

Copenhagen Central School Anti-Bullying Policy

The Board of Education of Copenhagen Central School is committed to protecting its students from bullying, harassment, or discrimination for any reason of any kind. The Board of Education believes that all students are entitled to a safe, equitable and harassment-free school experience. Bullying, harassment, or discrimination will not be tolerated and shall be just cause for disciplinary action. This policy shall be interpreted and applied consistently with all applicable state and federal laws and the Board's collective bargaining agreements. Conduct that constitutes bullying, harassment or discrimination, as defined herein, is prohibited on school grounds, school buses and at all school-sponsored activities, programs and events.

It is essential that a basic prevention curriculum be in place so that the school will receive a foundation of prevention upon which to build a culture of health, wellness, safety, respect and excellence.

The standards of this policy constitute a specific, focused, coordinated, integrated, culturally sensitive system of supports for all students that will improve relations within the school. It is designed to ensure that the staff has been trained and is supported in the district's efforts to provide awareness, intervention training, and instructional strategies on prevention, and to direct follow-up when incidents are reported and/or occur.

I. Definitions

- A. ***"Bullying"*** means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students. It is further defined as: unwanted purposeful written, verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior, including but not limited to any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment or cause long term damage, cause discomfort or humiliation, or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation, is carried out repeatedly and is often characterized by an imbalance of power. Bullying may be premeditated or a sudden activity. Bullying may involve, but is not limited to:
1. unwanted teasing
 2. threatening
 3. intimidating
 4. stalking
 5. cyberstalking
 6. cyberbullying
 7. physical violence
 8. theft

9. sexual, religious, or racial harassment
10. public humiliation
11. destruction of school or personal property
12. social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
13. rumor or spreading of falsehoods

Bullying is characterized by:

1. **Power imbalance** - occurs when a bully uses his/her physical or social power over a target.
2. **Intent to harm** - the bully seeks to inflict physical or emotional harm and/or takes pleasure in this activity.
3. **Threat of further aggression** - the bully and the target believe the bullying will continue.
4. **Terror** - when any bullying increases, it becomes a “systematic violence or harassment used to intimidate and maintain dominance.”

There are at least three kinds of bullying: **verbal, physical and social/relational.**

1. **Verbal** bullying includes name calling, insulting remarks, verbal teasing, frightening phone calls, violent threats, extortion, taunting, gossip, spreading rumors, racist slurs, threatening electronic communications, anonymous notes, etc.
2. **Physical** bullying includes poking, slapping, hitting, tripping or causing a fall, choking, kicking, punching, biting, pinching, scratching, spitting, twisting arms or legs, damaging clothes and personal property, or threatening gestures.
3. **Social** or relational bullying includes excluding someone from a group, isolating, shunning, spreading rumors or gossiping, arranging public humiliation, undermining relationships, teasing about clothing, looks, giving dirty looks, aggressive stares, etc.

- B. “**Harassment**” means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of technology, computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:
1. places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property;
 2. has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, or employee’s work performance, or either’s opportunities, or benefits;
 3. has the effect of substantially negatively impacting a student’s or employee’s emotional or mental well-being;
 4. has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.
- C. “**Cyberstalking**” means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through

the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at or about a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

- D. **“Cyberbullying”** is defined as the willful and repeated harassment and intimidation of a person through the use of digital technologies, including, but not limited to, email, blogs, social websites, chat rooms, and instant messaging.
- E. **“Bullying”, “Cyberbullying”, and/or “Harassment”** also encompass:
1. retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
 2. retaliation also includes reporting a baseless act of bullying, harassment, or discrimination that is not made in good faith.
 3. perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
 - a. incitement or coercion;
 - b. accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the District school system;
 - c. acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
- F. **“Bullying,” “Cyberbullying”, “Harassment,” and “Discrimination”** (hereinafter referred to as bullying, as defined in Section A, for the purpose of this Policy) also encompass, but are not limited to, unwanted harm towards a student in regard to their real or perceived: sex, race, color, weight, religion, Religious practice, national origin, age, disability (physical, mental, or educational), marital status, socio-economic background, ancestry, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, linguistic preference, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or social/family background on school grounds.
- G. **“Accused”** is defined as any District employee, consultant, contractor, agent, visitor, volunteer, student, or other person in the school, on school grounds, or outside the school at school sponsored events, on school buses, and at training facilities or training programs sponsored by the District who is reported to have committed an act of bullying, whether formally or informally, verbally or in writing.

