



Book	Policy Manual
Section	5000 Students
Title	ANTI-BULLYING
Code	po5517.01
Status	Active
Legal	Wis. Stat. 118.46
Adopted	October 7, 2014
Last Revised	December 20, 2022

5517.01 - **ANTI-BULLYING**

The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students and staff. The Board encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relationships among members of the school community. Bullying toward a student or staff member, whether by other students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes physical, verbal, written, and psychological abuse. The Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. This policy applies to all activities in the District on District property, including those at any District buildings or other property used exclusively or in part, whether leased or owned by the District, for the purpose of school-related functions or events. This policy also applies to District-related travel in vehicles arranged for by District officials, including travel to and from school and travel to and from school-sponsored functions or events. This policy applies as well during activities that occur off District property if a student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the supervision of school authorities, or where an employee is engaged in school business.

Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation, or harm. Bullying may be a repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic including, but not limited to: race; color; religion; creed; national origin; ancestry; ethnicity; sex (including transgender status, change of sex, gender identity, or gender expression); sexual orientation; citizenship status; pregnancy; childbirth; marital, parental, or family status; physical, mental, emotional, or learning ability or disability; physical attributes; social or economic status; or age; however bullying behavior need not be based on any of these characteristics.

Bullying includes any act that substantially interferes with a student's physical, emotional, and educational well-being. It includes, but is not necessarily limited to such behaviors as stalking, cyberbullying, intimidating, menacing, coercing, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property that might involve hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, pulling, taking and/or damaging personal belongings or extorting money, blocking or impeding student movement, unwelcome physical contact;
- B. Knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
- C. Verbal taunting, malicious teasing, insulting, name-calling, making threats;
- D. Spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, coercion, or engaging in social exclusion/shunning, extortion, or intimidation;
- E. Using information and communication technologies such as social media, e-mail, texting, and other platforms to spread deliberate, hostile, misleading, and/or embarrassing information and/or images that are intended to harm others;

F. Imposing strenuous, sometimes dangerous, and often humiliating initiation or hazing rituals.

For acts that rise to the level of harassment, see Policy 5517 - Student Anti-Harassment.

Complaint and Investigation Procedure

Any student or staff member that believes they have been or is the victim of bullying should immediately report the situation to the building administrator or assistant principal, or District Administrator. A student may also report concerns to a teacher or counselor who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator or Board official. Complaints against a building administrator should be filed with the District Administrator. Complaints against the District Administrator should be filed with the Board President.

Any parent of a student who believes the student has been a victim of bullying prohibited under this policy is encouraged to report the alleged bullying to the student's teacher, building administration, or District Administrator.

Any person with the knowledge or belief that bullying behavior has occurred is encouraged to immediately report the alleged act(s) to any District employee, such as a teacher, administrator, or any other staff.

All District staff and officials who observe or become aware of acts of bullying are required to immediately report these acts to the building administrator or the District Administrator.

Complaints of bullying may be made verbally or in writing and may be made confidentially. All such complaints, whether verbal or in writing, will be taken seriously and a clear account of the incident is to be documented. A written record of the complaint, including all pertinent details, will be made by the building administrator or the District Administrator and shall be investigated promptly.

The administrator who is investigating the report of bullying shall interview the victim(s) of the alleged bullying and collect whatever other information is necessary to determine the facts and the seriousness of the complaint.

Parents of each student involved in the bullying complaint will be notified prior to the conclusion of the investigation. The District shall maintain the confidentiality of the complaint and any related student records to the extent required by law.

If the investigation finds that bullying has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action. This may include student discipline, including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, or possible expulsion. Further, the result of an investigation that finds that bullying has occurred may result in discharge for employees and removal from any official position and/or a request to resign for Board members. In addition, parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors who have been found to have bullied may be excluded from District activities and property. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

The complainant shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and as appropriate, that remedial action has been taken.

This policy shall not be interpreted to infringe upon the First Amendment rights of students or staff members (i.e., to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is conducted at appropriate times and places during the school day and is protected by State or Federal law).

Retaliation

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of bullying is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy and independent of whether a complaint 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 similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally making a false report may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The District will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

To the extent appropriate in conducting a thorough investigation and/or as legally permitted, confidentiality will be maintained during the investigation process.

Notification

Notice of this policy will be **annually** distributed to all students enrolled in the School District and their parents in student handbooks. The policy will also be provided to organizations in the community having cooperative agreements with the schools. Additionally, the

policy or a summary will be incorporated into the staff handbooks.

The School District will also provide a copy of the policy to any person who requests it.

Records and Reports

Records of investigations will be maintained in accordance with Policy 8330 - Student Records and State law.

Education and Training

In support of this policy, the Board promotes preventative educational measures to create greater awareness of bullying behavior. The District Administrator shall provide appropriate training to all members of the District community related to the implementation of this policy and its accompanying administrative guidelines. All training regarding the Board's policy and administrative guidelines on bullying will be age and content appropriate.

The complaint procedure established by the District Administrator shall be followed.

Revised 7/21/20

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