

Anti Bullying Model Policy I

July 17, 2009

This model policy is adapted from select existing Wyoming district policies. It recognizes district expertise. Changes from this basic template, however, are expected to ensure that the collective product is suited to the unique circumstances of each school district and is brought into compliance with all expectations of the Safe School Climate Act (W.S. 21-4-311 through 21-4-315).

Bullying Prevention and Education

_____ School District No. __ supports a secure school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment, and any type of bullying behavior. 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 is defined as any written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture, or any pattern thereof - that is intended to cause distress upon one or more students in the school environment. For purposes of this policy, the school environment includes school buildings, grounds, vehicles, bus stops, and all school-sponsored activities and events.

A student who engages in any act of bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the bullying behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

The Superintendent of Schools shall develop and use a comprehensive program to address bullying at all school levels. Parents, teachers, students, and school administrations shall be involved in the development and ongoing review of this program. The program shall be aimed toward accomplishing the following goals:

1. To send a clear message to students, staff, parents, and community members that bullying will not be tolerated.
2. To train staff and students in taking proactive steps to prevent bullying from occurring.

3. To implement procedures for immediate intervention, investigation, and confrontation of students engaged in bullying behavior.
4. 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.
5. To foster a productive partnership with parents and community members in order to help maintain a bully-free environment.
6. To support victims of bullying by means of individual and peer counseling.
7. To help develop peer support networks, social skills, and confidence for all students.
8. To recognize and praise positive supportive behaviors of students toward one another on a regular basis.

Definitions for Discrimination, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, and Retaliation

School board policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, as defined by this policy, against students on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, including athletic activities, and on school-provided transportation. The district expects that staff, volunteers, and students will provide equal treatment and access to educational programs, services, and aid to students without regard to their disability, race, color, gender, national origin, ethnicity, age, religion, marital status, socioeconomic status, cultural background, family status, or physical characteristic of a national origin group.

1. “Discrimination” means any act that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably differentiating in treatment, based on disability, race, color, gender, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, characteristics, or linguistic characteristics of a national origin group.
2. “Harassment” means unwanted behavior of a non-verbal, verbal, written, graphic, sexual or physical nature that is directed at an individual or group of students or staff on the basis of disability, race, color, gender, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, socioeconomic status, cultural

background, familial status, physical characteristic, or linguistic characteristics of a national origin group.

3. "Intimidation or bullying" means any act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, and that has the effect of:
 - a. Physically harming a student or endangering a student's property.
 - b. Knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property.
 - c. Creating a hostile educational environment.
 - d. Verbal bullying.
4. "Retaliation" means any verbal or physical action taken against any person who reports, files a complaint, or participates in an investigation. Retaliation is prohibited and is considered a serious violation of board policy, independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. False charges shall also be regarded as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action.

Actions Resulting from Discrimination, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, and Retaliation

Deliberate malevolent actions that destroy educational opportunities for students shall not be tolerated.

1. A student or his or her parent/legal guardian who believes that the student is the recipient of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying from another student, staff member, or volunteer is encouraged to report the incident to the staff member on duty at the time or to the student's teacher or to the administrator. Information may be presented anonymously. Teachers and other staff who observe students engaging in discriminatory, harassing, intimidating, or bullying behaviors are responsible for taking action to deal with the behavior and reporting the incident to the administrator.
2. There will be an attempt to assist students and/or parents in resolving concerns and issues prior to the use of the formal

disciplinary or complaint procedures. This may include counseling, education, mediation, and/or other opportunities for problem solving between all parties.

3. However, the severity of a specific incident may require immediate disciplinary action. A student and his or her parent/legal guardian, are encouraged to resolve concerns through discussions with school staff. However, if they are unable to resolve the complaint and believe the student is the recipient of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, they are encouraged to follow the procedure outlined in the *Student Handbook* and the district's discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying complaint process.

Electronic Issues

The internet may be an extremely useful and beneficial tool, but it is also creating many new problems for young people. Many students are unaware that questionable images that individuals post online may attract the attention of predators, thus jeopardizing safety – or of employers, thus jeopardizing future job opportunities. Many students do not realize the serious implications of electronic irresponsibility.

More immediate are the issues of cyber bullying that are diminishing the confidence and educational opportunities of other students. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying will not be tolerated. This includes cyber bullying. Below is one strategy path students may use to deal with cyber bullies.

1. Keep cool. If you don't respond to cruel emails, the bully may stop.
2. Shut the bully out. Block their email address, screen name, or phone number.
3. Tell them to stop.
4. If you receive mean emails save them and print them for a record.
5. Talk to a trusted adult.
6. If the situation gets out of hand and you are harassed, threatened, or blackmailed, ask an adult to contact the police or school resource officer.

Because of the magnitude of the potential harm that can occur to students because of the misuse of the internet, email, cell phones, and related support issues, school regulations regarding electronic abuse will be strictly enforced.