

BULLYING

Definitions, Explanations, and Types of Bullying: Bullying, often involves expressive gestures, speech, physical acts that are sexually suggestive, lewd, vulgar, profane, or offensive to the education or social mission of this school district, and at times involves the commission of criminal acts. This behavior interferes with the curriculum by disrupting the presentation of instruction and also disrupts and interferes with the student-victim's or bystander's ability to concentrate, retain instruction, and study or to operate free from the effects bullying. This results in a reluctance or resistance to attend school.

Bullying includes, but is not limited to, a pattern of harassment, intimidation, threatening behavior, physical acts, verbal or electronic communication, directed toward a student or group of students that results in or is reasonably perceived as being done with the intent to cause negative educational or physical results for the targeted individual or group and is communicated in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student that a reasonable person should recognize will:

- A. Harm another student;
- B. Damage another student's property;
- C. Place another student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or damage to the student's property; or
- D. Insult or demean any student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- A. Verbal, physical, or written harassment or abuse;
- B. Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- C. Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, etc.;
- D. Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student;
- E. Unwelcome physical contact.

In determining what a "reasonable person" should recognize as an act placing a student in "reasonable" fear of harm, staff will determine "reasonableness" not only from the point of view of a mature adult, but also from the point of view of an immature child of the age of the intended victim along with, but not limited to, consideration of special emotional, physical, or mental needs of the particular child; personality or physical characteristics, or history that might cause the child to be particularly sensitive to efforts by a bully to humiliate, embarrass, or lower the self-esteem

of the victim; and the discipline history, personality of, and physical characteristics of the individual alleged to have engaged in the prohibited behavior.

According to experts in the field, bullying in general is the exploitation of a less powerful person by an individual taking unfair advantage of that person, which is repeated over time, and which inflicts a negative effect on the victim. The seriousness of a bullying act depends on the harm inflicted upon the victim and the frequency of the offensive acts. Power may be, but is not limited to, physical strength, social skill, verbal ability, or other characteristics. Bullying acts by students have been described in several different categories.

- A. Physical Bullying includes harm or threatened harm to another's body or property, including, but not limited to, what would reasonably be foreseen as a serious expression of intent to inflict physical harm or property damage through verbal or written speech or gestures directed at the student-victim, when considering the factual circumstances in which the threat was made and the reaction of the intended victim. Common acts include tripping, hitting, pushing, pinching, pulling hair, kicking, biting, starting fights, daring others to fight, stealing or destroying property, extortion, assaults with a weapon, other violent acts, and homicide.
- B. Emotional Bullying includes the intentional infliction of harm to another's self-esteem, including, but not limited to, insulting or profane remarks, insulting or profane gestures, or harassing and frightening statement, when such events are considered in light of the surrounding facts, the history of the students involved, and age, maturity, and special characteristics of the students.
- C. Social Bullying includes harm to another's group acceptance, including, but not limited to, harm resulting from intentionally gossiping about another student or intentionally spreading negative rumors about another student that results in the victim being excluded from a school activity or student group; the intentional planning and/or implementation of acts or statements that inflict public humiliation upon a student; the intentional undermining of current relationships of the victim-student through the spreading of untrue gossip or rumors designed to humiliate or embarrass the student; the use of gossip, rumors, or humiliating acts designed to deprive the student of awards, recognition, or involvement in school activities; the false or malicious spreading of an untrue statement or statements about another student that exposes the victim to contempt or ridicule or deprives the victim of the confidence and respect of student peers; or the making of false statements to others that the student has committed a crime, or has an infectious, contagious, or loathsome disease, or similar egregious representations.
- D. Sexual Bullying includes harm to another resulting from, but not limited to, making unwelcome sexual comments about the student; making vulgar, profane, or lewd comments or drawings or graffiti about the victim; directing vulgar, profane, or lewd gestures toward the victim; committing physical acts of a sexual nature at school, including the fondling or touching of private parts of the victim's body; participation in the gossiping or spreading of false rumors about the student's sexual life; written or verbal statements directed at the victim that would reasonably be interpreted as a serious threat to force the victim to commit sexual acts or to sexually assault the victim when considering the factual circumstances in which the threat was made and the

reaction of the intended victim; off-campus dating violence by a student that adversely affects the victim's school performance or behavior, attendance, participation in school functions or extracurricular activities, or makes the victim fearful at school of the assaulting bully; or the commission of sexual assault, rape, or homicide. Such conduct may also constitute sexual harassment.

