

POLICY PROHIBITING HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION OR BULLYING

The Board of Education does not tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying of any student on school property or at a school-sponsored event, regardless of whether the event occurs on or off school property (including on school buses and other school-related vehicles). Students who engage in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from school. The Board’s commitment to addressing such prohibited behavior involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which harassment, intimidation and bullying will not be tolerated by students, staff or administration.

For purposes of this policy, the term “harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any intentional written, verbal or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both: (1) causes mental or physical harm to the other student; and (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student.

Reporting Procedure

Students, parents or guardians are encouraged to immediately report conduct they consider to be harassment, intimidation or bullying to a teacher, guidance counselor, coach, principal or other administrator. Likewise, all school personnel who become aware of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall immediately report such behavior to their building principal.

Any staff member who receives a report of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall promptly write the report utilizing the Board of Education’s harassment, intimidation or bullying complaint form, which shall be made available in the office of the principal of each school building, the Board of Education’s central administrative office, student handbook, and downloadable from the Board of Education’s website. The complaint form shall specifically describe the actions giving rise to the suspicion of harassment, intimidation or bullying, including identification of all person(s) involved, the time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of the alleged behavior, and the names of any student or staff witnesses. Such written report shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal for administrative response.

The building principal or designee shall notify the parents, guardians or legal custodians of any student involved in an incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying under this policy. Such persons shall have access to any written reports pertaining to the prohibited incident to the extent permitted by State and Federal privacy/confidentiality laws.

Administrative Response

The building principal or designee shall promptly investigate all reports of harassment, intimidation or bullying. All matters involving such complaints should remain confidential to the extent permitted by law.

1. The principal or designee will confer with the student, parent or guardian making the report in order to obtain a clear understanding of the alleged facts. If not already completed, the principal or designee will complete the harassment, intimidation or bullying complaint form.
2. The principal or designee will meet with all witnesses identified by the person(s) making the report of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Witnesses will be asked to make a statement both orally and in writing regarding the alleged facts that form the basis of the complaint.
3. The principal or designee will meet with the student(s) accused of harassment, intimidation or bullying to obtain a response to the complaint both orally and in writing.
4. Following the completion of the investigation, any student(s) found to have violated this policy will be subject to any of the disciplinary actions described in the Student Code of Conduct.
5. Retaliation against any student who makes a complaint of harassment, intimidation or bullying, or any student who becomes involved in the investigation of such complaint, is strictly prohibited, and may result in discipline irrespective of the merits of the initial complaint.
6. The building principal or designee shall have the authority to involve local law enforcement if an individual believes danger is imminent due to the alleged harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Preventative measures

This policy shall appear in student handbooks and other publications that set forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools and students in the district. Information regarding this policy shall also be incorporated into employee training manuals.

To the extent that state or federal funds are appropriated for these purposes, the Board will provide training, workshops or courses on this policy to school employees and volunteers who have direct contact with students.

Teachers, guidance counselors, coaches and building administration will educate students about this policy through class discussion, counseling and reinforcement of appropriate student behavior. School personnel should intervene promptly whenever they observe student-on-student misbehavior, even if such conduct does not yet meet the frequency, severity or pervasiveness to constitute harassment, intimidation or bullying that is prohibited by this policy.

If the building principal or designee finds that a student has been the victim of harassment, intimidation or bullying, in addition to the imposition of disciplinary action against the student-offender, the following strategies may be implemented to protect the victim from additional harassment, intimidation or bullying:

1. Staff may be instructed to observe and record the behavior of the student-offender in less-supervised settings such as the cafeteria, playground and restrooms. If the student-offender's misbehavior persists, administration may assign the student-offender to recess, lunch or class-release times different from those of the student-victim.
2. The offending student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) may be requested to participate in a conference with building administration and staff in an attempt to enlist the parent(s) or guardian(s) to work cooperatively with the school to stop the harassment, intimidation or bullying.
3. In consultation with the student-victim and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s), examine the student's daily schedule to identify those activities where harassment, intimidation or bullying most often occur. Make arrangements to increase supervision or adjust the student's schedule to reduce or eliminate under supervised activities.
4. Change classroom layout or rearrange seating to eliminate "blind spots" where future acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may occur.

Summary of reported incidents

On _____ and _____ of each school year, the principal from each school building shall provide the Board President with a written summary of all reported incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying. To the extent permitted by State and Federal privacy/confidentiality laws, a summary of reported incidents shall be posted on the web site of the Board of Education concurrent with each report to the Board President.

No liability for good faith compliance

A school district employee, student, or volunteer shall be individually immune from liability in a civil action for damages arising from reporting an incident in accordance with this policy if the incident is reported promptly, in good faith, and in compliance with the procedures as specified in this policy.

Adoption Date:

LEGAL REFS.: Ohio Revised Code 3313.66
Ohio Revised Code 3313.661
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Ohio Revised Code 3313.666
Ohio Revised Code 3313.667
Ohio Revised Code 3319.321
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. 1232q