

BULLYING

The Board of Education promotes a secure and student friendly school climate, conducive to teaching and learning, that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

Bullying is defined as any overt acts by a student or groups of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity, or on a school bus, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year. Bullying which occurs outside of the school setting may be addressed by school officials if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. physical violence and attacks
2. verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnically-based verbal abuse or gender-based put downs
3. threats and intimidation
4. extortion or stealing money and possessions

Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and, therefore, bullying is not acceptable behavior in this district and is prohibited.

Students who engage in any act of bullying while at school, at any school function, or in connection to or with any district sponsored activity or event are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

A comprehensive program, involving everyone in the schools and the community, to address bullying at all school levels is essential to reducing incidences of bullying. Such a program must involve interventions at all levels, school-wide, classroom and individual.

The District's Program:

1. Permits anonymous verbal or written reports of bullying by students and written reports of suspected bullying by parents or guardians;
2. Requires teachers and other school staff to notify school administrators in writing of bullying acts they witness and students' reports they receive;

BULLYING (continued...)

3. Requires school administrators to investigate staff and/or parents' written reports and review students' anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
4. Requires each school to maintain a publicly available list of the number of verified bullying acts that occurred there, and within available appropriations, report such number to the Department of Education annually and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
5. Requires each school to have prevention and intervention strategies, as defined by statute, for school staff to deal with bullying, including language about bullying in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;
6. Requires each school to notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying and invite them to attend at least one meeting. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and to the other parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying;
7. Requires the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
8. Requires students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make reports of bullying;
9. Requires the identification of appropriate school personnel, which may include, but shall not be limited to, pupil services personnel, responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint;
10. As required, but not later than February 1, 2009, submit this policy to the Department of Education for its review, analysis, and cooperative assistance; and
11. Inclusion in the District's staff development program for certified staff training pertaining to the prevention of bullying (effective July 1, 2009).

The Board expects prompt and reasonable investigations of alleged acts of bullying. The Principal of each school or his/her designee is responsible for handling all complaints of alleged bullying.

BULLYING (continued...)

In addition, the norms that are established by adults through consistent enforcement of all policies pertaining to conduct and modeling appropriate behavior at school and at home will reduce the damage of bullying. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that is accepted and encouraged.

The District shall implement, as required by C.G.S. 10-221d, as amended, a prevention and intervention strategy which may include, but is not limited to:

Prevention and Intervention Strategy

1. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education.
2. A school survey to determine prevalence of bullying.
3. Establishment of a bullying prevention coordinating committee with broad representation to review the survey results and implement the strategy.
4. School rules prohibiting bullying, harassment, and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts.
5. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom, and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur.
6. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying prevention curricula in seventh through twelfth grade.
7. Individual interventions with the bully, parents; and school staff, and interventions with the bullied child, parents; and the school staff.
8. School wide training related to safe school climate.
9. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings, and individual interventions.
10. The Superintendent shall provide that students and parents of students are notified of this prohibition against bullying and the penalties for violating the prohibition by ensuring the posting of such information at each school and by ensuring inclusion of such information in student and parent handbooks. This policy shall be included in all student and faculty handbooks and shall be disseminated to the public in a manner to be determined by the Superintendent.

BULLYING (continued...)

School District Action

1. Upon receipt of a complaint or report of bullying, school officials shall undertake or authorize an investigation. The appropriate school personnel responsible for taking the bullying report and investigating the complaint shall include the following: (e.g., Building Principal, Superintendent, Director of Pupil Services).
2. If upon investigation it is determined that bullying has occurred, the superintendent of his/her designee will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, detention, suspension, or expulsion. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations.
3. The parents or guardians of students who engaged in acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed shall be notified by the superintendent or his/her designee of the results of the investigation, and shall invite them to attend at least one meeting. The notification shall include a description of the response of school staff to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying.

This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is protected by state or federal law.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-15b Access of parent or guardian to student's records. Inspection, and subpoena of school or student records.

10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160.

PA 06-115 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in Schools and Notices Sent to Parents or Legal Guardians