

# POCONO MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: ANTI-BULLYING/  
ANTI-CYBERBULLYING

ADOPTED: October 20, 2004

REVISED: June 2, 2010

249. ANTI-BULLYING/ANTI-CYBERBULLYING	
1. Purpose	<p>The Pocono Mountain School District recognizes that bullying/cyberbullying of students has negative effects on the educational environment of its schools. Bullying interferes with the learning process, and may present an obstacle to the academic, vocational, and social/emotional development of students. Bullying/Cyberbullying can also escalate into more serious violent offenses.</p> <p>The district has an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance, and will not tolerate any behaviors that infringe on the safety of any student. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the school district to maintain an educational environment in which bullying and cyberbullying in any form are not tolerated.</p> <p>Toward that end, bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited on school grounds, at school-sponsored events and activities, on school buses and other school-sponsored transportation and at school bus stops.</p>
2. Definitions	<p><b>Bullying</b> shall mean a pattern of repeated harmful and cruel behavior by a person with more physical or social power toward a less powerful person. This may include a wide variety of behaviors, with deliberate intent to hurt, embarrass, or humiliate the other person. Researchers have identified four (4) forms of bullying including but not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Physical</b> - the most commonly known form; includes hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing and taking personal belongings.</li> <li>2. <b>Verbal</b> - includes taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, and making threats.</li> <li>3. <b>Psychological or Relational</b> - involves spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, and engaging in social exclusion or intimidation.</li> <li>4. <b>Cyberbullying</b> - forms of verbal and psychological bullying may also occur on the Internet through e-mail, instant messaging, personal profile web sites, text messaging, social networking and/or Web 2.0 environments. <b>Cyberbullying</b> includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing,</li> </ol>

teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher or employee of the district by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory e-mail messages, web cam use, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or Web site postings (including blogs) and/or Web 2.0 environments. All forms of cyberbullying are unacceptable and, to the extent that such actions are disruptive of the educational process of the district, offenders shall be the subject of appropriate discipline.

**Bullying** shall mean unwelcome and intentional electronic, verbal, written or physical acts or series of acts directed at a student by another student that takes place in the school setting; is severe, persistent and pervasive; and has the intent and/or effect of:

1. Physically harming a student.
2. Damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property.
3. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm.
4. Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property.
5. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment (shunning, spreading rumors, cyberbullying).
6. Substantially interfering with a student's educational opportunities.
7. Systematically and intentionally excluding a student from activities with peers.
8. Spreading false information about a student or attempting to influence others to exclude a student.
9. Using **relational aggression**, which is defined as behavior which can undermine or destroy relationships and is often used when identifying female bullying.
10. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

**Bullying** may include a wide variety of behaviors, with deliberate intent to hurt, embarrass, or humiliate the other person. Some examples of bullying are as follows, but are not limited to:

1. Physical - hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, stealing and/or damaging personal belongings, sexual acts, and invasion of one's personal space in an aggressive manner.

