

PROHIBITION OF BULLYING

It is the responsibility of the District to provide a safe, nurturing educational environment for each student. Bullying of a student, whether by other students, staff, visitors, Board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors, and volunteers, is prohibited "at school," as defined in this policy. All pupils are protected under this policy, and bullying is prohibited without regard to its subject matter or motivating animus.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is defined as any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one or more pupils directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

1. Substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more pupils.
2. Adversely affecting the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the school districts or public school's educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress.
3. Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a pupil's physical or mental health.
4. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying is prohibited at school. "At school" is defined as on school premises, at school-sponsored activities or events, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, any official school bus stop, or using a telecommunications access device or a telecommunications service provider if the telecommunications access device or telecommunications service provider is owned by or under the control of the school district. "Telecommunications access device" and "telecommunications service provider" mean those terms as defined in Section 219a of the Michigan Penal Code (MCL § 750.219a).

Bullying that does not occur "at school," as defined above, including bullying that occurs over the internet (cyberbullying), that causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with this policy and applicable law.

REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING REPORTS OF BULLYING

Every student is encouraged to report any situation that they believe to be bullying behavior directed toward a student to a teacher, a counselor, a building principal, an assistant principal, or other staff member. Staff members shall report any reports made by students or situations that they believe to be bullying behavior directed toward a student to the building principal or assistant principal. Complaints against the building principal shall be reported to the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent shall be reported to the Board President.

Retaliation or false accusation 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 report is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as suspected bullying behavior. Making intentionally false accusations about bullying is prohibited. Retaliation and making intentionally false accusations about bullying may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

All complaints about bullying that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated and documented. The building principal or principal's designee is responsible for the investigation. If the investigation results in a finding that an instance of bullying has occurred, it shall result in prompt and appropriate

disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion for students, up to and including discharge for employees, up to and including exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors, and removal from any officer position and/or a request to resign for Board Members. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

Where the investigation results in a finding that bullying has occurred, notification will be provided to the parent or legal guardian of a victim of bullying and the parent or legal guardian of a perpetrator of the bullying.

Each school shall document any prohibited incident that is reported and shall document all verified incidents of bullying and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals. The Superintendent shall provide a report of all verified incidents of bullying and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals, to the Board of Education on an annual basis.

The Superintendent is the school official responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented

CONFIDENTIALITY

The District will comply with all applicable laws regarding confidentiality of personally identifiable information from education records.

NOTIFICATION

This policy will be annually circulated to parents and students, and will be posted on the District website.

The Superintendent is directed to develop administrative guidelines to implement this policy. Guidelines shall include reporting and investigative procedures, as needed.

Reference: Matt's Safe School Law, Public Act 241 of 2011 (MCL § 380.1310b).