



Policy Number	249 - Update
Title	Bullying/Cyberbullying
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Bullying/Cyberbullying

Purpose

The Lehigh Area School District Board of Directors is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for District students. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by District students.

Definitions

Code of Student Conduct - shall mean Board policies related to discipline and conduct as well as individual building student handbooks and Student Athletic Code of Conduct. [1] [2]

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following: [3]

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

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is defined by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as “the electronic posting of mean-spirited messages about a person, often done anonymously”. According to the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, cyberbullying can include sending cruel, vicious or

threatening emails; creating Websites that have stories, pictures and jokes ridiculing others; posting pictures of other students/kids online with derogatory phrases or questions attached to them; using someone else's email to send vicious or incriminating emails to others; and/or using instant messaging tools to harass others.

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.[3]

The term **bullying** will not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.

Authority

The **Board policy** prohibits all forms of bullying by District students.[3]

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

Students are encouraged to use the District's report form, available from the building principal, or to put the complaint in writing; however, oral complaints shall be accepted and documented. The person accepting the complaint shall 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.

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.

If it is determined that an incident of bullying or cyberbullying has occurred, the school shall immediately notify, as soon as practicable, the parents or legal guardians of any student involved in the incident.

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.[4][5]

Title IX Sexual Harassment and Other Discrimination / Harassment

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 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. **[6] [7]**

Confidentiality

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.

Retaliation

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.

Delegation of Responsibility

Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students. **[3]**

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board. **[3]**

District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report: **[3]**

1. Board's Bullying Policy.
2. Report of bullying incidents.
3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.

Guidelines

The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students. ^[1] ^[3] ^[8]

This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the District website. ^[3]

Education

The District shall develop, implement and evaluate bullying prevention and intervention programs and activities. Programs and activities shall provide District staff and students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting incidents of bullying. ^[3] ^[9] ^[10] ^[11]

Consequences for Violations

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include: ^[1] ^[3] ^[12]

1. Counseling within the school.
2. Parental conference.
3. Loss of school privileges.
4. Transfer to another school building, classroom or school bus.
5. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities.
6. Detention.

- 7. Suspension.
- 8. Expulsion.
- 9. Counseling/Therapy outside of school.
- 10. Referral to law enforcement officials.

Footnotes

- [1]

Pol. 218

Policy Reference

Open policy
- [2]

Pol. 123

Policy Reference

Open policy
- [3]

24 P.S. 1303.1-A

Legal Reference

View source
- [4]

24 P.S. 1302-E

Legal Reference

View source
- [5]

Pol. 236.1

Policy Reference

Open policy
- [6]

Pol. 103

Policy Reference

Open policy
- [7]

Pol. 103.1

Policy Reference

Open policy
- [8]

22 PA Code 12.3

Legal Reference

View source
- [9]

20 U.S.C. 7118

Legal Reference

View source
- [10]

24 P.S. 1302-A

Legal Reference

View source
- [11]

Pol. 236

Policy Reference

Open policy

[12] **Pol. 233**
Policy Reference

Open policy 