

540.1.7 **STUDENT BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION** (Approved 1-13-03)(Revised 4-9-12)(Revised 11-11-13)(see procedure page)

PURPOSE: To address student bullying behavior effectively through a multi-faceted approach that includes education and the promotion of a positive school atmosphere.

The Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior by students at school as well as active or passive support for acts of bullying. In addition, the Board prohibits bullying behavior by students outside of the regular school day if it causes a substantial and material disruption at school or an interference with rights of students and personnel to be secure. This includes but is not limited to bullying through electronic communication, whether or not such communication originated at school or with school equipment, if the communication is specifically directed at students or school personnel and concerns bullying at school.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will develop a regulation to support and provide specific procedures for implementation of this policy. The Superintendent or designee will also ensure that each site principal implements administrative regulations in furtherance of this policy. Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including suspension out of school in accordance with the policies, rules and regulations of the District's Board of Education.

Student and Staff Education and Training

The District is committed to providing appropriate and relevant training annually to students and staff regarding preventing, identifying, responding to and reporting incidents of bullying. A full copy of this policy will be posted on the District's website and included in all District handbooks. Parents, guardians, community members, and volunteers will be notified of the availability of this policy through the District's annual written notice of the availability of the district's anti-bullying policy. Written notice of the policy will also be posted at various places in all District school sites.

Students and staff will be periodically reminded throughout the year of the availability of this policy, the District's commitment to preventing bullying, and help available for those affected by bullying. Anti-bullying programs will be incorporated into the District's other violence prevention efforts.

All staff will receive annual training regarding preventing, identifying, reporting, and managing bullying. The district's bullying coordinator and individuals designated as school site investigators will receive additional training regarding appropriate consequences and remedial action for bullies, helping targets of bullies, and the District's strategy for counseling and referral for those affected by bullying.

Students will receive annual education regarding behavioral expectations,

understanding bullying and its negative effects, disciplinary consequences for infractions, reporting methods, and consequences for those who knowingly make false reports. Any person who knowingly makes false accusations against another person will be appropriately disciplined pursuant to District policy. Any accusations confirmed to be false will be removed from the falsely-accused student's file. Parents and guardians may participate in a parent education component.

Student Reporting

Students are encouraged to inform school personnel if they are the target of or a witness to bullying. To make a report, students should notify a teacher, counselor, or principal. The employee will give the student an official report form, and will help the student complete the form, if needed. Reports can also be made by any student, parent, or patron through the District's online reporting system found on the District's website or by calling the school.

Students may make an anonymous report of bullying, and such report will be investigated as thoroughly as possible. However, it is often difficult to fully investigate claims which are made anonymously and disciplinary action cannot be taken against an alleged bully solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Staff Reporting

Staff members will encourage students to report bullying. All employees are required to report acts of bullying to the school principal or his/her designee on an official report form. Any staff member who witnesses, hears about, or has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a student is a target of bullying is required to submit a report.

Bullying Investigators

Each school site will have a designated individual and an alternate to investigate bullying reports. These individuals will be identified in the site's student and staff handbooks, on the District's website, and in the bullying prevention education provided annually to students and staff. The District's anti-bullying program is coordinated at the District level by the District's Safe School Coordinator.

Investigating Bullying Reports

For any alleged incidents of bullying reported to school officials, the designated school official will investigate the alleged incident(s) and determine (i) whether the bullying conduct occurred, (ii) the severity of the incident(s), and (iii) the potential for future violence. In conducting an investigation, the designated official shall interview relevant students and staff and review any documentation of the alleged incident(s). School

officials may also work with outside professionals, such as local law enforcement, as deemed appropriate by the investigating official. In the event the investigator believes a criminal act may have been committed or there is a likelihood of violence, the investigator will immediately call local law enforcement and the superintendent or his/her designee.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the designated employee will document the steps taken to review the matter, the conclusions reached and any additional action taken, if applicable. Further, the investigator will notify the district's bullying coordinator that an investigation has occurred and the results of the investigation.

Upon completion of an investigation, the school may recommend that available community mental health care or substance abuse options be provided to a student, if appropriate. The school may provide a student with information about the types of support services available to the student bully, target, and any other students affected by the prohibited behavior. These resources will be provided to any individual who requests such assistance or will be provided if a school official believes the resource might be of assistance to the student/family. No school employee is expected to evaluate the appropriateness or the quality of the resource provided, nor is any employee required to provide an exhaustive list of resources available. All school employees will act in good faith.

The school may request the disclosure of information concerning students who have received substance abuse or mental health care (pursuant to the previous paragraph) if that information indicates an explicit threat to the safety of students or school personnel, provided the disclosure of the information does not violate the requirements and provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, OKLA. STAT. tit. 12 § 1376, OKLA. STAT. tit. 59 §1376 of the Oklahoma Statutes, or any other state or federal laws regarding the disclosure of confidential information. The school may request the disclosure of information when it is believed that the student may have posed a danger to him/herself and having such information will allow school officials to determine if it is safe for the student to return to the regular classroom or if alternative education arrangements are needed.