<p>SC 1303.1-A</p> <p>3. Authority SC 1303.1-A</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. <u>Verbal/Written</u> - taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, making threats, phone and/or Internet, and sexual innuendo/remarks.</li> <li>3. <u>Emotional</u> - spreading rumors, shunning, manipulating social relationships or environment, engaging in social exclusion, extortion, ridiculing, and intimidating.</li> <li>4. <u>Electronic</u> - verbal, written and/or emotional bullying through electronic means (i.e., cyberbullying).</li> </ol> <p><b>Direct bullying</b> includes, but is not limited to, a negative action when somebody hits, pushes, kicks, pinches, or restrains another by physical contact. Direct bullying can also be carried out by words (verbally) by threatening, taunting, teasing and calling names.</p> <p><b>Indirect bullying</b> includes, but is not limited to, making faces or dirty gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group, spreading rumors, or refusing to comply with another person’s wishes.</p> <p>The term <b>bullying</b> shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.</p> <p><b>Cyberbullying</b> includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher or employee of the district by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory e-mail messages, instant messages, digital pictures or images, web cam, web site postings and/or communications (including blogs and personal profile sites), or breaking into or misusing an e-mail or similar account to send vicious or embarrassing material. All forms of <b>cyberbullying</b> are unacceptable and, to the extent that such actions are disruptive of the educational process of the district, offenders shall be subject to appropriate discipline.</p> <p><b>School setting</b> shall mean 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, including during the time spent traveling to and from those activities.</p> <p>The Pocono Mountain School District will not tolerate any acts of bullying/cyberbullying occurring on school district property, at school-sponsored activities scheduled on or off school grounds, or during the time students spend traveling to and from school or school-sponsored activities. This includes time spent waiting at the bus stop.</p>
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<p>5. Guidelines SC 1303.1-A Title 22 Sec. 12.3 Pol. 218</p> <p>SC 1302-A, 1303.1-A Pol. 236</p>	<p>2. Report of bullying incidents.</p> <p>3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying/cyberbullying prevention, intervention, or education programs.</p> <p>The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be distributed annually to students.</p> <p>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 web site, if available.</p> <p><u>Education</u></p> <p>The district may develop and implement bullying/cyberbullying preventions and intervention programs. Such programs shall provide district staff and students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting incidents of bullying.</p> <p><u>Staff/Student/Parent/Guardian Complaint Procedure</u></p> <p>The school district encourages all students and parents/guardians who become aware of any act of bullying/cyberbullying to immediately report that conduct.</p> <p>Students shall report acts of bullying/cyberbullying to their teachers, building principal or other school employees supervising school-sponsored activities.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians shall contact the building principal to report acts of bullying/cyberbullying.</p> <p>Reports from parents/guardians and/or students of bullying/cyberbullying occurring outside of school-related hours shall be investigated when it is impacting school safety or the educational environment. Appropriate steps shall be taken to ensure students' safety.</p> <p>If staff cannot reasonably remediate acts of bullying/cyberbullying through their own intervention, they should report the bullying/cyberbullying to the building principal. Other school employees who observe acts of bullying/cyberbullying shall report that conduct to the building principal.</p>
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<p>SC 1303.1-A Pol. 218, 233</p>	<p><u>Investigation Procedures</u></p> <p>Each building principal or designated administrator is authorized to investigate reports of alleged bullying/cyberbullying brought to their attention by students, parents/guardians or school employees.</p> <p>Any investigation of a report may include meetings with students, parents/guardians or employees, a review of student records, and other reasonable efforts to better understand the facts surrounding a reported incident.</p> <p>After the investigation, the building principal shall be notified in writing of the complaint and the results of the investigation and shall take corrective action to ensure the conduct ceases. The parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the investigation summary.</p> <p><u>Consequences/Discipline</u></p> <p>A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct. In addition, consequences for students who are found to have bullied others may include counseling, a parent/guardian conference, loss of school privileges, detention, suspension, expulsion, counseling or therapy outside of school, exclusion from school-sponsored activities, transfer to another school building, classroom or school bus; and/or referral to law enforcement officials. Referral to law enforcement officials may occur and legal charges may also be filed depending upon the incident.</p> <p>All reported incidents of bullying/cyberbullying will be documented.</p> <p>Depending upon the severity of a particular situation, the building principal may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. Such steps may include the implementation of a safety plan; separating and supervising the students involved; providing employee support for students as needed; reporting incidents to law enforcement, if appropriate; and developing a supervision plan with parents/guardians.</p>
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Confidentiality

The district recognizes that both the complaining student and the alleged bullier have strong interests in maintaining the confidentiality of the allegations and related information. The privacy of the complaining student, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses involved will be respected as much as possible, consistent with legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any discovery or disclosure obligations. Subject to the limitations imposed by FERPA protections, the principal or his/her designee may inform the complaining student/parents/guardians of the outcome of the investigation.

Review Of Policy

This policy shall be reviewed every three (3) years and revised as necessary.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 1302-A, 1303.1-A

State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 12.3

Board Policy – 218, 233, 237, 248, 815