# 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 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 takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus, or that takes place off of school grounds but that 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 ethnically-based, gender-based, or religiously-based put-downs, extortion of money or possessions or actions, exclusion from peer groups within school, and inciting others to bully. All such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and is prohibited.

In order for the Board to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it is essential that all victims of bullying and persons with knowledge of bullying report the harassment immediately to the Building Principal or the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Employees must report any incidents they observe, and where appropriate, intervene to stop such activities. The District's administrators (or their 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.

The District's administration shall maintain records 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 the 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 punishment for a bullying incident, administration should take into account (1) the specifics of the current event, (2) the student's history of prior bullying incidents, and (3) any mitigating factors that may have contributed to the incident.

If, after appropriate investigation, the District finds 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 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 the law and applicable collective bargaining agreement. 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. If the alleged behavior constitutes or may constitute a crime, the police authorities or any 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 incidents of bullying.

This policy shall be posted in a prominent place in each district facility and shall also be published in student registration materials, student, parent and employee handbooks, and other appropriate school publications. Students and staff shall be notified of this policy as part of each year's school orientation.

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

Cross-ref: 5300, Code of Conduct

Ref: Penal Law, §§120.15, 120.05, 120.06, 120.65

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