Electronic Communication involves the communication of any written, verbal or pictorial information or video content by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, a mobile or cellular telephone or other wireless communication device, including a computer. Bullying of students by electronic communication is prohibited whether or not such communication originated at school or with school equipment, if the communication is specifically directed at students or school personnel and concerns harassment, intimidation, or bullying at school.

Procedures Applicable to the Understanding of and Prevention of Bullying of Students

Student and Staff Education and Training: All staff will be provided with a copy of District's policy on the prevention of bullying of students. All students will be provided a summary of the policy and notice that a copy of the entire policy is available on request. District is committed to providing appropriate and relevant training to staff regarding identification of behavior constituting bullying of students and the prevention and management of such conduct.

Students, like staff members, shall participate in an annual education program that sets out expectations for student behavior and emphasizes an understanding bullying of students, the district's prohibition of such conduct, and the reasons why the conduct is destructive, unacceptable, and will lead to discipline. Students shall also be informed of the consequences of bullying conduct toward their peers.

District's Safe School Committee: The safe school committee has the responsibility of studying and making recommendations regarding unsafe conditions, strategies for students to avoid harm at school, student victimization, crime prevention, school violence, and other issues that interfere with an adversely affect the maintenance of safe schools.

With respect to student harassment, intimidation, and bullying, the safe school committee shall consider and make recommendations regarding professional staff development needs of faculty and other staff related to methods to decrease student harassment, intimidation, and bullying and understanding and identifying bullying behaviors. In addition, the committee shall make recommendations regarding: identification of methods to encourage the involvement of the community and students in addressing conduct involving bullying; methods to enhance relationships between students and school staff in order to strengthen communication; and fashioning of problem-solving teams that include counselors and/or school psychologists.

In accomplishing its objectives, the committee shall review traditional and accepted harassment, intimidation, and bullying prevention programs utilized by other states, state agencies, or school districts.

Investigative Procedures:

The procedure for investigating reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying or threatening behavior, is as follows:

1. The matter should immediately be reported to the principal. If the bullying involved an electronic communication, a printed copy of the communication as well as any identifying information such as email address or web address shall be provided to the principal. Detailed information should be provided to the principal in written form to allow for a thorough investigation.

2. Upon receipt of a written report, the principal shall contact the superintendent and or his/her designee and begin an investigation to determine the severity of the incident and the potential for future violence.

3. If, during the course of the investigation, it appears that a crime may have been committed, the principal and/or superintendent or designee shall notify local law enforcement and request that the alleged victim also contact law enforcement to report the matter for potential criminal investigation.

4. If it is determined that District's Student Code of Conduct has been violated, the principal shall follow District policies regarding the discipline of the student. The principal shall make a determination as to whether the conduct is actually occurring. If it is determined that an act of bullying has occurred, a referral will be made to a delinquency prevention and diversion program administered by the Office of Juvenile Affairs.

5. Upon completion of the investigation, the principal or superintendent or designee may recommend that available community mental health care substance abuse or other counseling options be provided to the student, if appropriate. This may include information about the types of support services available to the student bully, victim, and any other students affected by the prohibited behavior. If such a recommendation is made, the administration shall request disclosure of any information that indicates an explicit threat to the safety of students or school personnel provided the disclosure of information does not violate the provisions or requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Section 2503 of Title 12 of the Oklahoma Statutes, Section 1376 of Title 59 of Oklahoma Statutes, or any other state or federal laws relating to the disclosure of confidential information.

6. Upon completion of an investigation, timely notification shall be provided to the parents or guardians of a victim, if under 18 years old, of documented and verified bullying. This information should be provided within 3 school days of the conclusion of the investigation.

7. Upon completion of an investigation, timely notification shall be provided to the perpetrator or the parent, if the perpetrator is under 18 years old, of the documented and verified bullying. This information should be provided within 3 school days of the conclusion of the investigation.

Reports may be made anonymously. However, no formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Reports shall be made immediately to the building principal by any school employee that has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for enforcing this regulation. The principal should notify the Superintendent or designee within twenty-four (24) hours of any report of bullying. Upon completion of an investigation, the principal should notify the Superintendent or designee of the findings of the investigation. Documentation should also be provided to the Superintendent or designee to establish that timely notification was provided to the parents of the victim and the parents of the perpetrator.

Adopted: September 14, 2020
Revised: