

## **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

The Board of Education believes that a safe, respectful, and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards.

Bullying and harassment is prohibited, will not be tolerated, and is viewed as a negative behavior which interferes with student learning and creating a safe, respectful environment. This includes inappropriate conduct by other students as well as any other person in the school environment, including employees, Board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors and volunteers. It is the policy of the District to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. This policy applies to all activities in the District, including activities on school property and those occurring off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the school's control, or where an employee is engaged in school business. Misconduct occurring outside of school may also be disciplined if it interferes with the school environment.

### **Definition**

**Bullying and harassment** is defined as a negative, intimidating action(s), that intentionally or unintentionally, harms, upsets, or compromises the physical, psychological, educational, or emotional well being of a person(s). This would include any bullying or harassing behaviors based on any actual or perceived characteristic, such as sex, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, socioeconomic status, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, height, weight, marital status, and expression of a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic.

Bullying and harassment of any form is prohibited, including but not limited to:

1. **Physical-** hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, pulling, taking and/or damaging personal belongings or extorting money, blocking or impeding students' movement, unwelcome physical contact.
2. **Verbal-** taunting, malicious teasing, insulting, name calling, making threats.
3. **Psychological/Emotional-** spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, coercion, or engaging in social exclusion/shunning, extortion, or intimidation.

This prohibition also includes examples such as gestures, written, verbal, graphic, socially aggressive acts, comments, threats, or actions to a student(s) which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm, reasonable fear for personal safety, and/or personal degradation. Additionally, sexual harassment, hazing, and/or inappropriate use of technology (in accordance with Board Policy 5100, 6175) as a means of bullying or harassment is prohibited, such as electronically transmitted acts- i.e., Internet, telephone or cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand held device.

**Hazing** shall be defined for purposes of this policy as performing any act or coercing a group or individual with less perceived power to perform any act of initiation into any class, group, or organization that causes or creates a risk of causing physical, verbal, or emotional harm. Forms of hazing include examples listed above and also may include:

1. physical punishment or infliction of pain
2. humiliation or embarrassment
3. dangerous or illegal activity
4. activities to cause mental or psychological stress
5. forced detention or kidnapping
6. undressing or exposure of intimates

### **Reporting**

Every student should, and every staff member must, without exception, report any situation that they believe to be bullying or harassment. Formal reports should be made to the Building Administrator or the Executive Director of Human Resources to initiate an investigation. Every reasonable effort will be made to maintain confidentiality during the investigation process. However, a proper investigation will, in some circumstances, require the disclosure of names and allegations. Furthermore, without exception, both the parent and/or legal guardian of the alleged victim and the parent and/or legal guardian of the alleged perpetrator shall be notified of the situation. (See AP 5116)

### **Consequences and Remedial Measures**

The board requires its school administrators to develop and implement procedures that ensure both the appropriate consequences and remedial responses to a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of bullying. Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying or harassment shall be given full consideration of the factors, will be unique to the individual incident, will vary progressively in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of discipline history and performance, and must be consistent with consequences defined in the Student Code of Conduct. Remedial measures shall also be assigned to individuals who violate this policy and shall be designed to: correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the behavior; and protect the victim(s) of the act(s). Some consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below:

#### **Example of Consequences**

- Reprimand
- Temporary removal from the classroom
- Denial of privileges
- Threat Assessment
- Behavioral Contract
- Classroom or administrative detention
- Referral to disciplinarian
- Restitution
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Referral to outside agency
- Legal action
- Expulsion or termination

#### **Some Examples of Remedial Measures**

- Corrective instruction (individual and/or group awareness sessions)
- Teach strategies, such as building empathy, self-esteem, social skills, anger management, etc.
- Peer support group, focused on skill building, social skills, or other appropriate educational focus
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience
- Positive Behavior Support Plan
- Behavioral assessment or evaluation
- Referral to Support Staff/Team
- Student study of relevant anti-bullying/harassment materials
- Student/group presentation of cause and effects of bullying/harassing behaviors (to classroom, staff, etc.)
- Peer/adult mentor
- Parent counseling
- Modification in student routes
- Restitution and restoration
- Anti-bullying/harassment training to student body and staff
- Development and mobilization of a caring, respectful student community of students
- Involvement of parent, community, law enforcement

If the investigation finds bullying or harassment occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remediation, corrective, or disciplinary action. This may include up to expulsion for students, up to discharge for employees, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors, and removal from any officer position and/or a request to resign for board members.

Retaliation against any person for reporting an act or acts of bullying or harassment is prohibited. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as bullying or harassment. Intentionally false bullying or harassment reports, made to get someone in trouble, are also prohibited. Retaliation and intentional false reports may result in remediation and/or disciplinary action as indicated above.

### **Publication**

This policy shall be circulated annually to all school buildings and departments within the district and discussed with students, as well as incorporated into the teacher, student, and parent handbooks. Anti-bullying and harassment programming shall align with the specific needs and goals of each school building and will be reviewed annually.

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