

BGM COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN



AUGUST 2025

Introduction

BGM Community Schools expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. The BGM Community School District is committed to providing all students and staff with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying, harassment, and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process. Bullying and/or harassment of or by students, staff, and volunteers is against federal, state, and local policy and is not tolerated. Bullying and/or harassing behavior can seriously disrupt the ability of school employees to maintain a safe and civil environment, and the ability of students to learn and succeed. Therefore, it is the policy of the state and the school district that school employees, volunteers, and students shall not engage in bullying or harassing behavior in school, on school property, or at any school function or school-sponsored activity.

Harassment and bullying are defined in Iowa Code section 280.28 as: Any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's academic performance.
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school

"Trait or characteristic of the student" includes but is not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.

Definitions

What is Bullying?

The definition below is used for bullying prevention and intervention programming in schools. This definition guides efforts to educate all constituents with common language around bullying.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. - *2014 US Department of Education office of Safe Schools*

Bullying Defined in Iowa Law

Harassment and bullying are defined in Iowa Code section 280.28 as: any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student based on the individual's actual or perceived age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status, and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

1. Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
2. Has a substantial detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
3. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's academic performance.
4. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Aggressor - is a student/adult who engages in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation

Confidentiality - is the expectation that anything done or revealed will be kept private

Cyberbullying - is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as phones, computers, social media, email, and internet.

Electronic means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optic cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. “Electronic” includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, and electronic text messaging.

Hostile environment is a situation in which bullying caused the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the condition of a student’s education

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who 1) reports bullying, 2) provides information during an investigation or bullying, or 3) witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Target is the person against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Trait or characteristic of the student includes but is not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.

Volunteer means an individual who has regular, significant contact with students.

What is the difference between bullying and harassment?

Although bullying and harassment are often used interchangeably when talking about hurtful or harmful behavior — and the behavior may look the same — there are important distinctions in the definition, laws, and protections for students experiencing harassment.

The first difference is in the definitions of bullying and harassment. For bullying, it’s important to note that while definitions vary from source to source, most agree that an act is defined as bullying when the behavior hurts, harms, or humiliates another person physically or emotionally. Those targeted by bullying behavior struggle to defend themselves and stop the action directed at them. There also is an “imbalance of power.” This means the student demonstrating the bullying behavior has more power; this can be physically, socially, or emotionally (for example, a higher social status, physically larger, or emotionally intimidating).

The definition of harassment outlines that the behavior is similar by its unwanted and hurtful actions. It can include unwelcome conduct such as verbal abuse, graphic or written statements, threats, physical assault, or other conduct that is threatening or humiliating, but the negative behavior is based on a student's race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin. For example, bullying behavior meets the threshold of harassment when a student is being verbally bullied with demeaning language about their disability.

Students experiencing harassment also have protections at the federal level. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) have stated that bullying is considered discriminatory harassment when based on a student's race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin. If a student is experiencing discriminatory harassment, federally funded schools are obligated under federal law to address the behavior.

Is it Bullying? What is it?

Conflict is not Bullying. A conflict is a disagreement or antagonism between two or more people. All parties involved have some responsibility for the encounter. It is not bullying when two or more kids with **no perceived power imbalance, fight, have an argument or disagree.** Conflict resolution strategies can be employed to find common ground when both parties have a vested interest in resolving the conflict. Peer mediation may be appropriate in conflict situations. Bullying is peer abuse and needs to be reported and treated as such. Peer mediation is **not** appropriate in bullying.

Is it bullying, teasing, mean moments or conflicts? This is sometimes hard to distinguish with school-aged children. All can be devastating, inappropriate and should be addressed immediately. If a student needs help with any of these incidents, please contact the classroom teacher, counselor, and/or building principal.

IS IT BULLYING?	
TEASING • Everyone is having fun • No one is getting hurt • Everyone is participating equally	CONFLICT • No one is having fun • There is a possible solution to the disagreement • Equal balance of power
MEAN MOMENT(s) • Someone is being hurt on purpose • Reaction to a strong feeling or emotion (feelings get hurt) • Isolated event(s), sometimes with "friends"	BULLYING • Attacked physically, socially, and/or emotionally • Unequal balance of power • Happens more than once over a period of time • Someone is being hurt on purpose

Types of Bullying from www.stopbullying.gov

Verbal - speaking or writing mean things.

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

Social Bullying - (Relational Bullying) hurting someone's reputation or relationships

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

Physical bullying - hurting a person's body or possessions

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

STUDENT TO STUDENT HARASSMENT

BGM Board Policy 502.10

Harassment of students by other students will not be tolerated in the school district. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, school district property, or on property within the jurisdiction of the school district; while on school-owned and/or school-operated buses, vehicles or chartered buses; while attending or engaged in school activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school district.

