff must be alert to and aware of the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy. If bullying is suspected or reported, staff will deal with the incident immediately.

REPORTING

Victims of alleged bullying, observers of bullying, and parents or guardians of students who have allegedly been bullied are encouraged to report incidents of bullying to the building principal, a school counselor or other school employee. All reports of bullying shall be taken seriously, treated fairly and promptly and thoroughly investigated. Retaliation against individuals for filing reports under this policy or assisting in the investigation of such reports is prohibited.

IMPLEMENTATION

SCHOOLS

The following steps will be taken as appropriate when dealing with incidents:

- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the principal
- The principal will interview all concerned and will record the incident
- Parents will be kept informed
- Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned

STUDENTS

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Being offered an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a school counselor/school social worker or other staff of their choice
- Offering ongoing support with the goal of restoring self-esteem and confidence
- Students who have bullied will be helped by:
 - Being offered an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a school counselor or other staff of their choice
 - Discovering why the student became involved
 - Identifying the bullying behavior and the need to change
 - Developing a plan to make amends for the incident
 - Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude/behavior of the student

The following disciplinary steps may be taken as appropriate:

- Official warnings to cease the offending behavior
- Detention
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- Loss of recess or privileges
- Short-term in-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion

STAFF

All adults involved with the school, including bus drivers, administrators, custodians, teachers, coaches, office personnel, paraprofessionals, and food service staff need to help in the prevention of bullying. Any adult witnessing any form of bullying must fill out an incident report and give it to the building principal.

If a District employee has been found to have bullied or retaliated against a student in violation of this policy, he/she shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

DISCLOSURE AND PUBLIC REPORTING

The policy will be annually distributed to all students enrolled in the school district, their parents and/or guardians and employees. It will be distributed to organizations in the community having cooperative agreements with the schools. The school district will also provide a copy of the policy to any person who requests it.

Records will be maintained on the number and types of reports made, and sanctions imposed for incidents found to be in violation of the bullying policy.

Adopted: January 24, 2007

Revised: February 18, 2009; June 16, 2010; February 20, 2013; December 21, 2016