Parental Notification

The assigned investigator will notify the parents of a target within two (2) school days that a bullying report has been received. Within two (2) school days of the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator will provide the parents of a target with the results of the investigation and any community resources deemed appropriate to the situation. If the report of bullying is substantiated, within two (2) school days of the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator will contact the parents of the bully to discuss disciplinary action and any community resources deemed appropriate to the situation.

Parental Responsibilities

All parents/guardians will be informed in writing of the District's program to stop bullying and will be given a copy of this policy upon request. An administrative response to a reported act of bullying may involve certain actions to be taken by parents. Parents will be informed of the program and the means for students to report bullying acts toward them or other students. They will also be told that to help prevent bullying at school they should encourage their children to:

- Report bullying when it occurs;
- Take advantage of opportunities to talk to their children about bullying;
- Inform the school immediately if they think their child is being bullied or is bullying other students;
- Watch for symptoms that their child may be a target of bullying and report those symptoms; and
- Cooperate fully with school personnel in identifying and resolving incidents.

Monitoring and Compliance

In order to assist the State Department of Education with compliance efforts pursuant to the *School Safety and Bullying Prevention Act*, 70 OKLA. STAT. § 24-100.2 *et seq.*, the district will identify a bullying coordinator who will serve as the District contact responsible for providing information to the State Board of Education. The bullying coordinator shall maintain updated contact information on file with the State Department of Education and the School District will notify the State Department of Education within fifteen (15) days of the appointment of a new bullying coordinator.

A copy of this policy will be submitted to the State Department of Education by December 10th of each school year as part of the District's Annual Performance Report.

The Administration recognizes that there are many motivations behind the act of bullying, one of which may be for a discriminatory purpose. If the bullying behavior constitutes discriminatory harassment, intimidation or bullying (i.e., it is targeted toward an individual because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, marital status, veteran status, disability or genetic information), the misconduct is prohibited pursuant to District Policy 4902 regarding Discriminatory Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying and is subject to the procedure and protections specified in 4902 in addition to this policy. Retaliation is expressly prohibited against any person who participates in reporting, investigating or addressing any incident of bullying behavior.

STUDENT BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Procedures

In furtherance of the Board's policy regarding student bullying prevention and intervention, the District shall require Prevention and Intervention Strategies, as

described below, based on building data, for school staff to address bullying behaviors. These interventions will be on a continuum, ranging from those aimed at prevention to those interventions that address more serious bullying behavior on a case-by-case basis.

The District's "Prevention and Intervention Strategies" referenced above include, but are not limited to:

1. Including prohibitions and guidance concerning bullying in the District's Behavior Response Plan;
2. Implementation of a positive behavioral intervention and support process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying, including any such programs identified by the State Department of Education;
3. A school survey to determine the prevalence of bullying, which will take place during the second or third quarter of each school year and a summary of which will be made available to a District office designee; and
4. Establishment of a Safe & Healthy Schools Committee for each school site (K-12) as mandated by the School Safety and Bullying Prevention Act. The Safe & Healthy Schools Committee will consist of at least ten (10) members and shall be composed of teachers, parents of enrolled students, students, and a school official who participates in the investigation of reports of bullying. Each Safe & Healthy Schools Committee has the responsibility of studying and making recommendations regarding unsafe conditions, strategies for students to avoid harm at school, student victimization, crime prevention, school violence, and other issues which interfere with and adversely affect school safety. With respect to student bullying, each Committee shall assist the Board in promoting a positive school climate. The Committee will study the District's policy and currently accepted bullying prevention programs (available on the State Department of Education website) to make recommendations regarding bullying. These recommendations must be submitted to the principal and cover: (i) needed staff development, including how to recognize and avoid bullying; (ii) increasing student and community involvement in addressing bullying, (iii) improving individual student-staff communication, (iv) implementing problem solving teams which include counselors and/or school psychologists, and (v) utilizing behavioral health resources.
5. The development, posting, and enforcement of rules at each school site that prohibit bullying and establish appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, as defined by District policy;
6. The consistent provision of adult supervision at each school site of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur;

7. Inclusion of grade-appropriate, research-based bullying prevention curricula in prekindergarten through high school grades, as compiled by the State Department of Education and which is reported annually using a fidelity checklist to submit to Safe & Healthy Schools Committee members;
8. Training school personnel to be sensitive to the interpersonal dynamics of bullying behavior so that they recognize the need to protect all students from reprisal, retaliation and false accusations.
9. The participation of all employees directly involved with student services in annual bullying awareness/intervention training and suicide prevention training;
10. The participation of all new employees directly involved with student services in bullying awareness/intervention training and suicide prevention training before reporting to their new positions;
11. Individual interventions for students who engaged in confirmed bullying behavior and against whom bullying behavior has been confirmed, the parents or guardians of those students, and involved school staff members;
12. School-wide training related to the provision of a safe school climate;
13. The promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions, which may include discussion panels, Safe & Healthy Schools Committee, TAPS, parent involvement facilitators and the like.