Harassment prohibited by the school district includes, but is not limited to, harassment, including bullying, on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, marital status, religion, creed, disability or sexual orientation. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will after an investigation may be disciplined, up to and including, suspension and expulsion.

Sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating, offensive or hostile learning environment.

Sexual harassment as set out above, may include, but is not limited to the following:

- verbal or written harassment or abuse
- pressure for sexual activity
- repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications
- unwelcome touching
- suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, etc.

Harassment on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, marital status, religion, creed, or disability means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to unreasonably embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble students when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating, offensive or hostile learning environment.

Harassment as set forth above may include, but is not limited to the following

- verbal, physical or written harassment, bullying or abuse
- repeated remarks of a demeaning nature
- implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, etc.
- demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student.

The district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. The building principal will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment.

Retaliation against a student because the student has filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding is also prohibited, however, the superintendent has the right to discipline students who knowingly file false harassment complaints. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including, suspension and expulsion.

It shall also be the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the investigator and principals, to develop administrative rules regarding this policy. The superintendent shall also be responsible for organizing training programs for students and employees. The training shall include how to recognize harassment and what to do in case a student is harassed. It will also include effective harassment prevention strategies. The superintendent will also develop a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the policy by reducing harassment in the school district. The superintendent shall report to the board on the progress of reducing harassment in the school district.

Reporting

It is the responsibility of every employee, student, and parent to recognize acts of bullying and retaliation, and to take every action necessary to ensure that the policies and procedures of the BGM Community School District are implemented. Any student or employee who believes that he/she has been subjected to bullying, harassment, or retaliation has the right to file a complaint and to receive prompt and appropriate handling of the complaint. Further, all reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of this policy may require disclosure of any or all information received.

The safety of suspected targets is our first consideration once a complaint is received. A safety assessment is made immediately and provisional accommodations are implemented by appropriate staff members as deemed necessary.

If a student feels they have been bullied or harassed, please report it **immediately** to the building principal. We will work together to discuss the incident and identify if it is conflict or meets the criteria for bullying. If it is agreed upon that it is conflict, we will develop a plan of action on how to address the conflict. If it is suspected that it is bullying or harassment the school district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying or harassment. The building principal, juvenile court school liaison, and/or superintendent will be responsible for handling all complaints alleging bullying or harassment.

Reporting procedures will be shared with students and staff annually. Each school has its own Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Forms that is age appropriate for the student and adult reporters. Initial reports can be made orally or in writing. Opportunities for discreet reporting are also made available. Written records of all oral interviews and written responses and documentation during the investigation are kept by the designated official for reporting.

STUDENT TO STUDENT HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

BGM Board Policy 502.10R1

Students who feel that they have been bullied or harassed should:

- If the student is comfortable doing so, the student should communicate to the harasser that the student expects the behavior to stop. If the student wants assistance communicating with the harasser, the student should ask a teacher, counselor or principal to help.
- If the harassment does not stop, or the student does not feel comfortable confronting the harasser, the student should:
 - tell a teacher, counselor or principal
 - write down exactly what happened, keep a copy and give another copy to the teacher, counselor or principal including
 - what, when and where it happened
 - who was involved
 - exactly what was said or what the harasser did
 - witnesses to the harassment
 - what the student said or did, either at the time or later\
 - how the student felt
 - how the harasser responded

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

A student who believes that the student has been harassed shall notify the building principal, the designated investigator. The alternate investigator is the superintendent. The investigator may request that the student complete the Harassment Complaint form and turn over evidence of the harassment, including, but not limited to, letters, tapes, or pictures. Information received during the investigation shall be kept confidential to the extent possible. The investigator, with the approval of the principal, or the principal has the authority to initiate a harassment investigation in the absence of a written complaint.

INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

The investigator shall reasonably and promptly commence the investigation upon receipt of the complaint. The investigator shall interview the complainant and the alleged harasser. The alleged harasser may file a written statement refuting or explaining the behavior outlined in the

complaint. The investigator may also interview witnesses as deemed appropriate. Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator shall make written findings and conclusions as to each allegation of harassment and report the findings and conclusions to the principal. The investigator will provide a copy of the findings of the investigation to the principal.

RESOLUTION OF THE COMPLAINT

Following receipt of the investigator's report, the principal may investigate further, if deemed necessary, and make a determination of any appropriate additional step which may include discipline, up to and including, suspension and expulsion.

