

STUDENTS

BULLYING

For purposes of this policy, “bullying” includes “cyber-bullying” and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct (including communications made in writing or electronically) that is directed toward a student or students and that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying, as defined above, may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

For purposes of this policy, “cyber-bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photooptical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. “Cyber-bullying” includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this policy. “Cyber-bullying” also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this policy.

It has been determined that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve; that bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students; that bullying interferes with students' ability to learn and participate in school activities; and that bullying has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, using drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment, and sexual violence.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this School District. Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited. No student shall be subjected to bullying:

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1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity;
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities; or
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment; or
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

In certain circumstances, the School District has jurisdiction to prohibit bullying via electronic communications that originate off of School District grounds, provided that there is a sufficient nexus between the electronic communication and the School District.

Not every confrontation between or among students will be considered bullying for purposes of this policy. Incidents will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The School District encourages anti-bullying strategies by providing age appropriate instruction about bullying.

The School District will implement the following procedures for reporting, investigating, and addressing bullying:

1. A student who is being bullied is encouraged to immediately report the situation to the District's Complaint Manager or to any staff member whom the student is comfortable contacting. Anyone who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the District's Complaint Manager or to any staff member. The Complaint Manager's name and contact information can be found in Policy 296 (Uniform Grievance Procedure). Contact information for staff members (including telephone numbers and email addresses) can be found on the school's website or obtained from the school's main office. Anonymous reports can be submitted to the school's Principal, via email (to the Principal's email address listed on the school's website), via mail (directed to the Principal at the school address listed on the website), or by using the Bullying/Safety Reporting Service found on the homepage of each school's website.
2. An employee who receives a report of bullying must notify the school's Principal or his/her designee, as soon as possible after the report is received.

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3. The School District will promptly investigate reports of bullying. Investigations will include the following procedures:
 - a. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the School District will endeavor to promptly inform parents/guardians of all students involved in the alleged bullying. Such contacts may include, as appropriate, discussions of the availability of interventions.
 - b. The School District will make all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the report of bullying was received, taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation.
 - c. To the extent deemed appropriate, the investigation process will involve appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention.
 - d. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the School District will provide parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Principal or his/her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported bullying.
 - e. The School District will investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the District's or school's jurisdiction. In addition, the School District will provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the District and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.
4. The School District will promptly address bullying that is found to have occurred. Students who engage in bullying will be subject to discipline and interventions as described below.

Interventions to address bullying may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services. For purposes of this policy, "restorative measures" means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline (such as suspensions and expulsions) that: (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.

The School District prohibits reprisal or retaliation against anyone who reports an act of bullying. Any person who engages in reprisal or retaliation will be subject to discipline and may be required to participate in appropriate remedial activities.

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The School District prohibits falsely accusing another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying. Any person who is found to have engaged in such misconduct will be subject to discipline and may be required to participate in appropriate remedial activities.

Nothing in this policy is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.

As required by *School Code* Section 27-23.7:

- Every 2 years the School District will conduct a review and re-evaluation of this policy and make any necessary and appropriate revisions.
- As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating this policy, the School District will assess the outcomes and effectiveness of this policy. The assessment will include a review of factors such as: the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at school; identification of school areas where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that the District already collects for other purposes. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation will be made available on the School District’s website.
- The District’s bullying prevention plan must be consistent with other Board policies.
- This policy will be filed with the State Board of Education after being updated.
- This policy will be posted on the School District's website and will be included in the student handbook. Via the handbook, this policy will be distributed annually to parents, guardians, and students. In addition, this policy will be distributed annually to school personnel, including new employees when hired.

LEGAL REF.: Illinois *School Code*, Section 27-23.7 (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7)
23 ILL. Admin. Code §1.240 and §1.280 405 ILCS 49/Children’s Mental Health Act

CROSS REF.: 715.01

- Adopted: May 26, 2011 (as part of Policy 715.01)
- Revised: June 14, 2012
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