- H. **“Complainant”** is defined as any District employee, consultant, contractor, agent, visitor, volunteer, student, or other person who formally or informally makes a report of bullying, orally or in writing.
- II. Expectations:** The Copenhagen Central School District expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.
- A. All administrators, faculty, and staff, in collaboration with parents, students, and community members, will incorporate systemic methods for student and staff recognition through positive reinforcement for good conduct, self discipline, good citizenship, and academic success, with the intent to increase positive school culture and behavior. All teachers and staff members shall extend their authority into hallways, student lines/queues, cafeteria, study hall, etc.
- B. Proper prevention and intervention steps shall be taken based on the level of severity of infraction as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, and this policy.

III. Stakeholder Responsibilities

- A. **Professional Development Committee:** The PDP Committee, in collaboration with other District departments, will collaborate with school based staff members, families, and community stakeholders to utilize this Policy and associated procedures to promote academic success, enhance resiliency, build developmental assets, and promote protective factors within the school by providing students with prevention training. These trainings will work to create a climate within the school and within the District that fosters the safety and respect of children and the belief that adults are there to protect and help them. Additionally, students and staff (including but not limited to school based employees, administrators, area/district personnel, counseling staff, bus drivers) will be given the skills, training, and tools needed to create

the foundation for preventing, identifying, investigating, and intervening when issues of bullying arise. The components of prevention training involve the following:

- Learning about and identifying the early warning signs and precursor behaviors that may lead to bullying.
- Gathering information about bullying at school directly from students.

- Establishing clear school wide and classroom rules about bullying.
- Training adults in the school to respond sensitively and consistently to bullying.
- Providing adequate adult supervision, particularly in less structured areas such as in the hallways, cafeteria, locker room and playground.
- Raising parental awareness and involvement in addressing problems.
- Providing instruction in civility, citizenship and character education that emphasizes tolerance and respect for others.

B. **Anti-Bullying Team:** The Anti-Bullying Team addresses acts of violence and school safety. This group shall designate a facilitator to lead meetings. At minimum, this team shall include staff members from administration, guidance, and instruction (which must have representation from elementary, middle school and high school). These designees, selected by the Superintendent, are the key school based personnel who will receive prevention training and assist in the dissemination of prevention methods, intervention, and curriculum, for bullying and other issues that impact the school culture and welfare of students and staff. Those trained in bullying prevention will then collaborate as “violence prevention partners” to implement the *evidence-based interventions and proven programs*. Training will focus on prevention and evidence-based programs.

C. **Students:** There is also an expectation of the student body to collaborate with staff and parents in reporting and self-correcting bullying.

D. **Parent Participation and Partnership:** Opportunities will be provided to encourage parents to participate in prevention efforts with their children in meaningful and relevant ways that address the academic, social, and health needs of their children. The Anti-Bullying Team will offer parents and parent associations’ trainings on violence prevention as well as knowledge of and/or opportunity to participate in any violence prevention initiatives currently taking place via the District school website, open houses, school

newsletters, etc. Training will provide resources and support for parents by linking them with internal supports as well as referral to community-based resources as needed.

IV. Training for students, parents, and school personnel on identifying, preventing, and responding to bullying will be conducted.

At the beginning of each school year, the school principal/designee and or appropriate administrator shall provide awareness of this policy and training on

bullying prevention as referenced in section III.A. above, through reasonable means such as faculty meetings, class meetings, and the “anti-bullying road show” presentation offered by the principal and guidance counselor.

V. Disciplinary sanctions (consequences) and due processes for a person who commits an act of bullying under this policy.

A. Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances, followed by the determination of disciplinary sanctions appropriate to the perpetrator’s position within the district.