Prior to the determination of the appropriate remedial action, the principal may, at the principal's discretion, interview the complainant and the alleged harasser. The principal shall file a written report closing the case and documenting any disciplinary action taken or any other action taken in response to the complaint. The complainant, the alleged harasser and the investigator shall receive notice as to the conclusion of the investigation.

POINTS TO REMEMBER IN THE INVESTIGATION

- Evidence uncovered in the investigation is confidential.
- Complaints must be taken seriously and investigated.
- No retaliation will be taken against individuals involved in the investigation process.
- Retaliators will be disciplined up to and including suspension and expulsion.

CONFLICTS

If the investigator is a witness to the incident, the alternate investigator shall be the investigator.

Responses to Bullying

Teaching Appropriate Behaviors Through Skills-Building

Once the determination of bullying, harassment, or retaliation has occurred and is founded, school staff will use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behaviors. Guidance and assistance will be provided for both the aggressor and the targets. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals
- Meeting with parents/guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce anti-bullying skills and social skills at home
- Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills
- Making a referral for counseling

Taking Disciplinary Action

If disciplinary action is appropriate, the action will be determined on the basis of facts including the nature of the conduct, the age of the students involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the plan and the district/school code of conduct.

Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

School personnel will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others. One strategy that may be used is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur. Within a reasonable amount of time following the determination and ordering of remedial/disciplinary action, school personnel will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of behaviors or if additional supportive measures are needed.

Parents and Families

Parents and families play a central role to preventing bullying and stopping it when it happens. The following list from [National Crime Prevention Council website](#) are a few things parents and families can do:

- Teach kids to solve problems without using violence and praise them when they do.
- Give children positive feedback when they behave well to help them build self-esteem. Help give them the self-confidence to stand up for what they believe in.
- Ask your children about their day and listen to them talk about school, social events, their classmates, and any problems they have.
- Take bullying seriously. Many kids are embarrassed to say they have been bullied. You may only have one chance to step in and help.
- If you see any bullying, stop it right away, even if your child is the one doing the bullying.
- Encourage your child to help others who need it.
- Don't bully your children or bully others in front of them. Many times kids who are bullied at home react by bullying other kids. If your children see you hit, ridicule, or gossip about someone else, they are also more likely to do so themselves.
- Support bully prevention programs in your child's school. If your school doesn't have one, consider starting one with other parents, teachers, and concerned adults.

Help your child deal with bullying by talking to teachers, administrators, and staff. The following PDF files give more information:

- [How to talk with educators at your child's school about bullying](#) - Get advice on how to communicate with teachers and other leaders at your child's school if you're dealing with bullying.
- [Tips for parents: What to do if your child is being bullied](#) - Get tips for supporting your child through this very painful experience.
 - [Spanish version/Consejos para los padres](#)
- [Tips for parents: What to do if your child bullies others](#) - If your child bullies others at school, it needs to stop. Find out what you can do at home.
 - [Spanish version: Consejos para los padres](#)
- [Tips for parents: What to do if your child witnesses bullying](#) - Empower your child to take positive action in bullying situations and help prevent further bullying.
 - [Spanish version: Consejos para los padres](#)
- [What can parents do to prevent and address cyber-bullying?](#) Protect your child from indirect forms of bullying that use text messaging, websites, and cell phones.
- [Advocate for a bullying prevention program at your school](#) - You can play a very important role in advocating for a bullying prevention program at your child's school.

Additional resources can be found on the Iowa Department of Ed website:

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/learner-supports/anti-bullyinganti-harassment>

Bullying Prevention

Bullying can threaten students' physical and emotional safety at school and can negatively impact their ability to learn. A safe and supportive school climate can help prevent bullying. The best way to address bullying is to stop it before it starts. There are a number of things school staff and parents can do to make schools safer and prevent bullying. At BGM we practice the 6 Pillars of Character through Character Counts to establish a culture of inclusion and respect that welcomes all students and creates a positive and safe climate and culture for all students and staff. The pillars of Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship are taught, modeled, practiced, and expected. This is obtained through a variety of methods including, but not limited to integrated classroom lessons, small group lessons, school-wide assemblies, cross grade level Home Base lessons at the elementary, student seminars with the principal, during DEN time at the high school, and individually with students through counseling and/or interventions. We believe we can all work together as staff, parents, community members and students to prevent bullying.

