

BULLYING

The Swallow School District Board of Education supports an educational environment that is free of bullying. It is the policy of the District that its students, employees, or volunteers will not be allowed to engage in any form of bullying or intimidation toward other students, employees, or volunteers.

Definitions

Bullying is any deliberate or intentional behavior, either in words or actions, which involves an imbalance of power, intent to harm, threaten, intimidate, or humiliate. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as, but not limited to: age, color, national origin, race, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, social status, or family status.

Bullying behavior can be:

- Between students and students, students and adults, adults and adults
- Physical – such as, but not limited to, assault, hitting, kicking, or theft
- Verbal – such as, but not limited to, threatening or intimidating language, name calling, or racial remarks
- Indirect – such as, but not limited to, spreading cruel rumors, social exclusion or isolation, using technology in a hurtful manner, which is electronic aggression commonly referred to as cyber bullying. Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, the use of e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, digital pictures or images, cell phones, or website postings to threaten, harass or intimidate the victim.

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NOTE: In situations in which cyber bullying originates off school property or from a non-school computer or telecommunication device, but is brought to the attention of school officials, any disciplinary action shall be based upon whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the educational process so that it markedly impedes the day-to-day operations of the school. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, harassment, bullying, or making a threat off school grounds through cyberspace that is intended to endanger the health, safety or property of others at school, a District employee, or a member of the Board of Education.

Bullying roles include:

One who bullies, one who is bullied, and third party witnesses. Third party witnesses are those aware of bullying behavior. Third party witnesses who join, encourage, or ignore bullying may be considered in violation of this policy.

Reporting Procedures

It is the responsibility of all students, staff, and volunteers to report any bullying acts observed or experienced to an administrator or other authority. Each person concerned about bullying shall be given an opportunity to report verbally or in written form. All reports shall be taken seriously, and clearly documented. There shall be no retaliation against individuals making such reports.

Investigative Response and Support

Bullying reports shall be addressed as soon as possible. The District shall keep the complaint confidential to the extent required or permitted by law for both the accused and accuser, until such time as any misconduct is confirmed and sanctions imposed. All reports are to be investigated to determine validity and the seriousness of the incident.

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When a report is received, the administrator or designee shall do the following:

- Interview all involved
- Contact teachers, as applicable, or any other staff members
- Contact parents or guardians
- Offer support services described in this policy

For the bullied:

- An opportunity to meet with a staff member, such as an administrator, teacher, counselor, or other staff member, who is chosen by the person who was bullied
- Develop a safety plan
- Inform parents or guardians
- Offer on-going support to develop self-confidence
- Inform other staff members, as needed

For those who bully:

- An opportunity to meet with a staff member, such as an administrator, teacher, counselor, or other staff member, who is chosen by the person who is bullying
- Identify the bullying behavior and develop a plan to change the behavior
- Develop a plan to make amends with the person who was bullied
- Inform parents or guardians
- Offer on-going support to assess needed behavior change

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For those who witness bullying, as needed:

- An opportunity to meet with a staff member, such as an administrator, teacher, counselor, or other staff member, who is chosen by the witness of the bullying
- Education regarding the importance of reporting and the impact of bullying on all involved
- Provide support for safety from retaliation

Administrators shall be trained in appropriate responses to bullying, according to the guidelines set by the Swallow School District. Administrators shall be responsible for assuring that all personnel receive adequate training to address issues of bullying when they arise.

Preventive Measures

All staff, including volunteers, shall review the definitions, prevention, and intervention strategies of this policy annually. The training should be included in orientation for all new staff and volunteers. The District will follow any Department of Public Instruction guidelines. The District will utilize only evidenced-based curriculum or research-based best practices in any prevention activities.

Sanctions

When it is determined that students engaged in bullying behavior, the administration may take disciplinary action including warnings, exclusion from certain areas or activities of school, detention, suspension, expulsion, as well as the possibility of referral law enforcement or social services, as deemed appropriate. The disciplinary action shall include helping students learn accountability for their actions and to develop more appropriate responses if confronted with similar situations in the future.

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When it is determined that employees participated in bullying behavior or have become aware that bullying was taking place and failed to report the behavior, they are considered to be in violation of this policy. They shall be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the Employee Handbook or disciplinary action established by policy or practice.

Disclosure and Public Reporting

Annually, this policy will be distributed to all students enrolled in the District, their parents and guardians, as well as all employees. In addition, it will be distributed to organizations in the community having cooperative agreements with the District. Also, the District will provide a copy of this policy to any person who requests it.

Records will be maintained on the number and types of reports made, as well as the sanctions imposed for incidents found to be in violation of the bullying policy.

At the end of each semester, a summary report shall be prepared and presented to the Board, which includes trends in bullying behavior and recommendations on how to further reduce bullying behavior. This report will be available to the public upon their request, following its presentation to the Board of Education.

References: Wisconsin Statutes 118.02(9t) and 118.46(2)

Cross Reference: Policy 363.2 – Technology Access and Use

Policy 411 – Equal Education Opportunities

Policy 443.7 – Harassment - Students

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ADOPTED: August 2, 2010

EDITED: May 16, 2012

Confirmed by: _____, President

_____, Clerk