1. Consequences and appropriate interventions for students who commit acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to, but not limited to suspension, as outlined in this policy.

Factors that may determine the type of *consequence* may include but are not limited to:

- age, development, and maturity levels of the parties involved
- degree of harm
- surrounding circumstances
- nature and severity of the behavior(s)
- incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behavior
- relationship between the parties involved
- context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred

Factors that may determine the type of *remedial measure or intervention* may include but are not limited to:

Personal

- life skill competencies
- experiential deficiencies
- social relationships
- strengths
- talents
- traits
- interests
- hobbies
- extra-curricular activities
- classroom participation
- academic performance

Environmental

- school culture
- school climate
- student-staff relationships and staff behavior toward the student

- general staff management of classrooms or other educational environments
- staff ability to prevent and de-escalate difficult or inflammatory situations
- social-emotional and behavioral supports
- social relationships
- community activities
- neighborhood culture
- family situation

Consequences for a student shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance, and must be consistent with the Student Code of Conduct. Remedial measures shall be designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of behavior and protect the victim of the act.

2. Consequences and appropriate interventions for a school/district employee found to have committed an act of bullying will be instituted in accordance with District policies, procedures, and agreements.
3. Consequences and appropriate intervention for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials, when necessary.
4. These same actions will apply to persons, whether they be students, school employees, or visitors/volunteers/independent contractors, who are found to have made wrongful and intentional accusations of another as a means of bullying.

VI. Reporting an act of bullying

- A. The principal/designee is responsible for receiving oral or written complaints alleging violations of this policy, as with all infractions of the Student Code of Conduct.
- B. All District faculty and staff are required and must report, in writing, any allegations of bullying, observations of acts of bullying, or violations of this policy to the principal/designee or appropriate area/district administrator. Teachers are urged to keep a personal log of incidents where warnings are issued to individual students.
- C. Any other members of the school community who have credible information that an act of bullying has taken place should file a report of bullying, whether a victim or witness.

- D. Any student (and/or the parent on that complainant's behalf if the complainant is a minor) who believes he/she is a victim of bullying (or any individual, including any student who has knowledge of any incident(s) involving bullying of students) is strongly encouraged to report the incident(s) in writing to a school official. Complaints should be filed as soon as possible after the alleged incident.
- E. The principal shall establish, and prominently publicize to students, staff, volunteers, and parents, how a report of bullying may be filed and how this report will be acted upon (using such media as the school website, student handbook, student central, posters, etc.).
- F. A school district employee, school volunteer, contractor, student, parent/ or other persons who promptly reports in good faith an act of bullying to the appropriate school official, and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set forth in this Policy, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to remedy the reported incident. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments within the CCS.
- G. Administrators/principal/designee(s) shall document in writing and/or via the specified data system all complaints regarding bullying, as with all infractions of the Code of Student Conduct, to ensure that problems are appropriately addressed in a timely manner, whether the report is made verbally or in writing.
- H. Confidential reports may be made utilizing the Copenhagen Central School's Bullying Witness Report forms. This reporting form can be found on the School District's website, the Guidance Office and at the main office. Confidential reports may be delivered to the Anti-Bullying Team Facilitator, the Guidance Office or the main office. Administrators shall use the specified data system to log all reports and interventions.

VII. Bullying Complaints and Resolution

- A. The investigation of a reported act of bullying of a student is deemed to be a school-related activity and begins with a report of such an act. Bullying based on certain characteristics, which are protected statues by other civil rights laws (i.e., race, color, national origin, creed, religion, marital status, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability or predisposing genetic characteristic), can possibly be a violation of that persons civil rights if the district takes no action in response, or if the district is involved in perpetrating the action. Such victims have additional avenues of redress

under those specific laws, which are described in policy 0100, Equal Opportunity, and its accompanying regulation.