Safety starts in the classroom. Students should also feel and be safe everywhere on campus—in the cafeteria, in the library, in the restrooms, on the bus, and on the playground. Everyone at school can work together to create a climate where bullying is not acceptable. Here are additional tips for teachers and parents to become proactive in preventing of bullying:

Five Tips to Help School Staff Prevent Bullying

Teachers can create safe, bully-free zones in their classrooms with the following tips:

- **Know Your School and District Policies on Bullying** Do your part to implement them effectively.
- **Treat Students and Others with Warmth and Respect** Let students know that you are available to listen and help them.
- **Conduct Classroom Activities around Bullying** Help your class identify bullying in books, TV shows and movies, and discuss the impact of that bullying and how it was/could be resolved. Hold class meetings in which students can talk about bullying and peer relations.
- **Discuss Bullying with Colleagues** As a group, you will be better able to monitor the school environment. Discuss both bullying in general and concerns regarding specific students.
- **Take Immediate Action** Failure to act provides tacit approval of the behavior and can cause it to spread.

(These tips were adapted from [NEA's Bully Free: It Starts With Me](#) and [AFT's See A Bully, Stop A Bully](#) campaign resources.)

Five Tips to Help Parents Prevent Bullying

Parents and guardians are among a school's best allies in bullying prevention:

- **Talk with and Listen to Your Children Everyday** Ask questions about their school day, including experiences on the way to and from school, lunch, and recess. Ask about their peers. Children who feel comfortable talking to their parents about these matters before they are involved in bullying are more likely to get them involved after.
- **Spend time at School and Recess** Schools can lack the resources to provide all students individualized attention during "free" time like recess. Volunteer to coordinate games and activities that encourage children to interact with peers aside from their best friends.
- **Be a Good Example** When you get angry at waiters, other drivers or others, model effective communication techniques. As Education.com puts it, "Any time you speak to another person in a mean or abusive way, you're teaching your child that bullying is ok."
- **Create Healthy Anti-Bullying Habits** Starting as young as possible, coach your children on both what not to do (push, tease, and be mean to others) as well as what to do (be kind, empathize, and take turns). Also coach your child on what to do if someone is mean to him or to another (get an adult, tell the bully to stop, walk away and ignore the bully).
- **Make Sure Your Child Understands Bullying** Explicitly explain what it is and that it's not normal or tolerable for them to bully, be bullied, or stand by and watch other kids be bullied.

(These tips were adapted from materials by the [National PTA](#) and [Education.com](#).)

COMPLAINT FORM A

(Discrimination, Anti-Bullying, and Anti-Harassment)

Date of complaint: _____

Name of Complainant: _____

Are you filling out this form
for yourself or someone else
(please identify the individual
if you are submitting on behalf
of someone else): _____

Who or what entity do you
believe discriminated against,
harassed, or bullied you (or
someone else)? _____

Date and place of alleged
incident(s): _____

Names of any witnesses (if
any): _____

Nature of discrimination, harassment, or bullying alleged (check all that apply):

☐	Age	☐	Physical Attribute	☐	Sex
☐	Disability	☐	Physical/Mental Ability	☐	Sexual Orientation
☐	Familial Status	☐	Political Belief	☐	Socio-economic Background
☐	Gender Identity	☐	Political Party Preference	☐	Other – Please Specify:
☐	Marital Status	☐	Race/Color		
☐	National Origin/Ethnic Background/Ancestry	☐	Religion/Creed		

In the space below, please describe what happened and why you believe that you or someone else has been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied. Please be as specific as possible and attach additional pages if necessary.

I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

DISPOSITION OF COMPLAINT FORM A

Date: _____

Date of initial complaint: _____

Name of Complainant: _____

Date and place of alleged incident(s): _____

Name of Respondent _____

Nature of discrimination, harassment, or bullying alleged (check all that apply):

	Age		Physical Attribute		Sex
	Disability		Physical/Mental Ability		Sexual Orientation
	Familial Status		Political Belief		Socio-economic Background
	Gender Identity		Political Party Preference		Other – Please Specify:
	Marital Status		Race/Color		
	National Origin/Ethnic Background/Ancestry		Religion/Creed		

Summary of Investigation:

I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM

Name of complainant: _____

Position of complainant: _____

Date of complaint: _____

Name of alleged harasser: _____

Date and place of incident or incidents: _____

Description of misconduct: _____

Name of witnesses (if any): _____

Evidence of harassment, i.e., letters, photos, etc. (attach evidence if possible): _____

Any other information: _____

I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Elementary Complaint Form

I have a complaint and would like help in resolving it. Here is what happened:

I would identify this event as

____ Teasing ____ Conflict ____ Mean Moment ____ Bullying

I think this because

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Adult who helped _____ Date _____

Resolution:

