

## BULLYING PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

### Statement of Purpose

The Board of Education supports a secure and positive school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, **exclusion, humiliation, physical aggression or harassment**, and any type of bullying behavior. **The Board understands that bullying may interfere with a student's education or participation in school activities.** The purpose of this policy is to promote consistency of approach and to help create a climate in which all types of bullying are regarded as unacceptable.

Bullying and other behaviors as defined below are prohibited on district property, at district or school-sanctioned activities and events, when students are being transported in any vehicle dispatched by the district or one of its schools, or off school property when such conduct has a nexus to school or any district curricular or non-curricular activity or event. Response to bullying behaviors are addressed in the district behavior matrix.

### Prohibited Behavior

- Bullying
- Retaliation against those reporting bullying and/or other behaviors prohibited by this policy
- Making knowingly false accusations of bullying behavior

### Definitions

**Bullying** is the use of coercion or intimidation to obtain control over another person or to cause physical, mental, or emotional harm to another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal, or electronically transmitted expressions (i.e., cyberbullying) or by means of a physical act or gesture.

Bullying is repeated; it keeps happening over time. The person it is happening to isn't able to make it stop.

Bullying is one sided; it involves a power imbalance and is unfair or unequal. One group or person is being mean and the other is not.

**Bullying is prohibited against any student for any reason**, including but not limited to any such behavior that is directed toward a student on the basis of his or her academic performance, on the basis of their weight, height, body size, immigration/citizenship status, or any basis protected by federal and state law, including disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, **marital status**, family **composition status**, national origin, religion, ancestry, or the need for special education services, whether such characteristic(s) is actual or perceived.

Examples of bullying may include:

- hurting someone's body or belongings
- using words to hurt someone's feelings
- leaving someone out on purpose
- getting others to be mean or exclude someone

**Retaliation** is an act or communication intended as retribution against an individual who reports an act of bullying. Retaliation can also include knowingly making false accusations of bullying or acting to influence the investigation of, or the response to, a report of bullying.

**False accusations** of bullying are those made knowingly by an individual or group of individuals with the purpose of causing harm to another individual and which are false.

### **Prevention and Intervention**

The superintendent or designee will develop a program to address bullying at all school levels and will ensure that the program is consistently applied across all students and staff. The program will be aimed toward accomplishing the following goals:

1. To send a clear message to students, staff, parents, and community members that bullying and retaliation against a student who reports bullying will not be tolerated.
2. To train staff and students on an annual basis in taking proactive steps to prevent bullying from occurring, which includes but is not limited to, training on the bullying prevention and education policy, how to recognize and intervene in bullying situations, and positive school climate practices.
3. To support positive school climate efforts that clearly define, teach, and reinforce prosocial behavior. This includes intentional efforts to promote positive relationships between staff and students as well as students with other students. To recognize and praise positive, supportive behaviors of students toward one another on a regular basis.
4. To designate a team of persons at each school who advise the school administration on the severity and frequency of bullying. The team of persons at the school may include, but need not be limited to, school resource officers, social workers, school psychologists, health professionals, mental health professionals, members of bullying prevention or youth resiliency community organizations, counselors, teachers, administrators, parents, and students.
5. To survey students' impressions of the severity and frequency of bullying behaviors in their school. by reviewing the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey and Panorama survey annually.
6. To include students in the development, creation, and delivery of bullying prevention efforts as developmentally appropriate.
7. To provide character building for students that includes, but is not limited to, age-appropriate, interactive, evidence-based social and emotional learning as well as information on the recognition and prevention of bullying behaviors.
8. To provide resources and education opportunities for parents to help prevent and address bullying.
9. To implement procedures for immediate intervention, investigation, and confrontation of students engaged in bullying behavior.

10. To initiate efforts to change the behavior of students engaged in bullying behaviors through re-education on acceptable behavior, discussions, counseling, and appropriate negative consequences.
11. To foster a productive partnership with parents and community members in order to help maintain a bully-free environment across settings.
12. To support targets of bullying through a layered continuum of supports that includes, but is not limited to, individual and peer counseling.

## Reporting

Any student or parent/guardian of a student who believes they have been a victim of bullying and/or other behaviors prohibited by this policy, or who has witnessed such bullying and/or other prohibited behaviors, is strongly encouraged to immediately report it to a school administrator, counselor, or teacher. Reports can be made in-person or in writing. Reports should include details of the incident including times, dates, and locations. Reports should also include names and contact information, if necessary, for alleged bullies and targets and witnesses. Students can also use Safe2Tell to report anonymously.

## Investigating and Responding

As part of the superintendent's comprehensive program to address bullying, procedures will be developed with the goal of immediate intervention and investigation in response to reports of students engaged in bullying and/or other behaviors prohibited by this policy. Procedures will include, to the extent appropriate as determined by the investigator and designated administrator, and in accordance with applicable law and local school board policy and procedures, notification to parents/guardians of the results of bullying investigations and their right to appeal investigatory findings to the district.

## Supports and Referrals

As part of the superintendent's comprehensive program to address bullying, procedures will be developed with the aim toward accomplishing the following goals:

- Initiate efforts to change the behavior of students engaged in bullying behaviors.
- Support targets of bullying in ways that avoid increasing their likelihood of discipline.
- Support witnesses of bullying.

A student who engages in any act of bullying, retaliation, and/or other behaviors prohibited by this policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the bullying behavior will be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made. Bullying behavior that constitutes **unlawful** discrimination or harassment will be subject to investigation and discipline under related Board policies and procedures. Students targeted by bullying when such bullying behavior may constitute **unlawful** discrimination or harassment also have additional rights and protections under Board policies and procedures regarding **unlawful** discrimination and harassment. The RFSB Discipline Matrix will address appropriate responses to acts of bullying, retaliation and/or other behaviors prohibited by this policy.

The board will be updated annually on student perceptions of bullying.

Legal References:

C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (2)(a)(I)(K)(policy required as part of safe schools plan)

Cross References:

AC - Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity

JB - Equal Educational Opportunities

JBB\* - Sexual-based Harassment

JICDA - Code of Conduct: Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion

JICDD - Violent and Aggressive Behavior

JICDE-E-2 - Bullying Investigation Form

JK - Student Discipline

JKD/JKE - Suspension/Expulsion of Students

JLDAC - Screening/Testing of Students