



Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Copy of Bullying/Cyberbullying
Number	249
Status	First Reading

Purpose

The Palmerton Area School District Board of Directors is committed to provide a safe, positive learning climate for students in the schools of the school district. The Board recognizes that bullying and intimidation have a negative effect on school climate, whereby students who are intimidated and fearful cannot give their education the single-minded attention they need for success and that bullying can lead to more serious violence. **Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by district students while on school property, in a vehicle on school property or at a school event, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, and any function held on school grounds, at any school event held away from the school, or while the student is coming to and from school.**

Definitions

Bullying shall mean a pattern of repeated harmful and cruel behavior by a person against another person. This may include a wide variety of behaviors, with deliberate intent to hurt, embarrass, or humiliate the other person, including, but not limited to:

1. Physical harm- includes hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, and taking personal belongings.
2. Verbal- includes taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, and making threats.
3. Psychological or Relational- involves spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, and engaging in social exclusion or intimidation.
4. **Cyberbullying- involves misuses of technology, including: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher, or employee of the district by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings or blogs. All forms of cyberbullying are unacceptable and, to the extent such actions are disruptive to the educational process, the offender(s) shall be subject to appropriate discipline.**

Bullying and cyberbullying have the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantial interference with a student's education

2. Creation of a threatening environment.
3. Substantial disruption to the orderly operation of the school.

Authority

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by district students.

The Board encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to any staff members.

The Board directs that complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.

Delegation of Responsibility

Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying.

Each staff member shall be responsible to maintain an educational environment free from bullying. Staff members who observe or become aware of an act of bullying shall take immediate, appropriate steps to intervene – unless intervention would be a threat to staff members' safety. If a staff member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the bullying persists, he/she shall report the bullying to the school principal for further investigation. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents/guardians, and school staff; review of school records; and any other appropriate means of investigation.

The Board expects students and parents/guardians who become aware of an act of bullying to report it to a school official for further investigation. Any student who retaliates against another person for reporting bullying may be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences.

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.[\[1\]](#)

District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe Schools Report: [\[1\]](#)

1. Board's Bullying Policy.
2. Report of bullying incidents.
3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.

Guidelines

The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students.[\[1\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)

This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the district website.

If the school principal is the subject of a complaint, the student shall report the complaint directly to the Superintendent or designated administrator.

When a student believes that he/she is being bullied or cyberbullied, intimidated or in physical danger, the student should immediately inform the bully that his/her behavior is unwelcome, offensive or inappropriate. If the unwelcome, offensive or inappropriate behavior continues, the student shall follow the established complaint procedure.

Complaint Procedures

1. A student shall report a complaint of bullying or cyberbullying to the school principal or a school district employee, who shall inform the student of his/her rights and of the complaint process.
2. The school principal or designee shall immediately conduct an impartial, thorough and confidential investigation of the alleged bullying behavior, which should include interviewing the bully and the potential victim.
3. The school principal or designee shall summarize the investigation as per school procedures, recommending disposition of the complaint.
4. If the investigation results in a substantiated charge of bullying, the school district shall take prompt corrective action to ensure the bullying ceases and will not recur. Such action may include guidance counseling, change of seating, change of class or schedule, other method for separation of the bully and victim, recommending outside of school therapy, detention, suspension or expulsion.

A substantiated charge against a school district student shall subject such student to disciplinary action, consistent with the school Code of Conduct and any other applicable Board policies, and may include educational activities; guidance counseling; a parent conference; detention; suspension and/or expulsion; involuntary transfer to another school or class or bus operated by the school district; or other appropriate forms of disciplinary consequence. In addition, the school may recommend the student participate in anger management and other outside of school therapy programs. Depending on the severity of the incident, the school principal may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. These may include implementing a safety plan; separating and supervising the students involved; providing staff support for students as necessary; reporting incidents to law enforcement if appropriate; and developing a supervision plan with the parents/guardians.

If it is concluded that a student has made false accusations, such student shall be subject to disciplinary action, consistent with the school Code of Conduct.

Appeal Procedure

If the complainant or accused is not satisfied with the school principal's decision, he/she may file a written appeal to the Superintendent within fifteen (15) days.

Education

The district may develop and implement bullying prevention and intervention programs. Such programs shall provide district staff and students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting incidents of bullying.[\[6\]](#)[\[8\]](#)[\[11\]](#)

Confidentiality

The district recognizes that both the complaining student and the alleged bully have strong interest in maintaining confidentiality of

the allegations and related information. The privacy of the complaining student, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and any witnesses will be respected as much as possible, consistent with the legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).

Legal

1. [24 P.S. 1303.1-A](#)
2. Pol. 218.2
3. Pol. 248
4. [22 PA Code 12.3](#)
5. Pol. 218
6. [24 P.S. 1302-A](#)
8. Pol. 236

Last Modified by Tom McLaughlin on April 3, 2018