

## STUDENT BULLYING & HARASSMENT

Purpose: To provide guidelines for the elimination and prevention of harassment in the District.

Policy: Student bullying and harassment will not be tolerated in the District.

The school district is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the school district has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment when they occur. Bullying and harassment of students by other students, school officials, faculty, staff, and volunteers who have direct contact with students will not be tolerated in the school district. The school district prohibits harassment, bullying, hazing, or any other victimization based on real or perceived age, gender, race, sex, creed, color, national origin, religion, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, physical appearance, physical or mental ability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, familial status, and/or personality characteristics.

This policy is in effect while students are on property within the jurisdiction of the school district; while on school-owned and/or school-operated vehicles; and while attending or engaged in school sponsored activities. Harassing and bullying behavior can seriously disrupt the ability of school employees to maintain a safe and civil environment, and the ability of students to learn and succeed. If after an investigation a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student shall be disciplined by measures up to and including suspension and expulsion.

Harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to unreasonably embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble students. Examples of such harassment may include, but not limited to: jokes, stares, pictures, or objects that are intended to cause a student fear, anxiety, shame, or embarrassment. Such behaviors become harassment when they are unwelcome, pervasive, severe, and interfere with activity and/or academic performance and when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably creating an intimidating, offensive, or hostile learning environment.

Harassment as set forth above may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal, non-verbal, electronic, physical, or written harassment, bullying, hazing, or other victimization that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering of the victim;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, etc., that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim.

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Students who feel they have been harassed should:

- If the student is comfortable doing so, the student should communicate to the harasser that the student expects the behavior to stop. If the student wants assistance communicating with the harasser, the student should ask an adult staff member or principal to help.
- If the harassment does not stop or the student does not feel comfortable confronting the harasser, the student should tell a teacher, counselor, or principal; and write down exactly what happened, keep a copy, and give another copy to the teacher, counselor, or principal including :
  1. what, when, and where it happened;
  2. who was involved;
  3. exactly what was said or what the harasser did;
  4. witnesses to the harassment;
  5. what the student said or did, either at the time or later;
  6. how the student felt; and
  7. how the harasser responded.

### COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

A student who believes that he/she has been harassed will notify the designated investigator or the alternate investigator. The investigator may request that the student complete the Harassment Complaint form and turn over evidence of the harassment, including, but not limited to letters, tapes, or pictures. Information received during the investigation is kept confidential to the extent possible.

The investigator, with the approval of the principal, or the principal has the authority to initiate a harassment investigation in the absence of a written complaint.

### INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

The investigator will reasonably and promptly commence the investigation upon receipt of the complaint. The investigator will interview the complainant and the alleged harasser. The alleged harasser may file a written statement refuting or explaining the behavior outlined in the complaint. The investigator may also interview witnesses as deemed appropriate.

Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will make written findings and conclusions as to each allegation of harassment and report the findings and conclusions to the principal. The investigator will provide a copy of the findings of the investigation to the principal.

### RESOLUTION OF THE COMPLAINT

Following receipt of the investigator's report, the principal may investigate further, if deemed necessary, and make a determination of any appropriate additional steps which may include discipline, up to and including, suspension and expulsion.

Prior to the determination of the appropriate remedial action, the principal may, at the principal's discretion, interview the complainant and the alleged harasser. The principal will file a written report closing the case and documenting any disciplinary action taken or any other action taken in response to the complaint. The complainant, the alleged harasser and the investigator will receive notice as to the conclusion of the investigation.

#### POINTS TO REMEMBER IN THE INVESTIGATION

- Evidence uncovered in the investigation is confidential.
- Complaints must be taken seriously and investigated.
- No retaliation will be taken against individuals involved in the investigation process.
- Retaliators will be disciplined up to and including suspension and expulsion.

#### CONFLICTS

If the investigator is a witness to the incident, the alternate investigator shall investigate.

Approved 5/2/05

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