As the terms are used in the District's policy and this regulation, the following definitions apply.

DEFINITIONS:

A. "Bullying" means any pattern of harassment, intimidation, threatening behavior, physical acts, verbal or electronic communication directed toward a student or group of students that results in or is reasonable perceived as being done with intent to cause negative educational or physical results for the targeted individual or group and is communicated in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's education mission or the education of any student.

According to experts in the field, bullying in general is the exploitation of a less powerful person by an individual taking unfair advantage of that person, which is repeated over time, and which inflicts a negative effect on the victim. The seriousness of a bullying act depends on the harm inflicted upon the victim and the frequency of the offensive acts. Power may be but is not limited to physical strength, social skill, verbal ability, or other

characteristics. Bullying acts by students have been described in several different categories:

“Physical Bullying” may include harm or threatened harm to another’s body or property, including but not limited to, what would reasonably be foreseen as a serious expression of intent to inflict physical harm or property damage through verbal or written speech or gestures directed at the student-victim, when considering the factual circumstances in which the threat was made and the reaction of the intended victim. Common acts include tripping, hitting, pushing, pinching, pulling hair, kicking, biting, starting fights, daring others to fight, stealing or destroying property, extortion, assaults with a weapon, other violent acts, and homicide.

“Emotional bullying” may include the intentional infliction of harm to another’s self-esteem, including but not limited to insulting or profane remarks, insulting or profane gestures, or harassing and frightening statements, when such events are considered in light of the surrounding facts, the history of the students involved, and age, maturity, and special characteristics of the students.

“Social bullying” may include harm to another’s group acceptance, including but not limited to, harm resulting from intentionally gossiping about another student or intentionally spreading negative rumors about another student that result in the victim being excluded from a school activity or student group; the intentional planning and/or implementation of acts or statements that inflict public humiliation upon a student; the intentional undermining of current relationships of the victim-student through the spreading of untrue gossip or rumors designed to humiliate or embarrass the student; the use of gossip, rumors or humiliating acts designed to deprive the student of awards, recognition or involvement in school activities; the false or malicious spreading of an untrue statement or statements about another student that exposes the victim to contempt or ridicule or deprives the victim of the confidence and respect of student peers; or the making of false statements to others that the student has committed a crime, or has an infectious, contagious, or loathsome disease, or similar egregious representations.

“Sexual bullying” may include harm to another resulting from, but not limited to, making unwelcome sexual comments, about the student, making vulgar, profane, or lewd comments or drawings or graffiti about the victim; directing vulgar, profane, or lewd gestures toward the victim; committing physical acts of a sexual nature at school, including the fondling or touching of private parts of the victim’s body; participation in the gossiping or spreading of false rumors about the student’s sexual life; written or verbal statements directed at the victim that would reasonably be interpreted as a serious threat to force the victim to commit sexual acts or to sexually assault the victim when considering the factual circumstances in which the threat was made and the reaction of the intended victim; off-campus dating violence by a student that adversely affects the victim’s school performance or behavior, attendance, participation in school functions or extracurricular activities, or makes the victim fearful at school of the

assaulting bully; or the commission of sexual assault, rape, or homicide. Such conduct may also constitute sexual harassment — also prohibited by the district.

B. “Threatening behavior” means any pattern of behavior or isolated action, whether or not it is directed at another person, that a reasonable person would believe indicates potential for future harm to students, school personnel or school property.

C. “Electronic communication” means the communication of any written, verbal, pictorial information or video content by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, a mobile or cellular telephone or other wireless telecommunication device or a computer. Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, communications made through weblogs and social media forums. Bullying by electronic communication is prohibited whether or not such communication originated at school, or with school equipment, if the communication is specifically directed at students or school personnel and concerns bullying at school.

D. The term “at school” means on school grounds, in school vehicles, at school-sponsored activities or at school-sanctioned events.

E. In determining what a “reasonable person” should recognize as bullying, staff will consider the point of view of the intended target, including any characteristics unique to the intended target. Staff may also consider the disciplinary history and physical characteristics of the alleged bully.

F. “Good faith” is a state of mind consisting in honesty in belief or purpose or faithfulness to one’s duty or obligation.

G. The term “discriminatory harassment, intimidation and bullying” is defined by the District pursuant to SPS Board Policy 489 as harassment, intimidation, and bullying targeted toward an individual because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, marital status, veteran status, disability or genetic information.