

## Students

### Prevention of and Response to Bullying and Other Aggressive Behaviors

Bullying diminishes a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Such conduct interferes with a student's educational environment, safety, and academic performance. Preventing students from engaging in these aggressive and disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important District goals.

Students are expected to act respectfully toward their peers and to avoid bullying and aggressive behaviors in their interactions with other students. The District prohibits and will not tolerate aggressive student behavior, including bullying conduct of any type or on any basis, as defined below. Further, the District will protect students against retaliation for reporting incidents of aggressive behavior and bullying, and will take disciplinary action against any student who participates in such conduct.

In addition, bullying is prohibited on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, or marital status; association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics; or any other distinguishing characteristic.

Bullying is **prohibited** in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the School District or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This paragraph (item #4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred. It does not require the School District to monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

### Legal Definitions (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7)

For the purposes of this Policy and as defined under the Illinois *School Code*, the terms used mean the following:

*Bullying* includes *cyber-bullying* and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;

3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Aggressive conduct toward other students that is not severe or pervasive shall not be deemed as bullying, but may constitute gross disobedience or misconduct leading to discipline under Board Policy 7:190, Student Discipline, of any student who engages in such behavior. Students who engage in bullying conduct also shall be disciplined under Board Policy 7:190.

*Cyber-bullying* means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. *Cyber-bullying* includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*. *Cyber-bullying* also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*.

*Restorative measures* means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.

*School personnel* means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school district, including without limitation school and school district administrators, teachers, school guidance counselors, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

#### Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the District's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan must be consistent with the requirements listed below, which reflect the; each numbered requirement, 1-12, corresponds with the same number in the list of required policy components in 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7(b) 1-12.

1. The District uses the definition of *bullying* as provided in this policy.
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this District. However, nothing in the District's bullying prevention and response plan is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.
3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the District Complaint Manager or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the District

Complaint Manager or any staff member. Anonymous reports also are also accepted and may be reported to the principal.

4.

<b>Complaint Manager:</b>	<b>Complaint Manager:</b>
Dr. Stephen Johns	Mrs. Elizabeth Keefe
18550 Millburn Road, Wadsworth, IL 60083	18550 Millburn Road, Wadsworth, IL 60083
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5.

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Superintendent or designee shall promptly inform the parents/guardians of every student involved in an alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

6. The Superintendent or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying, by, among other things:
  - a. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within **10 school days** after the date the report of a bullying incident was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported bullying incident.
  - b. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
  - c. Notifying the Building Principal or school administrator or designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
  - d. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Building Principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The Superintendent or designee shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the District’s jurisdiction and the District shall provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the District and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

7. The District shall use interventions to address bullying, that may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.
8. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying **is prohibited**. A student’s act of reprisal or retaliation will be met with disciplinary consequences and appropriate remedial actions consistent with this and other Board Policies.
9. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the District’s investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be met with disciplinary consequences and appropriate remedial actions consistent with this and other Board Policies. The District’s

bullying prevention and response plan must be based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.

10. This policy shall be posted on the District's Internet website, if any; included in the student handbook; and, where applicable, posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy also must be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.
11. The District shall review and re-evaluate this Policy and make necessary and appropriate revisions every two years, and file its updated Policy with the Illinois State Board of Education. The Superintendent or designee shall assist the Board with its evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, without limitation:
  - a. The frequency of victimization;
  - b. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
  - c. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
  - d. The types of bullying utilized; and
  - e. Bystander intervention or participation.

The evaluation process may include the use of relevant data and information that the District already collects for other purposes. The District shall post the information developed as a result of the policy evaluation on the District's website, or if a website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, Board members, school personnel, parents/guardians, and students.

12. This Policy must be consistent with other Board policies.

LEGAL REF.: 405 ILCS 49/, Children's Mental Health Act.

105 ILCS 5/10-20.14, 5/24-24, and 5/27-23.7.

23 Ill.Admin.Code §§1.240 and §1.280.

CROSS REF.: 2:240 (Board Policy Development), 2:260 (Uniform Grievance Procedure), 4:170 (Safety), 5:230 (Maintaining Student Discipline), 6:60 (Curriculum Content), 6:65 (Student Social and Emotional Development), 6:235 (Access to Electronic Networks), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7:185 (Teen Dating Violence Prohibited), 7:190 (Student Discipline), 7:220 (Bus Conduct), 7:230 (Misconduct by Students with Disabilities), 7:240 (Conduct Code for Participants in Extracurricular Activities), 7:285 (Food Allergy Management Program), 7:310 (Restrictions on Publications)