

301 Anti-Harassment, Anti-Intimidation, and Anti-Bullying Policy

It is the Policy of the Board of Directors that any form of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior whether in the classroom, on school property, to and from school, or at school-sponsored events, is expressly forbidden.

For purposes of this Policy, “School-Sponsored Activity” shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board of Directors.

To implement this Policy, the Board of Directors directs the Principal to develop and adopt regulations to address the existence of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying in the school.

Such regulations shall:

1. Enable students to anonymously report acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying to teachers and Principals;
2. Enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports (provided by school) of suspected Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying;
3. Require teachers and other school staff who witness acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying or receive student reports of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying to notify Principals;
4. Require Principals to investigate any written reports filed and to review any anonymous reports;
5. Include an intervention strategy for all school personnel to deal with Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying;
6. Provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying;
7. Require Principals to notify both the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed; and
8. Require that the school maintain a list of the number of verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying in the school and make the list available for public inspection.

Harassing, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior is strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include counseling, suspension or expulsion from school. The school’s commitment to addressing Harassing, Intimidating, and Bullying behavior, however, involves a multi faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which this behavior will not be tolerated by students, faculty or school personnel.

It is imperative that Harassing, Intimidating, and Bullying be identified only when the specific elements of the definition are met, because the designation of conduct as such behavior carries with it special statutory obligations. Any misconduct by one student against another student, whether or not appropriately defined as Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying will result in appropriate disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator.

I. Definition of Terms:

- Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying: In accordance with the Board Policy and with HB 276, “Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying” means any overt acts by a student or group of students directed

against another student/school personnel with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule or humiliate. Such behavior means any written, electronically-transmitted, verbal, or physical act taking place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation or at any official school bus stop that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

- A. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student's property;
- B. Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property; and/or
- C. Insulting or demeaning 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.

In accordance with this definition, the following factors should be considered before identifying conduct by a student or group of students as Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying in violation of Board Policy. The determination that conduct does not constitute Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying under Board Policy, however, does not restrict the right of the Principal and of the Board of Directors to impose appropriate disciplinary consequences for student misconduct.

- **Location.** Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior in violation of Board Policy must occur to and from school, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity. Conduct that occurs off-campus (e.g. physical intimidation in the community) is not Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying under this Policy and Regulation. While not considered Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying under Board Policy, conduct that would otherwise be considered Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying occurring off-campus (and outside of any school-sponsored activity) should trigger disciplinary action if such conduct markedly interrupts or interferes with the school's educational mission or the education of any student.

- **Ridicule, Humiliation, and/or Intimidation.** Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior is marked by the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the victim. In evaluating whether conduct constitutes this behavior, special attention should be paid to the words chosen or actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the perpetrator interacted with the victim, and the motivation, either admitted or appropriately inferred, of the perpetrator.

II. Types of Conduct

Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying can take many forms and can include many different behaviors having overt intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate another student. Examples of conduct that could constitute this include:

1. Physical violence and/or attacks;
2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, including taunts based on ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected and/or individual characteristics;
3. Threats and intimidation (through words and/or gestures);
4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions;
5. Exclusion from the peer group or spreading rumors; and,
6. Repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others through the use of information and communication technologies and other Web -based/online sites (also known as "cyber bullying"), such as the following:

- Posting slurs on Web sites where students congregate or on Web logs (personal online journals or diaries);
- Sending abusive or threatening instant messages;
- Using camera phones to take embarrassing photographs of students and posting them online;
- Using Web Sites to circulate gossip and rumors to other students; and,
- Excluding others from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to Internet service providers.

III. Complaint Processes

- A. Publication of the prohibition against Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying and related procedures
The prohibition against Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying shall be publicized by including a statement such as the following in the student handbook and/or standard operating procedures.

Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior by any student in the School is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying” shall mean any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student or school personnel with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule or humiliate. Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying means any written, electronically transmitted, verbal or physical act taking place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation or at any official school bus stop that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

- Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student’s property;
- Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property; and/or
- Insulting or demeaning 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.

Students and parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of such behavior to school personnel and Principal. Any report of suspected Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of misconduct are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process.

