

Harassment and bullying of students are against federal, state, and local policy and are not tolerated by the board. The board is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. The board has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment of students by students, school employees, or volunteers who have contact with students will not be tolerated in the school or school district.

The board prohibits all harassment, bullying, hazing, or any other victimization of students, including but not limited to that based on any of the following actual or perceived traits or characteristics, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status, as required under state and federal laws, rules, and regulations

This policy is in effect while students are on property within the jurisdiction of the board; while on school-owned or school-operated vehicles; while attending or engaged in school sponsored activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school or school district.

Complaints will be investigated within a reasonable timeframe. When staff members become aware of situations related to harassment and bullying, they will report the incident(s) to the building principal within 24 hours and may contact the parent. Within 24 hours of receiving a report from a staff member the principal will contact the parents of the offending student and the victim.

If, after an investigation, a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student shall be disciplined by appropriate measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. If, after an investigation, a school employee is found to be in violation of this policy, the employee shall be disciplined by appropriate measures up to, and including, termination. If, after an investigation a school volunteer is found to be in violation of this policy, the volunteer shall be subject to appropriate measures up to, and including, removal from service and exclusion from school grounds. "Volunteer" means an individual who has regular, significant contact with students.

Harassment and bullying include any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

“Electronic” means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. “Electronic” includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, electronic text messaging, or similar technologies.

Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances:

- Verbal, nonverbal, physical, electronic, or written harassment, bullying, hazing, or other victimization that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, etc. that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim; and/or
- Unreasonable interference with a student's performance or creation of an intimidating, offensive, or hostile learning environment.

In situations between students and school officials, faculty, staff, or volunteers who have direct contact with students, bullying and harassment may also include the following behaviors:

- Requiring that a student submit to bullying or harassment by another student, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of the targeted student's education or participation in school programs or activities; and/or
- Requiring submission to or rejection of such conduct as a basis for decisions affecting the student.

A student (or adult on student's behalf) who believes he/she has suffered bullying and/or harassment will report such matters to a teacher, principal, or counselor. The information will be given to the designated building investigator(s) as outlined in Board policy and procedures. Complaints alleging acts of intentional physical or sexual abuse by school employees, including inappropriate sexual behavior toward students, should be reported to the Level I Investigator as outlined in Board policy and procedures. Formal complaints and informal reports regarding sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, will be subject to the Title IX grievance process (see the Title IX Grievance Procedure regulation).

Any person who promptly, reasonably, and in good faith reports an incident of bullying or harassment under this policy to a school official, shall be immune from civil or criminal liability relating to such report and to the person's participation in any administrative, judicial, or other proceeding relating to the report. Individuals who knowingly file a false complaint may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Retaliation against any person, because the person has filed a bullying or harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. Individuals who knowingly file false harassment complaints and any person who gives false statements in an

investigation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall any person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. Any student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. Any school employee found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment. Any school volunteer found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, exclusion from school grounds.

The school or school district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying or harassment. The building principal or designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying or harassment. The building principal or designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by employees alleging bullying or harassment.

The superintendent is responsible for organizing training programs for students, school officials, faculty, staff, and volunteers who have direct contact with students. The training will include how to recognize harassment and what to do in case a student is harassed. It will also include proven effective harassment prevention strategies. The superintendent will also develop a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the policy in reducing bullying and harassment in the school. The superintendent shall report to the board on the progress of reducing bullying and harassment in the school.

The board will annually publish this policy. The policy may be publicized by the following means:

- Inclusion in the student handbook;
- Inclusion in the employee handbook;
- Inclusion in the registration materials; or
- Inclusion on the school or school district's website.

Furthermore, a copy shall be made to any person at the district's central administrative office.

*NOTE: This is a mandatory policy.*

Adopted:

Reviewed: 9/27/99; 6/27/22

Revised: 12/18/13; 11/28/16; 10/26/20; 10/23/23