

# BULLYING AND HARASSMENT - MEANS

Pursuant to Board Policy 5517.01, the School Board is committed to providing an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying for all of its students and school employees.

The School District will not tolerate unlawful bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited:

- A. during any education program or activity conducted by the School District;
- B. during any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity or on a school bus of the School District; or
- C. through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of the School District.

This policy has been developed in consultation with School District students, parents, teachers, administrators, school staff, school volunteers, community representatives, and local law enforcement agencies as prescribed in **F.S. 1006.147** and in conformity with the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) Model Policy.

The Superintendent shall develop a comprehensive plan intended to prevent bullying and harassment and to cultivate the school climate so as to appropriately identify, report, investigate, and respond to situations of bullying and harassment as they may occur on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and through school computer networks. Implementation of the plan will be ongoing throughout the school year and will be integrated with the school curriculum, School District disciplinary policies, and violence prevention efforts.

**Bullying means** systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to: teasing, social exclusion, threat, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, theft, sexual, religious, or racial harassment, public humiliation, or destruction of property.

## **Bullying is not:**

- An altercation between equals;
- Good natured playful teasing among equals or peers;
- Isolated incident, or;
- Annoying different people at different times.

## **What is Harassment?**

**Harassment means** any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

1. places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property;
2. has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits, or;
3. has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

## **Bullying and harassment also encompasses:**

1. retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment (reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation)
2. perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
  - a) incitement or coercion;
  - b) accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system, or;
  - c) acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment.

## What is Cyberbullying?

According to Title XLVIII of the K-20 Education Code in the **Florida State Statute 1006.147b**

**“Cyberbullying” means** bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo electronic system, or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. ***For more information see Board Policy 5517.01.***

## DATING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

The School Board strictly prohibits any act of dating violence and abuse committed by one student against another on school property, during a school-sponsored activity, or during school-sponsored transportation.

### Dating Violence and Abuse Defined

For purposes of this policy, dating violence and abuse shall be defined as emotional, verbal, sexual, or physical abuse of a student who is in a current or was in a past dating relationship by the other person in that dating relationship. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, stalking, threats and/or acts of mental, physical or sexual abuse. It may also be a pattern of demeaning, coercive, abusive actions that amount to emotional or psychological abuse. Dating violence and abuse may also include abuse, harassment, and stalking via electronic devices such as cell phones and computers, as well as harassment through a third party.

Dating violence and abuse reports shall be investigated, documented and referred to appropriate agencies in accordance with **Board Policy 5517.03** and **F. S. 1006.148**.

## HAZING

Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the disruptive to the educational process, and prohibited at any time in school facilities, on school property, and/or off school property if the misconduct is connected to activities or incidents that have occurred on school property in accordance with **Board Policy 5516**.

“Hazing” includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Pressuring, coercing, or forcing a student into:

1. Violation state or federal law;
2. Consuming any food, liquor, drug, or other substance; or
3. Participating in physical activity that could adversely affect the health or safety of the student.

(b) Any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, or exposure to the elements.