- B. The principal/designee shall document all complaints in writing and/or through the appropriate data system to ensure that problems are addressed in a timely manner. Although this Policy encourages students to use the formal written complaint process, school officials will investigate all complaints and reports of harassment, whether or not the complaint is in writing.
- C. If the complaint is about the principal or a staff member's direct supervisor, then the superintendent/designee or appropriate district administrator shall be asked to address the complaint.
- D. **Informal Resolution** occurs when the administrator, along with the *complainant/victim only* agree to informally resolve the complaint. The incident and the resolution must be documented on the appropriate data system.
 - If a mutual resolution has not been achieved, a formal written appeal must be filed within five (5) work days after the informal meeting and submitted to the principal or appropriate area/district supervisor.
- E. **Formal Resolution** occurs when the complainant/student/employee or parent(s), on behalf of the student file a written complaint with the principal/designee or appropriate area/district administrator by utilizing the Bullying Witness Report form. Said form is available on the school district's website, the Anti-Bullying Team Facilitator, the Guidance Office and the main office.
 - According to the level of infraction, parents will be promptly notified of any actions being taken to protect the victim via telephone or personal conference; the frequency of notification will depend on the seriousness of the bullying incident.
- F. The resolution, all interviews and interventions that take place and the corresponding dates shall be documented in writing and/or noted in the district specified data system.

VIII. Investigation requirements for reported acts of bullying under this policy

- A. The procedures for investigating school-based bullying may include the principal/designee.
- B. The investigator may not be the accused or the alleged victim.

- C. The principal/designee shall begin a thorough investigation and interviews with the complainant(s), accused, and witnesses within two (2) school days of receiving a notification of complaint.
- D. During the investigation, the principal/designee may take any action necessary to protect the complainant, or other students consistent with the requirements of applicable regulations and statutes.
 - 1. In general, student complainants will continue attendance at school and pursue their studies as directed while the investigation is conducted and the complaint is pending resolution. Any legal order of a court will prevail.
 - 2. When necessary to carry out the investigation or for other good reasons, and consistent with federal and state privacy laws, the principal/designee also may discuss the complaint with any school district employee, the parent of the complainant or accused, if one or both is a minor (or has given consent or is an adult who has been determined to be incompetent or unable to give informed consent due to disability), and/or child protective agencies responsible for investigating child abuse.
 - 3. During the investigation where an employee is the accused, the principal/designee may recommend to the Superintendent, any action necessary to protect the complainant, or other students consistent with the requirements of applicable statutes, State Board of Education Rules, School Board Policies, and collective bargaining agreements.
- E. Within ten (10) school days of the filing of the complaint, there shall be a written decision by the principal/designee regarding the completion of the investigation. The principal/designee shall make a decision about the validity of the allegations in the complaint and about any corrective action, if applicable, consistent with this policy.
- F. The principal/designee will inform all relevant parties in writing of the decision. A copy of the decision will be kept on the appropriate CCS data management systems.
- G. If the accused is an employee, discipline may be taken, consistent with any applicable collective bargaining agreement provisions, to resolve a complaint of bullying.
- H. No retaliation of any kind is permitted in connection with an individual's having made a bullying complaint and if it occurs, it shall be deemed an additional act of bullying as stated herein this Policy.

IX. Referral for InterventionFor the bully/accused student

- A. Referral of a student to the Anti-Bullying Team (or equivalent school-based team with a problem solving focus) for consideration of appropriate services is made by school personnel or parent to the principal/designee. Parent notification is required. When such a report of formal discipline or formal complaint is made, the principal/designee shall refer the student(s) to the Anti-Bullying Team for determination of need for counseling support and interventions.
- B. School-based intervention and assistance will be determined by the Anti-Bullying Team and may include, but is not limited to:
1. counseling and support to address the needs of the victims of bullying.
 2. counseling interventions to address the behavior of the students who bully (e.g., empathy training, anger management).
 3. intervention which includes assistance and support provided to parents.
 4. analysis and evaluation of school culture with resulting recommendations for interventions aimed at increasing peer ownership and support.
- C. Self-referral for informal consultation: District staff, students or parents may request informal consultation with school staff (e.g., school social worker, school counselor, school psychologist, etc.) to determine the severity of concern and appropriate steps to address the concern of bullying (the involved students' parents may be included) orally or in writing to the principal/designee.

