

Florence School District #14-1	NEPN Code: JFCE
Policies and Regulations Code: J- Students	

BULLYING & OTHER HARASSMENT

Florence School District is committed to maintaining a constructive, safe school climate that is conducive to student learning and fosters an environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. Persistent bullying can severely inhibit a student's ability to learn and may have lasting negative effects on a student's life. The bullying of students by students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated. Bullying consists of physical, verbal, written, or electronic conduct directed toward a student that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it:

1. has the purpose of effecting or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive academic environment, or
2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's educational opportunities (academic, curricular activities, & social opportunities within the school environment).

FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

An individual who believes that he/she has been harassed or bullied will notify the building. Principal and that individual will become the investigator. The alternate investigator is the school counselor assigned to a student's attendance center. The investigator may request that the individual complete the Harassment/Bullying Formal Complaint form and turn over evidence of the harassment, including, but not limited to, letters, tapes, or pictures. Information received during the investigation is kept confidential to the extent possible. The principal or the alternate investigator, with permission from the principal, has the authority to initiate an investigation in the absence of a written complaint. If the complaint involves the building principal, the complaint shall be filed directly with the Superintendent. If the complaint involves the Superintendent, the complaint shall be filed directly with the School Board.

INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

The investigator will reasonably and promptly commence the investigation upon receipt of the complaint. The investigation should begin within two school days, or within two work days during school recesses. Extenuating circumstances causing the delay of an investigation must be submitted to the superintendent for approval. The length of the investigation is governed by the facts and complexity of each individual case but should

be completed within 30 days of the complaint. The superintendent may approve an extension in special circumstances. The investigator will interview the complainant and the alleged harasser. The alleged harasser may file a written statement in response to the complaint. The investigator may also interview witnesses as deemed appropriate. In addition, the School District may take immediate steps at its discretion to protect the complainant student(s) pending completion of the investigation of alleged harassment. Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will make written findings and conclusions as to each allegation of harassment and produce written findings and conclusions. An alternate investigator will provide a copy of the written findings of the investigation to the principal.

RESOLUTION OF THE COMPLAINT

Following the completion of his/her own investigation or upon receipt of an alternate investigator's report, the principal may investigate further, if deemed necessary, and decide of any appropriate additional steps which may include discipline.

The remedial actions taken by the principal, including disciplinary action where appropriate, should be designed to prevent further harassment. The principal, or designee, will monitor the effectiveness of the remedial actions taken by contacting the complainant at least twice during the month following the investigation resolution. If further remedial actions are necessary, the case shall remain open with ongoing monitoring and documentation.

The complainant, the alleged harasser, and the investigator will receive notice as to the conclusion of the investigation. The principal may keep any documentation, findings, and actions taken, and may maintain all documentation related to a complaint investigation.

POINTS TO REMEMBER IN THE INVESTIGATION

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

This policy shall apply to persons on school property and at school activities and events on non- school property, including when the person is in any school vehicle or when in a private vehicle located on school property. The prohibition against bullying shall also apply to Florence students when not on school property or at a school event off school property when the bullying conduct results in substantial interference with schoolwork

and discipline, or reasonably causes school authorities to forecast substantial disruption of or material interference with school activities.

Florence students who violate this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.