

## STUDENTS

### **7:180 Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment**

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important Cooperative goals.

Bullying 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, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic **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 nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school Cooperative or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and it does not require a Cooperative or school to staff or monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

#### Definitions from 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7

*Bullying* includes *cyberbullying* 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.

*Cyberbullying* 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. *Cyberbullying* 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*. *Cyberbullying* 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 Cooperative, including without limitation school and school Cooperative 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 Director or designee shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the Cooperative's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan must be consistent with the following requirements:

1. Using the definition of *bullying* as provided in this policy, the Superintendent or designee shall emphasize to the school community that: (1) the Cooperative prohibits bullying, and (2) all students should conduct themselves with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students. This may include a process for commending or acknowledging students for demonstrating appropriate behavior.
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this Cooperative. However, nothing in the Cooperative'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 Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Building Principal, Assistant Building Principal, Dean of Students, a 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 Cooperative named officials or any staff member. The Cooperative named officials and all staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anonymous reports are also accepted.

**Nondiscrimination Coordinator:**

Assistant Director

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**Complaint Manager:**

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4. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Director or designee shall promptly inform parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students 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.
5. The Director 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 the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
  - 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 report of the 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 and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the 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 Director or designee shall investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the Cooperative's jurisdiction and shall require that the Cooperative provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the Cooperative and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

6. The Director or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, which 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.
7. 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 treated as *bullying* for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
8. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the Cooperative's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as *bullying* for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
9. The Cooperative's bullying prevention and response plan must be based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.

10. The Director or designee shall post this policy on the Cooperative's website, if any, and include it in the student handbook, and, where applicable, post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy must be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel (including new employees when hired), and must also be provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty.
11. The Director 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 use relevant data and information that the Cooperative already collects for other purposes. The Director or designee must post the information developed as a result of the policy evaluation on the Cooperative'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. The Cooperative's bullying prevention plan must be consistent with other Board policies.
13. The Superintendent or designee shall fully inform staff members of the Cooperative's goal to prevent students from engaging in bullying and the measures being used to accomplish it. This includes each of the following:
  - a. Communicating the Cooperative's expectation and State law requirement that teachers and other certificated or licensed employees maintain discipline.
  - b. Establishing the expectation that staff members: (1) intervene immediately to stop a bullying incident that they witness or immediately contact building security and/or law enforcement if the incident involves a weapon or other illegal activity, (2) report bullying, whether they witness it or not, to an administrator, and (3) inform the administration of locations on school grounds where additional supervision or monitoring may be needed to prevent bullying.
  - c. Where appropriate in the staff development program, providing strategies to staff members to effectively prevent bullying and intervene when it occurs.
  - d. Establishing a process for staff members to fulfill their obligation to report alleged acts of bullying.

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), 2:265 (Title IX Sexual Harassment 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 Behavior), 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; Elementary Schools), 7:315 (Restrictions on Publications; High Schools)

Adopted: November 10, 2020

**Southern Will Co. Spec. Ed.**

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