

# **Neenah Joint School District**



## **Bullying Policy and Procedures 2010**

This document was adapted from the following resources:

Coloroso, B. (2010). *Teaching With Wit and Wisdom*

Neenah Joint School District (2007). *Violence Risk Assessment Procedures for Responding to Violent Behavior or Serious Threats*

Olweus, D., & Limber, S. (2007). *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, Teacher Guide*.  
Hazelden: Center City, MN

Neenah Joint School District  
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## **Neenah Joint School District Bullying Policy**

*Adopted by Board of Education, August 17, 2010*

Students	5517.01
Professional Staff	3362.02
Support Staff	4362.02

The Board of Education 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 relations 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, 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, including activities on school property, including at any of the school 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; or while traveling to or from school or to and from school-sponsored functions or events; in transporting vehicles arranged for by School District officials. The policy applies as well during activities that occur off school property if the 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 word or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation, or harm. Bullying may be a repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. Furthermore, it may be serious enough to negatively impact a student's educational, physical, or emotional well being. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as, but not limited to: age; national origin; race; ethnicity; religion; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability or disability; and social, economic, or family status; however this type of bullying behavior need not be based on any of the legally protected characteristics. It includes, but is not necessarily limited to such behaviors as stalking, cyberbullying, intimidating, menacing, coercing, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing.

Any student or staff member that believes s/he has been or is the victim of bullying should immediately report the situation to the building principal or assistant principal, or the 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 the building principal should be filed with the District Administrator. Complaints against the District Administrator should be filed with the Board President.

Every student is encouraged to report any situation that they believe to be bullying behavior directed toward a student. Reports may be made to those identified above.

All school staff members and school officials who observe or become aware of acts of bullying are required to report these acts to the building principal or assistant principal, or the District Administrator.

Reports of bullying may be made verbally or in writing and may be made confidentially. All such reports, 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 report, including all pertinent details, will be made by the recipient of the report.

All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be investigated promptly by the building principal. 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 report.

Parents and/or guardians of each student involved in the bullying report will be notified prior to the conclusion of the investigation. The District shall maintain the confidentiality of the report 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, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors, and removal from any official position and/or a request to resign for Board members. 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 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.

The following definitions are provided for guidance only. If a student, staff member, or other individual believes there has been bullying, regardless of whether it fits a particular definition, s/he should report it and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action.

“Bullying” is defined on page one. Some examples of bullying are:

- A. Physical – hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, pulling, taking and/or damaging personal belongings or extorting money, blocking or impeding student movement, unwelcome physical contact.
- B. Verbal – taunting, malicious teasing, insulting, name calling, making threats.
- C. Psychological – spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, coercion, or engaging in social exclusion/shunning, extortion, or intimidation.
- D. “Cyberbullying” – the use of information and communication technologies including, but not limited to e-mail, social networking sites, cell phone and paper text messages, instant messaging (IM), defamatory online personal polling web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others.”

The Board recognizes that cyberbullying can be particularly devastating to young people because:

1. cyberbullies more easily hide behind the anonymity that the Internet provides;
2. cyberbullies spread their hurtful messages to a very wide audience with remarkable speed;
3. cyberbullies do not have to own their own actions, as it is usually very difficult to identify cyberbullies because of screen names, so they do not fear being punished for their actions; and
4. the reflection time that once existed between the planning of a prank – or a serious stunt – and its commission has all but been erased when it comes to cyberbullying activity.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. posting slurs or rumors or other disparaging remarks about a student or staff member on a web site or on weblog;
2. sending e-mail or instant messages that are mean or threatening, or so numerous as to drive-up the victim's cell phone bill;
3. using a camera phone to take and send embarrassing photographs of students or staff members;
4. posting misleading or fake photographs of students or staff members on web sites.

“Harassment” includes, but is not limited to, any act which subjects an individual or group to unwanted, abusive behavior of a nonverbal, verbal, written or physical nature on the basis of age, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability (sexual orientation, physical characteristic, cultural background, socioeconomic status, or geographic location).

