

249 BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

(Adopted: May 7, 2007, Revised: August 20, 2018)

Purpose

The Central Dauphin School District is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. The district recognizes that bullying of students has a negative effect on the educational environment and overall climate of its schools. The district recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Students who are bullied, intimidated, or fearful of other students may not be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the district. Bullying can also escalate into more serious violence. The district strives to offer all students and district employees an educational environment free from bullying. Therefore, the district prohibits bullying by district students.

Definitions

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following: [2]

1. Substantially interfering with a student's education.
2. Creating a threatening environment.
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.
4. Physically harming a student.
5. Damaging, extorting, or taking a student's personal or academic property.
6. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm.
7. Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss or personal property.
8. Systematically and intentionally excluding a student from activities with peers.

9. Spreading false information about a student or attempting to influence others to exclude a student from an activity.
10. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying. Bullying is occurring when there exists an imbalance of physical, psychological, or social power between the aggressor and the victim, favoring the aggressor. Bullying is often a series of aggressive acts as directed above.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher or employee of the district by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or web site postings (including blogs). All forms of cyberbullying are unacceptable and, to the extent that such actions are disruptive of the educational process or the district, offenders shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

Cyber Harassment a person commits the crime of cyber harassment of a child if, with intent to harass, annoy or alarm, the person engages in a continuing course of conduct by repeatedly communicating any of the following by electronic means directly to a child or by publication through an electronic social media service;

1. Seriously disparaging statement or opinion about the child's physical characteristics, sexuality, sexual activity or mental or physical health or condition.
2. Threat to inflict harm.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school. [2]

Authority

The district prohibits all forms of bullying by district students. The district will not tolerate known acts of bullying occurring on district property, at school-sponsored activities scheduled on or off school grounds or during the time students necessarily spend traveling to and from school or school-sponsored activities. Bullying is prohibited in all school settings. [2]

The Board encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

The district shall annually inform students that bullying or cyberbullying of students will not be tolerated.

The district shall investigate complaints of bullying or cyberbullying 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

Development of Education Programs

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative procedures and programs to increase awareness of the problems of bullying, and train teachers and support staff to effectively intervene if bullying is witnessed in their presence or brought to their attention.

Intervention

Teachers and staff workers who observe acts of bullying shall take reasonable steps to intervene and stop such conduct, unless intervention would threaten a teacher's or worker's personal safety. The nature of the intervention will vary depending upon the age of the student (both victim and aggressor), the severity of the bullying and the student's involvement in prior acts of bullying. The purpose of the intervention is to take prompt remedial steps to ensure observed acts of bullying cease and to teach students that bullying is not acceptable behavior.

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

Students shall be encouraged to report bullying allegations to district employees, who will notify building principals.

The building principal or designee will inform parents/guardians of the victim and person accused.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and

administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students. [2]

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every two (2) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board. [2]

District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report: [2]

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.

Student, Parent/Guardian and Employee Reporting

The district expects students and parents/guardians who become aware of any act of bullying to immediately report that conduct. Students may report acts of bullying to their teachers, building principal, or other school employees supervising school-sponsored activities. Students should be encouraged not to stand by as third parties and tolerate bullying of others. Parents/Guardians may contact the building principal to report acts of bullying.

Guidelines

The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students. [2] [3] [4]

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 available.

If teachers cannot reasonably remediate acts of bullying through their own intervention, they shall report the bullying to the building principal. Other school employees who observe acts of bullying shall report the conduct to the building principal. The building principal or designee shall investigate any report of bullying and shall resolve this instance in a manner consistent with the district's stance that such acts will not be tolerated and that students are to be taught that bullying is unacceptable behavior.

Investigation Procedures

Each building principal or designee is authorized to investigate reports of bullying brought to their attention by students, parents/guardians or school employees. Any investigation of a report may include meeting with students, parents/guardians or employees; a review of student records and other reasonable efforts to better understand the facts surrounding a reported incident.

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. [5] [2]

Consequences/Discipline

Consequences for students who are found to have bullied others may include counseling, a parental conference, a loss of school privileges, exclusion from school-sponsored activities, detention, suspension, expulsion, counseling/therapy outside of school, and/or referral to law enforcement officials.[2][4][7]

Depending on the severity of the particular situation, the building principal may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. Such steps may include the implementation of a safety plan; separating and supervising the students involved; providing employee support for students as needed; reporting incidents to law enforcement, if appropriate; and developing a supervision plan with parents/guardians.

Dissemination and Training

1. A summary of this policy shall be included in the Code of Conduct and the district calendar.
2. Discussion of the policy shall be included in the orientation of each new teacher and periodically in staff development workshops.

Confidentiality

The Central Dauphin School District recognizes that both the complaining student and the alleged bully/extorter have strong interests

in maintaining the confidentiality of the allegations and related information. The privacy of the complaining student, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witness will be respected as much as possible, consistent with the legal obligation to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and any discovery or disclosure obligations. As limited by FERPA protections, the principal or designee may inform the complaining student/parents/guardians of the outcome of the investigation. [8]

Reprisal

Any student who retaliates against another student for reporting bullying or extortion or for assisting or testifying in the investigation or hearing may be subject to disciplinary action.