

policy

BOARD OF EDUCATION
MACOMB INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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PROHIBITION OF BULLYING BEHAVIOR

It is the policy of the District to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. This policy protects all students from bullying behavior and discriminatory harassment regardless of the subject matter or motivation for such impermissible behavior. Bullying of a student is strictly prohibited. This prohibition includes written, verbal, physical, and emotional/psychological abuse, which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm, reasonable fear for personal safety or substantial emotional distress. This policy applies to all "at school" activities in the District as defined by this policy.

Notification

Notice of this policy will be annually distributed to students and families; posted in conspicuous locations in District's school buildings and on the District's website, as well as incorporated into applicable student handbooks. All new hires will be required to review and sign off on this policy and the related complaint procedure.

Parents or legal guardians of the alleged victim(s), and of the alleged aggressor(s), shall be promptly notified of any complaint or investigation as well as the results of the investigation to the extent consistent with student confidentiality requirements.

To the extent appropriate and/or legally required, confidentiality will be maintained during the investigation process. However, the investigation may, in some circumstances, require the disclosure of names and allegations. Depending on the nature of the complaint and/or the results of the investigation, the appropriate authorities may be notified.

Procedure

Any student who believes he or she has been or is the victim of bullying should immediately report the situation to the Principal or Assistant Principal. The student may also report concerns to a teacher or school staff member who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator. Complaints against the building Principal should be filed with the Superintendent.

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Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that he or she believes to be bullying behavior directed toward a student. Reports shall be made to those identified above.

The Principal (or other administrator as designated by the Superintendent) shall promptly investigate and document all complaints about behavior that may violate this policy. The investigation must be completed as promptly as the circumstances permit. If the investigation finds an instance of bullying has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial action which may include disciplinary measures.

The administrator conducting the investigation shall document any reported prohibited activity and within a prompt and reasonable time frame, report all verified incidents of bullying as well as any remedial action taken, including disciplinary actions and referrals, to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will submit a compiled report of verified incidents to the Board on an annual basis.

Retaliation or false allegations against a target of bullying, a witness, or another person with reliable information about an act of bullying is prohibited.

Retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy, independent of whether a complaint of bullying is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as bullying. Making intentionally false reports about bullying for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is prohibited. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action.

Implementation

The Superintendent is responsible for implementing this policy, and may develop administrative guidelines, consistent with this policy.

This policy is not intended to and should not be interpreted to interfere with legitimate free speech rights of any individual. However, the District reserves the right and responsibility to maintain a safe environment for students, conducive to learning and other legitimate objectives of the school program.

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Definitions

While not all conflict is bullying, if a student or other individual believes there has been bullying behavior, regardless of whether it fits a particular definition, he or she should report it immediately and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action.

“At School” is defined as in a classroom, elsewhere on school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises. It also includes conduct using a telecommunications access device or telecommunications service provider that occurs off school premises if either is owned by or under the control of the District.

“Bullying” is defined as any written, verbal, or physical act, including cyber bullying (i.e., any electronic communication, including, but not limited to electronically transmitted acts involving the use of the internet, telephone or cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand-held device) that, without regard to its subject matter or motivating animus, is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one (1) or more students either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

- A. substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one (1) or more students;
- B. adversely affecting the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the school district’s educational programs or activities by placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress;
- C. having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a student’s physical or mental health; and/or
- D. causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

M.C.L. 380.1310b (Matt Epling Safe School Law, PA 478 of 2014)

Amended: August 26, 2015