

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

ADOPTED: April 14, 2003

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August 16, 2021

EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

249. BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

1. Purpose

Creating and maintaining a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students is a high priority in all School District schools. A safe school environment free from bullying is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Bullying/Cyberbullying behavior disrupts the educational or learning process, and may present an obstacle to the academic, vocational, social, emotional, and other development of students. Bullying and cyberbullying can also escalate into more serious violent or cyberspace crimes. Therefore, bullying and cyberbullying will not be tolerated.

2. Definitions

Bullying/Cyberbullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or series of acts (a) directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting (b) that is severe, persistent or pervasive, and (c) that has the effect of doing any of the following:[1]

1. Substantially interfering with a student’s education;
2. Creating a threatening environment; or
3. Substantially disrupting of the orderly operation of the school.

School setting - means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the School District.[1]

3. Authority

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying/cyberbullying by district students.[1]

The Board encourages students who believe they have been bullied/cyberbullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

Students are encouraged to use the district’s ~~report form~~ **Incident Form (218I)**, available from the ~~school office~~ **building principal**, or to put the complaint in writing; however, oral complaints shall be accepted and documented. The person accepting the complaint shall

<p>4. Delegation of Responsibility</p>	<p>handle the report objectively, neutrally and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor the student filing the complaint or those accused of a violation of this policy.</p> <p>The Board directs that verbal and written complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and appropriate corrective or preventative action be taken when allegations are substantiated. The Board directs that any complaint of bullying brought pursuant to this policy shall also be reviewed for conduct which may not be proven to be bullying under this policy but merits review and possible action under other Board policies.</p> <p>When a student's behavior indicates a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community or others, district staff shall report the student to the threat assessment team, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.[2][3]</p> <p><u>Title IX Sexual Harassment and Other Discrimination</u></p> <p>Every report of alleged bullying that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws against discrimination and discriminatory harassment shall be handled as a joint, concurrent investigation into all allegations and coordinated with the full participation of the Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator. If, in the course of a bullying investigation, potential issues of discrimination are identified, the Title IX Coordinator shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of alleged discrimination as well as the incidents of alleged bullying.[4][5]</p> <p><u>Confidentiality</u></p> <p>Confidentiality of all parties, witnesses, the allegations, the filing of a complaint and the investigation shall be handled in accordance with applicable law, regulations, this policy and the district's legal and investigative obligations.</p> <p><u>Retaliation</u></p> <p>Reprisal or retaliation relating to reports of bullying or participation in an investigation of allegations of bullying is prohibited and shall be subject to disciplinary action.</p> <p>Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying/cyberbullying.</p> <p>The Superintendent, or designee(s), shall develop administrative regulations necessary to implement this Policy.[1]</p> <p>The Superintendent, or designee(s) shall ensure that this Policy and administrative regulation(s), if any, are reviewed annually with students.[1]</p>
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<p>5. Guidelines</p>	<p>The Superintendent, or designee(s), in cooperation with other appropriate School District administrators, shall review this Policy every three (3) years, and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.[1]</p> <p>District administration must annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:[1]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Board of School Director’s Bullying/cyberbullying Policy.2. A report of the School District’s bullying/cyberbullying incidents.3. Information on the development and implementation of the bullying/cyberbullying prevention, intervention, and education programs. <p><u>Notices</u></p> <p>The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this Policy, must be disseminated annually to students.[1][6][7]</p> <p>This Policy must be accessible in every classroom. The Policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building where notices are usually posted, and posted on the School District’s web site.[1]</p> <p><u>Bullying/Cyberbullying Prevention, Intervention, and Education Programs</u></p> <p>The School District shall educate students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.</p> <p>Bullying/Cyberbullying prevention, intervention, and education programs shall also be provided that consists of school-wide actions, classroom-level activities, individual interventions, and community involvement.</p> <p>a. <i>School-wide actions</i> include, but are not limited to, training for school staff and students and adoption of the following district-wide anti-bullying rules:[1][8][9][10]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We do not bully/cyberbully others.2. We help students who are bullied/cyberbullied.3. We include students who are left out.4. We tell an adult at school and an adult at home when somebody is being bullied/cyberbullied.
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- b. *Classroom level activities* include, but are not limited to, consistent interventions, use of rules, and reinforcement of pro-social behavior and incorporation of bullying/cyberbullying themes.
- c. *Individual interventions* include, but are not limited to, follow up with both victims and bullies/cyberbullied that may include consequences, provisions for making restitution, and counseling referrals, as appropriate.
- d. *Community involvement* encourages partnerships with families, community organizations and agencies to implement the School District's bullying/cyberbullying prevention, intervention, and education programs.

Complaint Procedure

~~Guidelines/forms for filing a complaint can be found in Policies 103, 103.1 and 104 and associated attachments.~~

Consequences For Violations

A founded charge against a School District student shall subject such student to disciplinary action. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions range from positive behavioral interventions to and including suspension or expulsion, and may include counseling (within and/or outside of the school), parental conferences, detentions, separating the student(s) being bullied/cyberbullied from the perpetrator(s), warnings, usage restrictions, loss of school privileges, reassignment (including but not limited to another school building, classroom, or school bus), exclusion from school-sponsored activities), oral or written reprimands, detentions, suspensions, expulsions, referral to law enforcement officials, and/or legal proceedings.[1][6][11]

Any violation of this Policy shall be considered an infraction of the Code of Student Conduct and any other applicable School District policy, with discipline implemented accordingly. Any violation of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code will be reported to law enforcement.

Victims and their parents/guardians shall be made aware of appropriate counseling, agency services and safety plan developments described in the School District's victimization procedures.

False Reports

The principal, in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct and/or other School District policies, will determine the consequences and remedial actions for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of discrimination/harassment, intimidation or bullying/cyberbullying. The Superintendent will determine consequences and remedial actions for personnel found to have falsely accused another as a means of discrimination/harassment, intimidation or bullying. Any violation of the Pennsylvania

Crimes Code will be reported to law enforcement.

References:

1. 24 P.S. 1303.1-A

2. 24 P.S. 1302-E

3. Pol. 236.1

4. Pol. 103

5. Pol. 103.1

6. Pol. 218

7. 22 PA Code 12.3

8. 20 U.S.C. 7118

9. 24 P.S. 1302-A

10. Pol. 236

11. Pol. 233

Pol. 113.1