

Bullying Prevention Policy

Code #443.71

The Tri-County Area School District Board of Education supports an educational environment that is supportive, caring, and safe. It is therefore the policy of the District that neither students nor employees will be permitted to engage in any form of "bullying" behavior at school, on the bus, or at school-related activities. Such behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Bullying is defined as: deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation or harm. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. The behavior may be, but is not required to be, motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as, but not limited to: age; national origin; race; ethnicity; religion; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability or disability; and social, economic or family status.

The three main types of bullying are:

1. **Physical:** Physical bullying involves harmful actions against a person's body. Examples include, but are not limited to: hitting, pinching, poking, pulling hair, choking, kicking, tripping, spitting, hazing, biting, excessive tickling, and inappropriate touching. It also involves interfering with another person's property and stealing.
2. **Verbal:** Verbal bullying involves speaking to a person or about a person in a way that is derogatory, unkind or hurtful. Examples include, but are not limited to: teasing, name calling, insulting or inappropriate remarks, threatening, spreading rumors, and making discriminatory remarks or false accusations.
3. **Indirect:** Indirect bullying refers to behaviors that upset, exclude, or embarrass others. Examples include, but are not limited to: intentionally excluding a person from an activity, spreading cruel rumors, intimidation through gestures, social exclusion and sending insulting messages or pictures by mobile phone or using the internet - also known as cyber bullying.

Bullying behavior is prohibited in all schools, buildings, property and educational environments, including any property or vehicle owned, leased or used by the District. The Administration and staff will inform students that the District does not tolerate bullying in any form and will take all necessary and appropriate action to eliminate it, up to and including disciplinary action.

Complaint Procedures:

It is the responsibility of administrators, staff and all students to report acts of bullying to a member of the school staff or Administration. Everyone in the school must be aware of the signs of bullying and promptly report it to a school official. The complaint procedure will be made available to any students or parent(s)/guardian(s) wishing to file a complaint.

The Administration and school staff will support students and coworkers making reports and protect them against any potential retaliation for making such a report.

A clear account of the incident will be recorded in writing using the *Bullying Incident Report*.

The Principal or designee will investigate the report to determine the facts and circumstances in order to verify the validity and seriousness of the report. Interviews will be conducted and the results of the investigation will be documented.

When it is determined that a student participated in bullying behavior, the Administration will take disciplinary action, which may include warnings, exclusion from certain areas of the school, detention, suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement officials and/or social services.

Support and Intervention Services:

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Being offered an opportunity to discuss the experience with a School Counselor or other staff member of their choice.
- Offered ongoing support with the goal of restoring self-esteem and self-confidence.

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- Being offered an opportunity to discuss the experience with a School Counselor or other staff member of their choice.
- Identifying the bullying behavior and the need to change the behavior.
- Developing a plan to make amends for the incident.

- Informing parent(s) or guardian(s) to help change the attitude and behavior of the student.

Legal References: Sections 115.28(31), 118.13 and 118.155, Wisconsin Statutes
PI 9 and PI 41 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code
Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972
Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Civil Rights Act of 1991
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Cross References: 411.01, Student Harassment
411.01AR, Student Harassment - Complaint Procedures
447.00, Student Discipline
443.07, Student Hazing

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