“Intimidation” includes, but is not limited to, any threat or act intended to tamper, substantially damage or interfere with another's property, cause substantial inconvenience, subject another to offensive physical contact or inflict serious physical injury on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

“Menacing” includes, but is not limited to, any act intended to place a school employee, student, or third party in fear of imminent serious physical injury.

“Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” means any act that substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, that takes place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation or at any official school bus stop, and that has the effect of:

- A. physically harming a student or damaging a student's property;
- B. knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student's property; or
- C. creating a hostile educational environment.

“Staff” includes all school employees and Board members.

“Third parties” include, but are not limited to, coaches, school volunteers, parents, school visitors, service contractors, vendors, or others engaged in District business and others not directly subject to school control at inter-district or intra-district athletic competitions or other school events.

For a definition of and instances that could possibly be construed as hazing, consult Policy 5516.

#### Privacy/Confidentiality

The School District will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against who 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, their parents and/or guardians and school district employees. The policy will also be distributed to organizations in the community having cooperative agreements with the schools. Additionally, the policy will be posted in conspicuous locations in all school buildings and departments within the District and discussed with students and staff, as well as incorporated into the teacher, student, and parent/guardian handbooks. State and Federal rights posters on discrimination and harassment shall also be posted at each building. All new hires will be required to review and sign off on this policy and the related complaint procedure.

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

#### Records and Reports

Records will be maintained on the number and types of reports made, and sanctions imposed for incidents found to be in violation of the bullying policy.

An annual summary report shall be prepared and presented to the School Board, which includes trends in bullying behavior and recommendations on how to further reduce bullying behavior. The annual report will be available to the public.

#### Education and Training

In support of this policy, the Board promotes preventative educational measures to create greater awareness of behavior. The District Administrator or designee shall provide appropriate training to all members of the School 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 as set forth in AG 5517.01 shall be followed.

Wis. Stat. 118.46

## **Neenah Joint School District Bullying Procedures**

### **Introduction**

Bullying has quickly become a growing concern for school children and adults around the world. The adage "kids will be kids" is no longer an acceptable response to incidents where 'deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation, or harm' is occurring. Bullying today is very different from the bullying even a generation ago. Many factors contribute to this, but ultimately we, as a school district, must address the issue of bullying through policy, prevention education, and intervention.

This document was motivated by the passage of Senate Bill 154 on May 12, 2010. Governor Doyle signed this bill which is a comprehensive school safety bill initiated by a Special Committee on School Safety. The bill includes anti-bully language taken directly from Senate Bill 202, which Senator Neal Kedzie (R-Elkhorn) authored in a bipartisan effort to deal with the growing problem of bullying in schools. The bill requires all school districts in Wisconsin to create a bullying policy, with all policies to be in place by August 15, 2010.

### **School Climate**

As a school district, and individual schools, we must ask ourselves the following questions:

- Does our school entitle certain people?
- Is our school intolerant of differences?
- Does our school give a 'liberty to exclude'?

To create a safe school climate each school must eliminate circumstances that allow for certain individuals or groups to be seen as 'better than' the others. Neenah High School's Challenge Day is one example of how school's can begin to address the underlying problems that aide in creating a breeding ground for bullying. Any time someone is made to feel less than another, they become an easy target for bullying.

From the NJSD *Violence Risk Assessment Procedures for Responding to Violent Behavior or Serious Threats*, we learn that the major components and tasks for creating a safe school climate include:

- Assessment of the school's emotional climate;
- Emphasis on the importance of listening in schools;
- Adoption of a strong, but caring stance against the code of silence;
- Prevention of, and intervention in, bullying;
- Involvement of all members of the school community in planning, creating, and sustaining a school culture of safety and respect
- Development of trusting relationships between each student and at least one adult at school; and
- Creation of mechanisms for developing and sustaining safe school climates.

