

***Bullying***

The Board of Education is committed to providing an educational and work environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality. Accordingly, the Board condemns all forms of harassment, including bullying.

For the purposes of this policy and its implementation, “bullying” is defined as behavior that intimidates, either as a severe one time occurrence or in repeated occurrences, others by the real or threatened infliction of physical, verbal, written electronically transmitted or emotional abuse, or through attacks on the property of another that take place on school property, at any school-sponsored function (whether on or off school property) or on a school bus, or that takes place off school grounds but is designed to or has the effect of interfering with one’s ability to attend school, to work and/or to be educated/employed in a safe, non-hostile environment.

Bullying may include, but is not limited to, actions such as verbal or written taunts, gestures, name-calling and put-downs, including those that are ethnically-based, gender-based, or religiously-based, extortion of money or possessions or actions, exclusion from peer groups within school, threatening actions, and inciting others to bully. All such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and the workplace, and is prohibited.

Student victims of bullying are encouraged to report incidents to an adult with whom they are comfortable. Employee victims of bullying should report incidents to an administrator. Employees must report any incidents they observe or of which they are informed, and where appropriate, intervene to stop such activities. The District’s administrators or designees will promptly investigate all complaints of bullying, either formal or informal, verbal or written. All complaints will be treated in a confidential manner to the extent possible; limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

In order for the Board to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it is important that all incidences of bullying be reported to the Building Principal or designee, the Athletic Director or an Assistant Superintendent.

The Building Principal shall maintain a log of bullying incidents as a record for the purpose of tracking repeat offenders, and shall intervene with appropriate measures. Specifically:

1. All reported incidents of “bullying” must be documented in the student file of a student being accused of bullying. Written records should also capture what action, if any, was taken, or why no action was taken. These reports shall remain in the student’s file and will travel with the student from elementary school to high school.
2. When determining discipline for a bullying incident, administration should take into account:
  - a. the specifics of the current incident;
  - b. the individual’s history of prior bullying incidents and the nature and degree of such incidents; and
  - c. any mitigating factors that may have contributed to the incidents.

If, after appropriate investigation, the District determines that a student, an employee or a third party (e.g., vendor, contractor or volunteer), has violated this policy, prompt and appropriate corrective action will be taken. A student found to have engaged in bullying shall be subject to consequences that range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension from school, as permitted under the Code of Conduct. An employee found to have engaged in bullying shall be subject to consequences that range from a counseling letter and training up to and including discipline in accordance with law and applicable collectively negotiated agreement and/or contract of employment. A third party found to have engaged in bullying shall be subject to consequences ranging from a warning up to and including removal from school property in accordance with the Code of Conduct. If the alleged behavior constitutes or may constitute a crime, the police authorities or other appropriate agency shall be immediately notified.

The Board prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed towards any person who reports an act of bullying, or directed against anyone who participates in the investigation of a complaint of bullying. The Board also prohibits the knowingly false reporting of an incident(s) of bullying.

This policy shall be published in the District Code of Conduct and the Annual Notice Booklet and other appropriate District publications. Students and staff shall be notified of this policy annually.

The Superintendent will develop regulations to document instances of bullying and to report such instances to the Board on a regular basis.