

Definitions:

Definition of Bullying. Nebraska statute defines bullying as “an ongoing pattern of physical, verbal or electronic abuse.” The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines bullying as “any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated.” The school district’s administrators will consider these definitions when determining whether any specific situation constitutes bullying. These definitions include both in-person and cyber-bullying behaviors.

Bullying involvement includes bystanders, victims, and bully-perpetrators. Since bystander support of bullying can support these behaviors, the school district prohibits both active and passive support for acts of bullying. School district employees should encourage students to support others who walk away from these acts when they see them, constructively attempt to stop them, or report them to designated authorities. School districts will provide support to everyone affected by bullying behavior (bystanders, victims, and bully-perpetrators).

Bullying Prohibited. Students are prohibited from engaging in any form of verbal, physical, relational/emotional, or cyber-bullying behavior.

Anonymous Reporting

Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report. It is encouraged that students make a written or oral report to a trusted school employee. Anonymous reports will be investigated and made available via an anonymous report application. Information of all reports will be tracked and kept confidential.

The school district prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the school district administration after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

Bullying Investigation

Bullying Investigations. School district staff will investigate allegations of bullying using the same practices and procedures that the district observes for student disciplinary matters and will be outlined in student handbooks. The school will keep records of all reports and steps taken in the investigation. In no circumstance will school district staff be deliberately indifferent to allegations of bullying.

Students and parents are encouraged to inform teachers or administrators orally or in writing about bullying behavior or suspected bullying behavior. If the complainant is not satisfied with the disciplinary action prescribed by the school administration, the complainant may pursue further redress via direct appeal to the Board of Education. Until the investigation is completed, and a final decision rendered, both the complainant's and alleged offender's position and/or academic standing shall be protected. Additionally, in accordance with the Family Educational

and Privacy Act (FERPA) information regarding disciplinary measures or other information protected under FERPA shall not be shared.

Consequences

Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying shall be unique to the individual incident and shall vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors, and must be consistent with the board of education's approved code of student conduct. Remedial measures shall be designed to: correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the behavior; and protect the victim of the act. Consequences when safety is a concern may include but are not limited to admonishment, temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, classroom or administrative detention, in-school suspension during the school week or weekend, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, or legal action. Consequences or supports for students shall not interfere with their school functioning, and additional consideration must be taken for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) as outlined in Rule 51 and IDEA.

Biased-based Bullying

It shall be the policy of the school to prohibit any student, volunteer, and district employee, from engaging in bullying, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, age, sex or gender, sexual orientation, disability, or marital status.

Every report of alleged bullying that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the protections of laws against discrimination 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 an ongoing 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.

Bullying Prevention and Education

Bullying Prevention and Education. Each building shall engage in school-wide, classroom and individual activities which educate students about bullying, bullying prevention, social emotional learning, and digital citizenship. The school district shall implement evidenced-based interventions based on student developmental level and school environmental needs. Progress monitoring shall be conducted to ensure the effectiveness of selected intervention. The superintendent in coordination with school employees trained in student behavior management, progress monitoring, mental health, or staff with knowledge in bullying prevention shall be responsible for identifying educational materials, lessons, and/or programs suitable for the age and maturity level of the students and for ensuring the delivery of such materials, lessons, and/or programs to students.

Cyber-Bullying. It shall be the responsibility of all members of school's staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the

Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. The school will educate all students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber-bullying awareness and response.

Educators

School district administrators, employees, and volunteers are expected to provide positive examples for student behavior by demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate bullying.

The school district shall incorporate information regarding the policy against bullying into each school employee training program and handbook. School district administrators, employees, and volunteers will be trained in the schools bullying policy, identifying bullying, and the school's reporting procedures.

Bullying perpetrated by a school district employee, administrator, or volunteer, towards students or staff, will be subject to disciplinary actions including suspension or termination as set forth in the board of education's approved employee handbook. School staff shall report any instances of being bullied by students or parents to their school administrators.

Review and Communication of Policy

All school district officials shall annually disseminate this policy to all school district employees, students, and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all applicable acts of bullying that occur on school district property, at school-sponsored functions, or in school district vehicles and computers. The superintendent shall review all instances of bullying and determine if each report was followed according to this policy. The superintendent shall develop an annual process for discussing this policy by engaging students, parents, and school district employees.