In addition, Barbara Coloroso suggests that reversing a bullying culture requires:

- Rechanneling the leadership roles that bullies play, into positive leadership opportunities.
- Acknowledging the non-aggressive behaviors of the bullied as strengths, and honor them.
- Transforming the role of the bystander into that of someone willing to stand up and speak out against injustices.

We can help in transforming school climate by engaging in discipline rather than punishment. This requires students to learn and grow from poor choices as opposed to creating a culture of resentment that stems from punishing.

The Neenah Joint School District has engaged in a variety of school climate projects in an effort to develop a school climate that fosters acceptance, understanding, respect, responsibility, and safety for all. Several such K-12 projects include but are not limited to:

- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
- PBIS
- Classroom Guidance Lessons
- The ONE Campaign
- Leadership Council
- LAUNCH @ NHS
- BLAST @ Shattuck
- One Tribe @ Horace Mann
- Heart Group @ NHS
- Challenge Day
- Student Assistance Program Parent/Community Education Presentations

### **A Special Note About Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of information and communication technologies including, but not limited to e-mail, social networking sites, cell phone and paper text messages, instant messaging (IM), defamatory online personal polling web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others.

Although cyberbullying incidents may occur outside of the school hours, if it effects school climate, it is in the best interest of the school to address the incident as the school would with any other bullying situation.

Students should be taught to deal with cyberbullying with four simple steps developed by Barbara Coloroso:

- STOP- Immediately stop communication with the person
- COPY- Make copies of any evidence of the bullying
- BLOCK- Put a block on that person
- TELL- Let a trusted adult know what is going on

### **Notification**

Notification of Board policy must be annually distributed to all students enrolled in the NJSD, their parents and/or guardians and school district employees. Our committee suggests that all of the above be notified in the following manner:

- Students- Class meetings, classroom guidance or all-school assembly, student handbook
- Parents/Guardians- School newsletter and website, parent/guardian handbook, registration packet
- School District Employees- Staff meeting, staff handbook

The Office of the Director of Pupil Services will be responsible for ensuring the policy is posted in conspicuous locations in all school buildings and departments within the District. This will

include State and Federal rights posters on discrimination and harassment for each building within the District.

Lastly, all new hires will be required to review and sign off on this policy and the related complaint procedure.

### **Records and Reports**

All records and reports will be maintained in the Pupil Services Office.

### **Student Education and Training**

Our committee recommends that all K-12 grade students each year receive some type of bullying education. This education should include, but not be limited to:

- NJSD Board Bullying Policy
- Bullying identification
- Difference between "ratting" and "reporting"
- Difference between "teasing" and "taunting"
- Intervening in bullying incidents
- Process of reporting

These education opportunities can be provided through Health Education, homerooms, all school assemblies, LAUNCH, classroom guidance sessions, etc. Resources to aide in development of bullying prevention programming includes: Olweus materials, DPI materials, Barbara Coloroso's book *Teaching With Wit and Wisdom*, to name a few.

Barbara Coloroso offers some very simple methods of helping students understand the importance of reporting as well as when to report. Here are just two examples:

"Three gates" can be used elementary and up. Before you speak about anyone else you should ask yourself three simple questions. If it gets through the gate (all 'yes' responses) then it can be said.

- Is it true?
- Is it necessary?
- Is it kind?

"Ratting or Reporting" is one method of teaching students how to identify when an incident should be told to a teacher or other adult.

- "If you are getting someone out of trouble, tell me!"
- "If you are getting someone into trouble, don't tell me!"
- "If you aren't sure, or if it's both, tell me!"

Bullying prevention education should always include methods on teaching the bystanders to act. The Olweus materials, DPI materials, and Barbara Coloroso's materials all provide ideas on how to help the bystanders stand up to bullying.

### **Parent Education**

Our committee recommends that each year our parents be provided an educational opportunity to learn more about bullying. The ideal method would be via the existing Student Assistance Program Parent/Community Education Presentations. These presentations should include the following:

- NJSD Board Bullying Policy
- Bully, Target, Bystander identification
- Difference between "ratting" and "reporting"
- Difference between "teasing" and "taunting"
- Teaching children to intervene in bullying incidents
- Teaching children to be "bully-proof"
- Process of reporting and procedures our administration will follow

These presentations could be conducted by the Student Assistance Program, school counselors, other NJSD staff, or by a guest speaker.

