

ANTI-BULLYING

The District strives to provide a safe, secure and respectful learning environment for all students in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at school sponsored activities. Bullying behavior has a harmful social, physical, psychological, and academic impact on the bullies, the victims and the bystanders. The District consistently and vigorously addresses bullying so that there is no disruption to the learning environment and learning process.

Definition

Bullying is a deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation or harm. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power.

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of information and communication technologies, such as cell phones, computers, websites and e-mail, to support deliberate, hostile behavior intended to frighten, intimidate, mock, insult, bully or harm others.

Bullying behavior can be:

1. Physical, which involves harmful actions against a person's body. It also involves interfering with another person's property (e.g., assault, hitting, punching, kicking, theft).
2. Verbal, which involves speaking to a person or about a person in a way that is derogatory, unkind, or hurtful (e.g., threatening or intimidating language, teasing, name-calling).
3. Indirect or non-verbal emotional, which refers to behaviors that upset, exclude or embarrass others (e.g., spreading cruel rumors, intimidation through gestures, social exclusion, and sending insulting messages or pictures by mobile phone or using the internet).
4. Between students and students or students and adults.

Prohibition

Bullying behavior is prohibited in all schools, buildings, property or educational environments, including any property or vehicle owned, leased, or used by the District. This includes public transportation regularly used by students to go to and from school. Educational environments include, but are not limited to, every activity under school supervision.

Procedures for Reporting/Retaliation

All school staff members and school officials who observe or become aware of acts of bullying are required to promptly report this to the principal. If the complaint involves the principal, the incident shall be reported to the Administrator of Pupil Services.

Any other person, including a student who is either a victim of the bullying or is aware of the bullying or any other concerned individual is encouraged to report the conduct to the principal. If the complaint involves the principal, the incident shall be reported to the Administrator of Pupil Services.

Reports of bullying may be made verbally or in writing and may be made confidentially. All such reports, either verbal or in writing, will be taken seriously and a clear account of the incident to be documented. A written record of the report, including all pertinent details, will be made by the recipient of the report.

The school official receiving a report of bullying shall immediately notify the school district employee assigned to investigate the report: principal or Administrator of Pupil Services.

There shall be no retaliation against an individual making such reports. Individuals engaging in retaliatory behavior will be subject to disciplinary action.

Procedure for Investigating Reports of Bullying

An investigation to determine facts will take place in a timely manner to verify the validity and seriousness of the report. Affected parents and/or guardians will be notified that a report has been made. The District shall keep the complaint confidential to the extent required by law for both the accused and accuser.

In situations in which cyberbullying originated from a non-school computer or other technology device but is brought to the attention of school officials, disciplinary action shall be based upon whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the educational process so that it markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operation of school. Any legal violation will be promptly reported to legal officials.

Sanctions and Supports

If it is determined that students participated in bullying behavior or retaliated against anyone due to reporting of bullying behavior, the principal, Administrator of Pupil Services and Board of Education may take disciplinary action, including, but not limited to: suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials for possible legal action as appropriate.

False Complaints Prohibited

The District recognizes that false or fraudulent claims of bullying may be filed. The District shall treat all bullying claims as valid claims unless and until the District's investigation reveals that the complaint was filed falsely, fraudulently, or for an improper purpose. The District reserves the right to discipline any person filing a false or fraudulent claim of bullying, with the same range of discipline as described in the above paragraph.

Students found in violation of the bullying policy may be referred to pupil services staff for counseling or other educational programming designed to prevent repetitive bullying behavior. Employees found to have participated in bullying behavior, or having become aware that bullying was taking place and failed to report the behavior, are considered to be in violation of the prohibition expressed by the policy. They may be subjected to disciplinary action consistent with collective bargaining agreement or disciplinary action established by policy or practice.

Disclosure and Public Reporting

The policy will be distributed annually to all students enrolled in the District, their parents and/or guardian and employees. It will also be distributed to organizations in the community having cooperative agreements with the schools. The District will provide a copy of the policy to any person who requests it.

Records will be maintained on the number or types of reports made, and sanctions imposed for incidents found to be in violation of the bullying policy.

An annual summary report shall be prepared and presented to the Board, which includes trends in bullying behavior and recommendations on how to further reduce bullying behavior. The annual report will be available to the public.

Reference:

WI Act 309

Adopted: November 1, 2010