

## **A Letter from the Board of Education of the Cooperstown Central School District**

To our School Community:

Events in our school deserve this reminder and reflection for us as a board of education and all who are our collective responsibility: Hate has no place in our school.

“The Cooperstown Central School District is committed to providing a safe, productive, and positive learning environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and violence.”

“The District will promptly respond to reports of discrimination and harassment, ensure that all investigations are conducted within a reasonably prompt time frame and under a predictable fair grievance process that provides due process and confidentiality protections, then impose disciplinary measures and implement remedies when warranted.”

“The Board of Education recognizes that teaching students respect, civility, and understanding toward others - as well as the practice and reinforcement of appropriate behavior and values of our society - is an important function of the school system. The emotional and physical well-being of our students is a priority in our District, and we will continue in our efforts to grow and learn together.”

Further, “the District is committed to the prevention of violence against any individual or property in the schools or at school activities whether such acts and/or threats of violence are made by students, staff, or others. Threats of violence against students, school personnel and/or school property will not be tolerated whether or not such threats occur on school grounds or during the school day. The District refuses to condone acts and/or threats of violence which threaten the safety and well-being of staff, students, and the school environment. Employees and students shall refrain from engaging in threats or physical actions that create a safety hazard for others. All staff who are made aware of physical and/or verbal threats to students must immediately report these threats against students to the next level of supervisory authority for prompt action.”

Many Cooperstown Central School District policies form the foundation of these standards -- several cited verbatim above -- echoing laws and regulations from New York State and United States of America about the expectations for conduct and discipline that foster positive learning environments.

- Bylaws Policy 1110: School District and Board of Education Legal Status
- Community Relations Policy 3230: Communication to the Board
- Community Relations Policy 3410: Code of Conduct on School Property
- Community Relations Policy 3412: Threats of Violence in School
- Community Relations Policy 3420: Anti-Harassment in the School District
- Non-Instructional Business Operations Policy 5680: Safety and Security
- Students Policy 7310: School Conduct and Discipline
- Students Policy 7330: Searches and Interrogations
- Students Policy 7550: Complaints and Grievances by Students

- Students Policy 7551: Sexual Harassment of Students
- Students Policy 7552: Bullying / Peer Abuse in the Schools
- Students Policy 7553: Hazing of Students
- Students Policy 7580: Dignity for All Students
- Instruction Policy 8130: Equal Educational Opportunities
- Instruction Policy 8242: Civility, Citizenship and Character Education/Interpersonal Violence Prevention Education

Although most of these laws and related policies have been in place for over a decade, we have welcomed many new students, families, employees, volunteers, and community members to the district who may not be familiar with them. As we navigate the evolving pandemic response in education together, especially our students back in classrooms with teachers by their sides, we must continue our work and take action to ensure everyone is safe and feels valued in our school. Conversations and dialogues, trainings and refreshers, curriculum growth and fidelity, policy updates and reviews, and feedback and evaluations are ahead for administrators and staff, the board of education and advisory group volunteers, and students and families.

Our vision is always for a district where these types of policies are no longer needed because these threats don't exist. That will take time and empathy. Our goal, for now, is to make demonstrable progress so when hate rears its ugly head, we all know the way to a safer, more productive, and positive education for everyone.

Sincerely,

Tim Hayes  
Cooperstown Central School District Board of Education  
November 22, 2021