### **Staff Education and Training**

Staff members are in position every day to help prevent bullying within our schools. Through our actions alone we are able to model appropriate ways to interact with one another. Being visible in typically isolated areas, or areas already identified as locations where bullying occurs, is enough to keep bullying incidents from happening.

In addition to being visible throughout the school day, staff also can aid in prevention by stepping in anytime they observe someone else being treated with disrespect. Showing intolerance to this type of behavior is essential to developing a school climate where students feel safe.

Just as staff must intervene when incidents of bullying between students occurs, they must also be aware of bullying behaviors amongst themselves and potential bullying with other adults that they interact with throughout the day. The district will not tolerate bullying between any individuals, including the adults. Staff should always treat one another with respect and foster the development of a safe working environment.

If a staff member observes bullying happening or they need to break up a bullying incident on the spot, they should take the following steps (taken in part from *Olweus*) to intervene:

1. Stop the bullying.
2. Support the target that has been bullied. This must be the number one goal.
3. To the bullying student(s): Specifically identify the bullying behavior observed.
4. Empower the bystanders with appreciation if they were supportive to the student who was bullied, or with information about how to act in the future.

It is the staff member responsibility to determine if the incident is "teasing/ non-bullying" or in fact "bullying." Refer to Appendix E for chart. To determine which it was, the staff member should ask the following questions:

1. Was there intent to cause fear, intimidation, or harm?
2. Did the accused continue the behavior even after noticing the target was distressed?
3. Does the event require more than use of a "teachable moment" to correct the behavior?

If the staff member believes they can manage the situation without administration intervention, they should proceed and intervene as necessary. If the answer to any of the above questions is "yes," and the staff member feels administration intervention is necessary, they should immediately report the incident to principal or assistant principal, and complete the District Bullying Complaint Report Form, including as much detail as possible.

If a staff member receives information about a bullying incident (anonymously, verbally, or in writing) they must immediately report the information to principal or assistant principal, and complete the District Bullying Complaint Report Form, including as much detail as possible.

If a staff member is being bullied, the incident should be reported to the building principal, assistant principal, or District Administrator.

### **Administrative Procedures**

The U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education developed six principles specific to threat assessment in schools. Those principles apply to bullying situations as well:

1. *Prevention is possible.* Through student, staff, and parent education, bullying incidents can be prevented.
2. *Consider the context.* When assessing a bullying incident you must consider not only the accused bully, but also the total context of the alleged bullying. This includes the situation in which the alleged bullying occurred and that the student intended to harm the target. Many times a student will make a statement as a joke, insult, or rhetorical remark without substantial intent to harm anyone. The context of the student's behavior and the targets response to the incident will help in determining whether the bullying was intentional or not. See page 12 and 13 for examples of transient threats.

If the accused concludes that their actions could harm another person and they commence to act, there is intent to harm.

If the victim demonstrated discomfort with what was occurring, and the accused continued to act, there is intent to harm.

3. *Adopt an investigative mind-set.* School authorities investigating a bullying incident must adopt a critical and skeptical mindset that strives to accumulate reliable evidence and verify all claimed facts about the situation. Their approach must be fair, and they must be willing to accept or reject hypotheses based on a careful analysis of all available information.
4. *Rely on facts, not profiles.* Conclusions must be based on objective facts and behaviors rather than inferred traits or characteristics of the student accused of bullying.
5. *Gather information from multiple sources.* In serious cases, information should be gathered from multiple sources within and outside the school system.
6. *Does the student pose a threat?* If it is found that the bullying student poses a threat, the Administrator should consider moving towards the threat assessment.