- B. Formal Complaints:

Students and/or their parents or guardians may file reports of conduct that they consider to be Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of such behavior, including person(s) involved, time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or Principal, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the Principal for review and action in accordance with Section IV.

- C. Informal Complaints

Students may make informal complaints of conduct that they consider to be Harassment, Intimidation, or

Bullying by verbal report to a teacher or Principal. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of misconduct, including person(s) involved, time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected misconduct, and the names of any potential student or staff witness. A school staff member or Principal who receives an informal complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the information provided. Such written report by the school staff member and/or Principal shall be promptly forwarded to the Principal for review and action in accordance with Section IV.

D. Anonymous Complaints

Students who make informal complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school staff member(s) and Principal(s) who receive the complaint. The anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying.

IV. School Personnel responsibilities and intervention strategies

A. Teachers and other school staff :

Teachers and other school staff, who witness acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying, as defined above, shall promptly notify the Principal and/or his/her designee of the event observed, and shall promptly file a written incident report concerning the events witnessed. Teachers and other school staff who receive student or parent reports of suspected misconduct shall promptly notify the Principal and/or his/her designee of such report(s). If the report is a formal, written complaint, such complaint shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the Principal or his/her designee. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a teacher or other professional employee, he or she shall prepare a succinct written report of the informal complaint, which shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the Principal or his/her designee. In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, school personnel members are encouraged to address the issue of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying in other interaction with students. School personnel may find opportunities to educate students about such behavior and help eliminate it through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. School personnel should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating, or intimidating another student or school personnel, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying.”

B. Principal responsibilities:

1. Investigation:

The Principal shall be promptly notified of any formal or informal complaint of suspected Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying received by any building Principal or school personnel. Under the direction of the Principal or his/her designee, all such complaints shall be investigated promptly. A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying were verified, and, when acts of such behavior are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action. Where

appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complaint. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged perpetrator), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

2. Remedial actions:

Verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying shall result in intervention by the Principal or his/her designee that is intended to assure that the prohibition against this behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such behavior will end as a result.

Harassing, Intimidating, or Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the targeted individual and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of this nature. While conduct that rises to the level of “Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying” as defined above will generally warrant disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such behavior, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (detention, in and out-of-school suspension; or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the Principal. The following sets forth possible interventions for Principals to enforce the Board’s prohibition against Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying.

a. Non-disciplinary interventions:

When verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of such behavior do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of misconduct, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. The victim’s communication and assertiveness skills may be low and could be further eroded by fear resulting from past Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying and fear of future Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

b. Disciplinary Interventions:

When acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints that are not otherwise verified, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

In- and out-of-school suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation.

Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board of Directors. This consequence shall be reserved for serious incidents of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating such behavior.

3. General Intervention Strategies:

In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying and direct intervention when acts of misconduct are verified, other school actions may ameliorate any potential problem with Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying in school or at school-sponsored activities. While no specific action is required and school needs for such interventions may vary from time to time, the following list of potential intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for the Principal and school personnel:

- a. Respectful responses to Bullying concerns raised by students, parents or school personnel;
- b. Planned professional development programs addressing Harassment, Intimidation, bully/targeted individuals' problems;
- c. Data collection to document bully/victim problems to determine the nature and scope of the problem;
- d. Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;
- e. Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping (e.g. males need to be strong and tough);
- f. Awareness and involvement on the part of all school personnel and parents with regard to bully-victim problems;
- g. An attitude that promotes communication, friendship, assertiveness skills, and character education;
- h. Modeling by teachers of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;
- i. Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others (Ohio School Climate Guidelines);
- j. Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.

V. Reporting Obligations

A. Report to the Parent or Guardian of the Perpetrator

If after investigation, acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying by a specific student are verified, the Principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the perpetrator in writing of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in such notification.

B. Reports to the victim and his/her parent of guardian

If after investigation, acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying against a specific student are verified, the Principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such finding. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such misconduct.

C. List of verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

The Principal shall maintain a list of the number of verified acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying in

the school and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. The list shall be limited to the number of such verified acts of misconduct in the school, and it shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.

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 such as the Nondiscrimination, Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process, Violent and Aggressive Behavior, Hazing, Discipline/Punishment, Sexual Harassment, Peer Sexual Harassment, and Equal Educational Opportunity Acts.

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