

ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: PUPILS
TITLE: BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING
ADOPTED: 6/21/07
REVISED: 11/18/10

249. BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

Section 1. Purpose

Creating and maintaining a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students is a high priority in all school district schools. A safe school environment free from bullying is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Bullying behavior disrupts the educational process; therefore it will not be tolerated in any school setting. 24 P.S. § 1303.1-A(E).

Section 2. Definitions

Bullying - For the purposes of this policy, bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts (a) directed at another student or students (b) which occurs in a school setting, (c) that is severe, persistent or pervasive, and (d) that has the effect of doing any of the following:

- (1) Substantially interfering with a student's education;
- (2) Creating a threatening environment; or
- (3) Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school. 24 P.S. § 1303.1-A(E).

For example, bullying could be cyberbullying, and/or a form of harassment in which the behavior is intended, or perceived to intend, to harm or cause distress to another. It may include, but is not limited to, actions such as verbal taunts, physical aggression, extortion of money or possessions, exclusion from peer groups within school, name-calling, and derogatory statements, including any discriminatory statements prohibited by and consistent with the school district's nondiscrimination and harassment policies. Policies #103, Nondiscrimination in School and Classroom Practices, #248, Unlawful Harassment. The term cyberbullying shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct. Policy #220, Student Expression/Distribution and Posting of Materials.

School Setting – school setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, with the use of school-issued equipment, or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school district. 24 P.S. § 1303.1-A(E).

Section 3. Authority

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying in any school setting. Any violation of this policy shall be considered an infraction of the Code of Student Conduct, with discipline implemented accordingly, and on a case-by-case basis. All bullying behavior that is a violation of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code will be reported to the police. This policy shall be implemented through the cooperative efforts of the Superintendent, the Superintendent's Team, the building administrators, the school employees, the parents/guardians, the students, the school volunteers, the Allentown Police Department, and the school district's community. Any person discovering bullying shall report the incident to an Allentown School District teacher, counselor, or administrator. School employees will provide immediate interventions

249. BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

consistent with this policy. Students are also required to immediately report bullying. 24 P.S. § 1303.1-A, Policy #218, Student Discipline.

Section 4. Delegation of Responsibility

Each student must be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying. The Superintendent or designee(s) must (a) ensure that this policy is reviewed annually with students, and (b) in cooperation with other appropriate school district administrators and ensure that this policy is reviewed every three (3) years, then, if applicable, recommend necessary changes to the Board of School Directors. 24 P.S. §1303.1-A. The school district administrators must annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:

- a. The Board of School Director's Bullying Policy;
- b. A report of the school district's bullying incidents;
- c. Information on the development and implementation of the bullying prevention, intervention, and education programs. 24 P.S. §1303.1-A and 24 P.S. §1303-A.

Section 5. Guidelines

Notices

The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain a summary this policy, must be disseminated annually to students. 24 P.S. §1303.1-A, 22 Pa. Code §13.3. This policy must be accessible in every classroom. The policy must be posted in a prominent location within each school building where notices are usually posted, and posted on the school district's web site. 24 P.S. §1303.1-A.

Bullying Prevention, Intervention, and Education Programs

The school district must educate students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response. 47 U.S.C. §254(h)(5)(B)(iii), Policy #815, Acceptable Use of Communications and Information (CIS) Systems. Bullying prevention, intervention, and education programs must also be provided that consists of school-wide actions, classroom-level activities, individual interventions, and parent and community involvement. 24 P.S. §1303.1-A(A).

- a. *School-wide actions* include, but are not limited to, training for school staff and students and adoption of the following district-wide anti-bullying rules:
 1. We will not bully others;
 2. We will try to help students who are bullied;
 3. We will try to include students who are left out; and,
 4. We will tell an adult at school and an adult at home when somebody is being bullied.
- b. *Classroom level activities* include, but are not limited to, class meetings, consistent interventions, use of rules, reinforcement of pro-social behavior and incorporation of bullying themes.
- c. *Individual interventions* include, but are not limited to, follow up with both victims and bullies individually that may include consequences, provisions for making restitution, and counseling referrals, as appropriate.
- d. *Community involvement* encourages partnerships with families, community organizations and agencies to implement the school district's bullying prevention, intervention, and education programs.

Complaint Procedure

When a student believes that s/he is a victim of bullying, the student shall promptly report a complaint of bullying, orally or in writing, to the building principal, counselor, teacher or another school employee.

249. BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

If the building principal is the subject of a bullying complaint, the student shall promptly report the complaint directly to the Superintendent, or Superintendent's designee. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the building principal or the principal's designee. An employee shall be subject to disciplinary procedures consistent with the current collective bargaining agreement, as applicable, and school district policy for failure to report. Complaints of bullying must be investigated by the principal/principal's designee, or Superintendent/Superintendent's designee, as applicable, promptly, and corrective action must be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties must be maintained, consistent with the school district's legal and investigative obligations. The incident must be maintained as a confidential record in the discipline file of both the victim and the bully. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. The building principal/principal's designee or Superintendent/Superintendent's designee will contact the parent/guardian of both the bully and victim.

Consequences for Violation

A founded charge against a School District employee shall subject such employee to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Policies #317, Disciplinary Procedures (Administrative), #417, Disciplinary Procedure (Professional), #517, Disciplinary Procedure (Classified). A founded charge against a school district student shall subject such student to disciplinary action. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions range from positive behavioral interventions to and including suspension or expulsion, and may include counseling, parental conferences, detentions, separating the student(s) being bullied from the perpetrator(s), warnings, usage restrictions, loss of privileges, reassignment, oral or written reprimands, detentions, suspensions, expulsions, and/or legal proceedings. Policies #218, Gangs, #233, Suspension and Expulsion. Any violation of this policy shall be considered an infraction of the Code of Student Conduct and any other applicable school district policy, with discipline implemented accordingly on a case-by-case basis. Any violation of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code will be reported to the police department. Victims and their parents/guardians shall be made aware of appropriate counseling, agency services and safety plan developments described in the School District's victimization procedures.

Retaliation

The school district prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who in good faith reports an act of bullying. The principal/principal's designee, in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct and/or other school district policy, will determine the consequences and remedial actions for students, and the Superintendent/Superintendent's designee for employees. Any violation of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code will be reported to the police department.

False Reports

The principal, in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct and/or other school district policy, will determine the consequences and remedial actions for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The Superintendent, or Superintendent's Designee will determine consequences and remedial actions for an employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Any violation of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code will be reported to the police department. Policy #218, Student Discipline.