For the victim/complainant

- A. The school psychologist, school guidance counselor or other appropriately trained staff member, may meet with the victim to discuss ways and methods of dealing with bullying in proactive and preventative ways. Counseling may be recommended to the victim.

Any investigations and interventions shall be recorded on the district-specified data system.

X. Incident reporting requirements

- A. The procedure for including incidents of bullying in the school's report of safety and discipline data is required under VADIR.
- B. The district will utilize New York's (VADIR) Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline Data, which includes bullying/harassment in its codes.

- C. Discipline, referral data, investigations, interventions, and actions of discipline shall be recorded on the specified data system, as with other infractions from the Student Code of Conduct.

XI. Process for referral for external investigation

- A. If the act is outside the scope of the district, and determined a criminal act, referral to appropriate law enforcement shall be made immediately, the parent will be notified, and the referral documented by the principal/designee in the specified data system.
- B. While the district does not assume any liability for incidences that must be referred for external investigation, it encourages the provision of assistance and intervention, as the principal/designee deems appropriate. The principal/designee shall use district Reporting Systems to log all reports and interventions.

XII. Appeals process

- A. Appeal procedure for bullying by a student will follow the steps outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
- B. Appeal procedure for an accused/employee:
 1. If the accused/employee wishes to appeal the action taken in resolution of the complaint, such appeal shall be filed in accordance with the relevant collective bargaining agreement.

XIII. Confidentiality

- A. To the greatest extent possible, all complaints will be treated as confidential.
- B. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation as described above. The District's obligation to investigate and take corrective action may supersede an individual's right to privacy.
- C. The complainant's identity shall be protected, but absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The identity of the victim of the reported act shall be protected to the extent possible. If a complainant requests that his/her name not be revealed to the individual(s) against whom a complaint is filed, the staff member responsible for conducting the investigation shall inform the complainant that:
 1. the request may limit the district's ability to respond to his/her complaint;
 2. district policy and federal law prohibit retaliation against complainants and witnesses;
 3. the district will attempt to prevent any retaliation; and
 4. the district will take strong responsive action if retaliation occurs.

XIV. Retaliation Prohibited

- A. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment in connection with filing a complaint or assisting with an investigation under this Policy.
- B. Retaliatory or intimidating conduct against any individual who has made a bullying complaint or any individual who has testified, assisted, or participated, in any manner, in an investigation is specifically prohibited and as detailed in this Policy shall be treated as another incidence of bullying.

XV. Constitutional Safeguard

This policy does not imply to prohibit expressive activity protected by the First Amendment of the United State Constitution.

XVI. Preclusion

This policy should not be interpreted as to prevent a victim or accused from seeking redress under any other available law either civil or criminal.

XVII. Severability

If a provision of this policy is or becomes illegal, invalid or unenforceable in any jurisdiction, that shall not affect the validity or enforceability in that jurisdiction of any other provision of this policy.

XVIII. Monitoring and Review

Each year, as part of the annual review of the code of conduct, this policy will be reviewed to assess its effectiveness and compliance with state and federal law. If changes are needed, revisions will be recommended to the Board for its consideration.

The Board will receive the annual VADIR report and pay particular attention to the trends in the incidences of bullying.

XIX. Discipline Matrix*

The following is a guideline to be used for grades 2-12.

Prior to Referral	First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense	Fourth Offense
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teacher warning based on severity of incident • teacher logs warning by submitting a “no action necessary” referral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent contact • daily log 2 weeks • warning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent contact • daily log 4 weeks • detention • community service (ex: reading to the kindergarten) • checklist of what they view to be bullying and what they must personally correct • drawing of appropriate vs. inappropriate behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • daily log 6 weeks • ISS + video (“To Save a Life”) + reflective assignment (research, presentation, etc.) • community service decided by peer group (what and how long) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent contact • daily log 6 weeks • OSS • counseling/ intervention upon return with Anti-Bullying team member • community service decided by peer group (what and how long)

*Individual classroom policies in grades K-5 will be honored.

XX. References

Education Law §§10-18 (The Dignity for all Students Act)
The Bully, The Bullied & The Bystander, Barbara Coloroso, 2003

Adoption date: Spring 2012