

# Administrative Regulation

## Anti-bullying

School behavior standards shall be coordinated district-wide, with particular attention to applying the standards for bullying behavior fairly and consistently among schools at the same grade level. Schools will follow district guidelines and policies according to the Education Code and school rules pertaining to related matters such as bullying, suspension, and expulsion.

The objectives of the district are as follows:

- 1) Cultivation of a culture of empathy, kindness, respect, and mutual trust among students and between students and staff
- 2) Creation of a school climate which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying, both in their roles as victims and bystanders
- 3) Demonstration of commitment to address incidents of bullying by outlining the school response to any such incidents of bullying

### Adult Responsibilities:

Each school site should strive to cultivate a school culture of empathy, community, and mutual trust among students and between students and staff. Such a culture begins with the adults on campus or involved in the school day: teachers, parents, bus drivers, nutrition service workers, administrators, classified staff, and counselors. Adults should make use of teachable moments to communicate what behaviors are unacceptable and can reinforce positive relationships among students by recognizing and rewarding empathetic and community-oriented behavior at school. Staff should also learn to recognize the indicators of bullying behavior to better identify incidents of bullying. The school climate should also encourage students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying, both in their roles as targets and bystanders, by building trust that the school considers bullying an egregious offense. Staff must model this position by being proactive and diligent in supervising students in classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, buses, and school grounds. All staff members are responsible for taking action when bullying occurs.

### Reporting Procedures:

Reports of alleged bullying incidents shall be submitted to the principal or the principal's designee at each school site. If the bully is the principal, the report shall be given to the Superintendent/designee.

***Students, Parents/Guardians, Volunteers, Visitors, and Staff Members:*** who feel that they are the targets of bullying or have witnessed bullying should report the abuse to the principal, the principal's designee, or a trusted school staff member. Incidents of alleged bullying should be documented by completing a Bullying Incident Report Form (Form). While submission of the report form is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to use the report form available from the

principal of each school or the district office. Oral reports shall also be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report. If a victim feels that he/she is the target of cyberbullying, the victim is encouraged to save and print any messages, postings or other communication sent to him/her that he/she feels constitutes cyberbullying and to notify a teacher, principal or other employee so that the matter may be investigated.

**Teachers and School Staff:** Upon receiving a written report form from a student, parent/guardian, volunteer, visitor, or fellow staff-member, teachers and school staff are required to deliver the form to the principal or the principal's designee. If a target or witness of bullying delivers an oral report of bullying to a teacher or staff member, the teacher or school staff member is required to fill out a Form for the complainant that documents the information contained in the oral report. The teacher or staff member must notify the complainant that as a staff member he/she must submit this form to the principal or the principal's designee and then immediately deliver the form to the principal or principal's designee. If the alleged bully is the principal, then the teacher or staff member must follow the same procedure except submit the form to the Superintendent/designee. Even if a student, parent/guardian, volunteer, visitor, or fellow staff-member asks that their report be kept private between him/her and the staff member they are confiding in, a report must still be made to the principal/principal's designee (or Superintendent/designee) and the person reporting must be made aware that the staff member is required to do so. *If a teacher or school staff member observes or becomes aware of bullying behavior, he or she must (if safe) immediately intervene or call for assistance, and subsequently report the incident. (right place?)*

**Principal/Principal's Designee:** Upon receiving a report either directly from the target of bullying, a witness of bullying, or from a teacher or staff member, the principal or principal's designee (or Superintendent/designee) must initiate the Investigation Procedures.

#### Investigation Procedures:

The procedures for investigating school-based bullying must include the principal/designee in the case of student-to-student bullying. The principal or designee shall be trained in investigative procedures and interventions. If the complaint is about the principal or a district staff member's direct supervisor, then the Superintendent/Designee shall be asked to address the complaint. For incidents at the district level, or for school-based adult-on-adult bullying, the principal will be responsible for the investigation, which must comply with all agreed upon procedures for staff discipline.

- 1) The Principal/Designee(s) will make the determination if a reported act of bullying or harassment falls within the scope of District responsibility.
  - a. If it is within the scope of the District, the designee should continue with the investigation as outlined in #2 below
  - b. If it is outside the scope of the District, and determined to be an alleged criminal act, the Designee shall refer the matter to appropriate law enforcement, provide any applicable interventions, and document according to policy.
  - c. *If it is outside the scope of the District, and determined not a criminal act, inform*

*parents/guardians of the victim involved*

2) Within five (5) school days of receiving a notification of complaint, the principal/designee or Superintendent/designee will meet with the alleged victim and if the victim is a student, with the victim's parents/guardians.

