

Weddington Elementary Anti-Bullying Plan 2026-2027

Statement of Purpose

Everyone at Weddington Elementary is committed to making our school a safe and caring place for all students. We recognize the importance of promoting respectful relationships within our school community and are committed to providing a nurturing environment in which all students and staff are treated fairly and with respect. We refuse to tolerate bullying of any kind at our school.

Policy Statement (UCPS BOE Policy 4-7)

The Board believes that all employees and students should be free of racism, and unlawful discrimination, including harassment and bullying, as a part of a safe, orderly and inviting working and learning environment. It commits itself to non-discrimination in all its educational and employment activities. The Board expressly prohibits racism, unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying however motivated, directed toward any person or group, including, but not limited to acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic that is based on a federally protected class, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, sexual orientation, and gender identity), socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, military affiliation, genetic information, or age (40 or older) in its educational program, which includes all operations, services, and activities of the district and will provide equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups as required by law. In the context of employment, the Board prohibits discrimination based on the above or any unlawful grounds.

The Board also prohibits retaliation against an employee, student or witness who has exercised any rights made available through state or federal law, including prohibiting retaliation for reporting violations of this policy.

Any violation of this policy is considered serious and school officials shall promptly take appropriate action to address the violation.

Definition of Bullying Behavior

UCPS Definition (BOE Policy 4-7): Harassment or bullying behavior is deliberate conduct intended to harm another person or group of persons. Such conduct violates this policy when any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication:

- A. places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or

- B. creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits or by adversely altering the conditions of an employee's employment.

"Hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as harassment or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is harassment or bullying. A hostile environment may be created through pervasive or persistent misbehavior or a single incident, if sufficiently severe.

Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, behavior described above that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic or motivated by an individual's association with a person who has or is perceived to have a differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, sexual orientation, and gender identity), socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability. Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to, acts of disrespect, intimidation, or threats, such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, lewd propositions, exclusion from peer groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching, or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Harassment and bullying may occur through electronic means ("cyberbullying"), such as through the Internet, emailing, or text messaging, or by use of personal websites to support deliberate and repeated behavior intended to cause harm to persons or groups. Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment or bullying.

Petty slights, annoyances, simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents (unless extremely serious) are not harassment under this Policy. Legitimate appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment, not are reasonable performance management actions taken to direct or control how work is performed or to monitor feedback on work performance. The exercise of legitimate authority administered in a professional and constructive manner is not harassment under this Policy.

- b. Complaints of discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex in violation of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 are addressed in Policy 4-07(a) Sexual Harassment (Students) and Policy 4-07(a) AG Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process - Administrative Guidelines.

Student Definition: Bullying is done on purpose and usually happens more than one time. Bullying is when someone does not treat another person with respect and hurts them physically or emotionally.

Cyber-Bullying: Cyber-bullying is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It has to have a minor on both sides, or at least have been instigated by a minor against another minor. Cyber-bullying is usually not a one-time communication, unless it involves a death threat or a credible threat of serious bodily harm.

Examples of Bullying Behaviors:

Bullying may include, but is not limited to, cyber bullying, verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats and may be directed at the same or different individuals. This rule includes hate-motivated behavior (i.e. injuring or intimidating another due to the victim's race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability).

(Code of Student Conduct 4-3)

Managing Bullying

Student Bullying Prevention Strategies:

- Treat everyone with respect and kindness
- Include others
- Refuse to bully others or let others be bullied
- Report bullying to a staff member when you see it

Staff Bullying Prevention Strategies:

- Watch and listen carefully for bullying, especially at recess. Stop bullying when you see it!
- Spread out at recess and stay on watch. Teachers should move around so that they can see all areas of the playground.
- Have class discussions about respect and how to treat others.
- Make sure your students know the school's bully policy
- Pay attention when students say that they are being bullied
- Follow the school's policy and give consequences each time you see or find out that bullying really happened!

Anti-Bullying Training and Information for Staff:

- Staff members will be trained early each school year on current bullying research and the school anti-bullying policy. The training will include ways to recognize and prevent bullying and appropriate responses to all bullying reports.

Anti-Bullying Training and Information for Students:

- Each classroom teacher is responsible for classroom discussions with students about the school anti-bullying policy and the importance of showing respect to everyone in an effort to prevent bullying.

Reporting Procedures for Staff and Students

Students:

Students are instructed to report bullying behaviors to their teacher or any staff member/adult right away. They are able to report verbally or in written form and may choose to remain anonymous. Students are taught the importance of reporting dangerous/hurtful behaviors immediately so that the proper course of action can be followed to address any bullying.

Staff:

Staff members are responsible for monitoring student behavior at all times and are responsible for investigating and addressing bullying behavior immediately when it is observed/when they become aware of it. Teachers will inform the counselor and/or administrators immediately when they are aware of a bullying incident so that the situation can be investigated, and if needed, consequences can be determined as outlined in the bullying policy.

Parents/visitors/volunteers/community members:

All visitors to our school campus are encouraged to report verbally or in written form to a staff member any bullying behaviors they observe. Staff members will inform the counselor and/or administrators immediately when they are aware of the bullying incident so that the situation can

be investigated, and if needed, consequences can be determined as outline in the bullying policy.

Consequences and Appropriate Remedial Actions for Acts of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

For each incident, the developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved, levels of harm, the reasons surrounding the incident, the nature of the behaviors, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, and past history of the parties involved will be considered when providing consequences.

In accordance with the Elementary School Student Handbook, general consequences for bullying at Weddington Elementary are outlined below.

1st Offense: 0-3 days of suspension at the discretion of the principal

2nd Offense: 3-5 days of suspension

3rd Offense: 5-10 days of suspension

We recognize the importance of providing support to prevent future bullying behavior. Therefore, for each offense, the student will receive additional actions at the discretion of the teacher, administration, counselor, and/or other school staff. These potential actions include:

- Parent phone call or email
- Parent conference
- Meeting with the school counselor
- Student reflection about the incident, impact on other students, and how to prevent future problems

Monitoring and Evaluating

All reports of bullying are shared between administration and the school counselor so that the school counselor can assist in monitoring the nature and extent of bullying in our school.

Administration will review bullying data to look for patterns at specific locations within our school (such as recess or bathrooms), in classrooms, or with individual students so that we can put supports in place to address these needs. Any indicator of an increase in bullying behaviors will necessitate conversation among school staff to thoroughly review our current plan and consider changes.