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Victor F. Capellan, Superintendent of Schools

5.3.3 Anti-Bullying

Prohibition of Bullying: Bullying is prohibited in the public schools of Central Falls, Rhode Island [[R.I.G.L. 16-21-26](#)]. The prevention of bullying is part of the Central Falls School District's strategic plan [RI.G.L. 16-7.1-2(e)] and school safety plan [RI.G.L. 16-21-24].

Definition of Bullying: Bullying occurs when a student, while at school, intentionally assaults, batters, threatens, harasses, stalks, menaces, intimidates, extorts, humiliates or taunts another student. Bullying also occurs when a student or a group of students organize a campaign of shunning against another student or when a student or a group of students maliciously spread rumors about another student. In most circumstances, bullying does not include a mutual fight between two students of roughly equal strength who are angry with each other. Such fights are subject to discipline as a violation of school rules prohibiting fighting.

At School: In the context of these regulations, the phrase at school includes the following places and situations:

- In a classroom
- Elsewhere in the school
- On school property Immediately adjacent to school property
- On a school bus or other school vehicle
- At school bus stops
- While students are walking to or from school
- At any school-sponsored activity or event, whether or not held on school premises.

Disciplinary Sanctions: Disciplinary sanctions for bullying may include:

- Loss of the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities
- Loss of opportunity to participate in school social activities
- Loss of the opportunity to participate in graduation activities
- Loss of school bus transportation
- Transfer to another school
- Assignment of additional work or community service In house suspension
- Short term school suspension [10 or fewer days of suspension] or long term suspension [suspension for more than 10 days]
- Admonitions, warnings and counseling

Reporting Bullying: The principal of each school in the Central Falls School District shall establish and prominently publicize to students, staff, volunteers and parents how a report of bullying maybe filed and



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how this report will be acted upon. The victim of bullying, anyone who has witnessed the bullying or and one who has credible information that an act of bullying has taken place may file a report of bullying.

Responsibility of Staff: School staff shall take all reasonable measures to prevent bullying and shall report all acts of bullying that come to their attention. In this context, staff includes volunteers working in the school.

Instruction in the Prevention of Bullying: Students and staff shall be given instruction in the district's Policy Against Bullying. This instruction shall include methods of discouraging and preventing bullying, instruction in how to file a complaint against bullying and the disciplinary action that may be taken against those who commit acts of bullying.

Responsibility of Students: Students who observe an act of bullying or who have reasonable grounds to believe that bullying is taking place are obligated to report the bullying to school authorities. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. The victim of bullying shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report the bullying.

Investigation of Bullying: The principal, or his or her designee, shall investigate all allegations of bullying to school authorities. If the allegation is found to be creditable, appropriate disciplinary sanctions, subject to any appropriate due process procedures, will be imposed. The investigation will include an assessment of what effect the bullying has had on the victim.

Help for the Victim of Bullying: If the victim's mental health has been placed at risk, appropriate referrals will be made. If the bullying included a violent criminal offense, the victim of the bullying will be informed of any school transfer rights under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*.

Prohibition of Retaliation: Retaliation or threats of retaliation in any form designed to intimidate the victim of bullying, those who are witnesses to bullying or those investigating an incident of bullying shall not be tolerated. In most cases, retaliation or a threat of retaliation will result in the imposition of a short or long term school suspension and, in appropriate cases, referral to the police [[R.I.G.L. 11-42-2. Extortion](#) and blackmail] [[R.I.G.L. -59-2. Stalking](#) prohibited].

Prohibition of False Reports of Bullying: False reports concerning bullying will be subject to appropriate school discipline, including short or long term suspension from school.

Individualized School Safety Plan: If a student is the victim of serious or persistent bullying the principal of the school will prepare a written school safety plan outlining what steps will be taken to provide the student with a safe educational environment. This plan will be developed, if possible, with input from the parents of the student. Staff members who are to implement the plan will help formulate it.

Police Notification: When the bullying involves conduct, which violates criminal law the police, shall be notified.



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Mediation Board: The principal of any school in the Central Falls School District may establish a Mediation Board to resolve complaints of bullying in circumstances where mediation may provide an appropriate remedy. The Mediation Board may, when appropriate include students.

Voluntary Participation in Mediation: No student who is the victim of bullying shall be required to participate in mediation or to accept any apology rendered by the bullying student. The decision of a victim not to participate in a mediation program shall not diminish the obligation of the school to impose discipline against the student who has committed an act of bullying.

Bullying Prevention Task Force: The principal of each school in the district shall establish a Bullying Prevention Task Force. This task force may include parents, school staff and law enforcement officers, as well as community members and, if age allows, students. The purpose of this task force will be to develop policies and programs to educate students and staff about the harm caused by bullying. The task force may also create programs to prevent or diminish bullying. The program recommendations of the task force shall be subject to review by the Board of Trustees before programs are implemented. The duties of the Bullying Prevention Task Force may be assigned to the school's student intervention team [R.I.G.L. 16-7.1-2] or to the school's school improvement team [[R.I.G.L. 16-53.1-2](#)].

School Atmosphere: School staff at all times will model correct and courteous behavior to each other, to students and to visitors to the school. Abusive or humiliating language or demeanor will not be accepted. An effort will be made to ensure that each student is well known by at least one certified teacher so that the student will have someone to turn to at school if a bullying situation develops. To the extent possible the influence of cliques and other exclusive student groupings will be diminished by the creation of a range of inclusive school activities in which students will be encouraged to participate [[R.I.G.L. 16-38-4](#) Exclusive Clubs].

Social Skills Training: The school health program and the school counseling services will include appropriate social skills training to help students avoid isolation and to help them interact in a healthy manner.

Reports to the Superintendent and to the Board of Trustees: School principals will provide the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Trustees with a semi-annual report on the incidents of bullying which have taken place in the schools under their respective supervision. This report will include a statement describing what remedial action has been taken to address bullying.

Source: Policy Manual

Approved: August 8, 2008

[CFSD Bullying Documentation Form](#)