- a. The principal **uses a common simple \_\_ in beginning** the investigation process. After gaining an understanding of the process, the victim will then decide whether he/she wants the investigation to proceed.
  - i. if the victim wants the investigation to proceed, the designee will begin a formal investigation as outlined in #3 below
  - ii. if the victim does not want an investigation to proceed, the principal or designee will then discuss with the victim (and his/her guardians) ways for the school to be more vigilant in protecting the victim. Example measures could include instructing recess monitors to carefully watch the alleged bully; having a classroom teacher change the seating arrangement; etc. The designee must document the meeting with the victim and the details of the measures they have decided to take. If the victim later wants to proceed with an investigation, he/she should notify the designee, and the designee should begin an investigation as outlined in #3 below.
- b. If the victim is a student, and he/she is in disagreement with his/her guardians about whether or not the principal will meet with victim and student and guardian and make a decision regarding how or whether to proceed based on the age of the victim, the severity of the bullying, and the arguments against investigation.

3) Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses) will be interviewed privately, separately, and at no time will the alleged perpetrator and victim be interviewed together.

***4) The alleged bully should be considered innocent until proven guilty and must have an opportunity to defend himself/herself against accusations. This is a due process, not a procedural step.***

5) The investigator should consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incident occurred

6) If a determination is made that bullying occurred, the principal/designee shall design an intervention/consequence plan which is consistent with any District or site and bullying program

7) Parents/guardians of the bully and victim will be notified of any actions taken regarding their students.

8) The resolution, all interviews and interventions that take place and corresponding dates shall

be documented in writing and/or noted in the District's specified data system. This process is to be followed with all anonymous complaints as well.

**Confidentiality:** Before, during, and after an investigation, all individuals involved must to the extent reasonably possible maintain confidentiality of the proceedings and the names of the complainant and students involved. Anyone who breaches confidentiality about the proceedings without acceptable cause will face consequences. Confidentiality is essential to both protect the target and the witnesses from retaliation by the bully and to protect the alleged bully from being permanently labeled a "bully" before the allegation has been proven.

***During the Investigation:***

- 1) In general, student complainants and/or alleged victims will continue attendance at the same school and pursue their studies as directed while the investigation is conducted and the complaint is pending resolution. Any legal order of a court to the contrary will prevail.
- 2) Where an employee is the accused, the principal/designee or the appropriate area/district administrator may recommend to the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources/designee, any action necessary to protect the complainant, the alleged victim, or other students or employees, consistent with the requirements of applicable statutes, State Board of Education Rules, School Board Policies, and collective bargaining agreements.

***After the Investigation:*** The Principal/Designee or appropriate area/district administrator will inform all relevant parties in writing of the decision. A copy of the decision will be sent to the originating school and be noted in all relevant data tracking systems.

Intervention/Discipline:

The Principal or designee shall decide the appropriate way to deal with the bully if the investigation has proven that the bully has violated this policy. Interventions and consequences must be age-appropriate and equal to the severity of the violation. In dealing with bullies, the designee should regard the bully and the situation as unique and create an intervention/discipline plan based on the particular characteristics of the situation to ensure that the plan remedies the bullying, decreases chances of retaliation, and helps rehabilitate the bully (if appropriate).

***Possible Interventions:***

- 1) Counseling interventions to address the behavior of the students who bully (e.g., empathy training, anger management);
- 2) Written warning entered in student's file;
- 3) A parent/student/administrator conference;
- 4) Community service;
- 5) Restrict privileges, such as recess time, off-campus lunch, confiscation of electronic device, etc.;
- 6) Intervention, which includes assistance and support, provided to parents; and

- 7) Most extreme cases: suspension and expulsion (see the Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process Policy BP 5144.1);
- 8) Apology.

**Education:** To prevent bullying, each school site has the obligation to educate students about what bullying is and why it is unacceptable. School sites should strive to create a positive, empathetic, and kind school culture.

**Classroom Teachers, Staff:**

- Use teachable moments in class to discuss bullying and emphasize the negative, hurtful effects of bullying
- Use existing curriculum, such as literature, art projects, etc, to discuss bullying and teach empathy

**School Counselor:**

- Hold empowering workshops for victims
- Create curriculum for classroom teachers about bullying and/or help teach classes about bullying
- Create curriculum for classroom teachers about appropriate use of electronic devices and/or help teach classes about safe, appropriate use of electronic devices

**School Administrators:**

- Create consistency in messaging regarding bullying within the school that is in line with the definition of bullying in the Board Policy
- Provide anti-bullying curriculum for teachers
- If possible, hold assemblies regarding bullying
- Prioritize anti-bullying curriculum

The district has the obligation to provide materials and curriculum to each school site that requests support.

Annual Report to the Board:

**Site Level Report:** Every year, each school site must include a section regarding bullying in the School Site Plans. Using the data from the data tracking system, the section will include:

- 1) Efforts made to create a empathetic, kind, trusting, and respectful school environment
- 2) The incidence of bullying
- 3) Summary of the motivations for bullying (race, sexual orientation, disability etc)
- 4) A copy of the administrative reports for each incident
- 5) The disciplinary measures used and effectiveness, such as how many bullies continued to bully others after being disciplined

**Director of Student Services:** At the first Board meeting in May, the Director of Student Services will summarize the reports from each school site, report on changes in the incidence of bullying, and make recommendations as to how the district can more effectively implement the Anti-Bullying Board Policy