

BULLYING PREVENTION

The Wayland Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve his/her own highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to bullying, or cyber-bullying.

“Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Cyber-bullying” is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical systems, including but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications:-

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, parents or guardians of students involved in incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation are expected to cooperate fully with the administration.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

It is a violation of this policy for any student or school staff members to engage in Bullying, or for any employee of the Wayland Public Schools to condone or fail to report acts of bullying that they witness or become aware of.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs, whether on or off school grounds;
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Wayland Public schools;

Bullying is also prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Wayland Public Schools if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school, as determined by school administrators.

Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall represent the School District's philosophy of prevention built-on education, discipline, and intervention, and it shall set forth the administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy. Such plan shall include, but not be limited to; procedures for reporting, responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation; the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation or against someone for making a false accusation of bullying; procedures for remedying incidents of bullying and restoring a sense of safety for a target of bullying and assessing that target's needs for protection; strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a person who reports bullying or provides information during an investigation; any notification requirements consistent with applicable law; a strategy for providing counseling or

referral to appropriate services for perpetrators, targets and family members; and provisions for informing parents about the School District's bullying prevention curriculum. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Bullying Prevention and Implementation Plan within his or her school.

Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are strongly urged to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying. Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students and adults of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

A member of a school staff (including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional) who witnessed or becomes aware of alleged Bullying, Cyber-bullying or retaliation shall immediately report it to the school principal or ~~their~~ designee.

Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report of alleged bullying, shall promptly conduct an investigation. The investigation shall be completed within a reasonable amount of time from the date of the report. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on an as necessary basis.

The school principal or a designee will use a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form during his/her investigation, which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses. The school principal or designee

may also contact the parents or guardians of the alleged target or perpetrator during the investigation.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall:

- Notify the parents or guardians of the perpetrator;
- Notify the parents or guardians of the target. and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation;
- Take appropriate disciplinary action; and
- Notify the police if the principal or designee, after consulting with the Superintendent of Schools, believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

Target Assistance

The Wayland Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school faculty and staff in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the Wayland Public Schools website. Each building principal shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan at his or her school. The building principal or designee shall assist students, parents and employees of the School District who seek guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of Bullying, Cyber-bullying or retaliation.

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
603 CMR 26.00
MGL 71:37O
MGL 265:43, 43A
MGL 268:13B
MGL 269:14A

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination
ACAB, Sexual Harassment

JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment
JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing

JK, Student Discipline Regulations

APPROVED

December 11, 2015