A *Bullying Complaint Report Investigation* should be undertaken anytime a bullying incident is reported to school authorities. Therefore, school staff must understand the purpose and goals of the Board Bullying Policy and be prepared to assist the school principal in identifying and responding to bullying incidents. Preventing bullying requires a shared commitment among school staff to work cooperatively and constructively to maintain school safety. Bullying prevention also requires student cooperation, because many incidents are observed only by students and must be reported to school authorities before they can be investigated. All students should be taught that seeking help from an adult in order to prevent bullying is not the same as “snitching” or “tattling” on a classmate in order to get the classmate in trouble.

## **Step One- Begin Investigation to Determine if Teasing/ Non-Bullying, Transient Threat, or Bullying**

The first step is for the principal or assistant principal—to interview the student who made the report as well as witnesses to the bullying. These interviews are conducted to assess the intention for the purpose of making a determination whether the incident was deliberate or intentional and intended to cause fear, intimidation, or harm. The content of the incident is less important than what the student meant and intended by their actions or words. In all cases, the administrator should attempt to base decisions on information gathered from multiple sources, including one or more school staff members who have direct knowledge of the incident or relevant knowledge of the students involved. Once the principal or assistant principal has enough information, they should interview the accused. School Board Policy requires that parents and/or guardians of each student involved in the bullying report will be notified prior to the conclusion of the investigation. If the administrator determines this is a substantive incident, a call should be made to the target's parents before interviewing the accused. This is an initial contact to let them know what is being investigated.

As soon as the report is received, the administrator has one school day to begin the investigation. Ideally, this interview should be conducted right away so that, if the incident is substantive, prompt action can be taken to prevent further incidents. If it is not possible to do the interviews right away, the administrator should gather information that is immediately available and decide on a reasonable, provisional course of action that emphasizes the safety of anyone targeted by the accused. For example, the administrator might decide to call the parents of the target and/or of the accused. However, the administrator will interview the student at the first opportunity in order to conduct a more complete assessment. Suggested interview questions can be found in the appendix.

### **Consider student and witness credibility.**

Experienced school personnel know that students do not always tell the truth and that students confronted with allegations of misbehavior may deny what they are accused of doing. It is also possible for students to be falsely accused. In ambiguous circumstances, there is no substitute for the judgment of the school staff member. Judgments of a student's credibility should be based on consideration of the student's demeanor and cooperativeness and on a history of any previous misbehavior or dishonesty. The administrator must be sure to compare the student's account with witness accounts although the credibility of witnesses should also be considered. Unfortunately, there is no foolproof method for determining whether a student is being truthful; even sophisticated polygraph machines are not considered reliable indicators of lying. When in doubt, the team should err on the side of safety and take those protective actions that would be appropriate if the bullying incident were substantive.

### **1. Teasing/ Non-Bullying**

Teasing or non-bullying incidents occur when the accused did not intend for the target to feel fear, intimidation, or harm. Although intent might not be there, they must still be responsible for unintended consequences. A key in determining intent is in how the accused responded as soon as they recognized that the target was uncomfortable.

### **2. Transient Threats**

Transient threats are defined as statements that do not express a lasting intent to harm someone. Transient threats either are intended as figures of speech or reflect feelings that dissipate in a short period when the student thinks about the meaning of what he or she has said. All transient threats end with an apology or explanation that makes it clear the threat is over.

### **Examples of Transient Threats:**

1. "I'm gonna kill you"—said as a joke.
2. "I'm gonna kill you"—said in the heat of competition during a basketball game.
3. Two students use their fingers to "shoot" one another while playing cops and robbers.
4. "I'm gonna bust you up"—said in anger but then retracted after the student calms down.
5. "I could break you in half"—said to intimidate someone but retracted after the student calms down.
6. "I'll get you next time"—said after a fight but retracted after the two students reconcile.
7. "Watch out or I'll hurt you"—said to intimidate someone but retracted after the student calms down.
8. "I oughta shoot that teacher"—said in anger but retracted after the student calms down.

By definition, transient threats do not require protective action because there is no sustained intent to carry out the threat. Based on the field-test findings in 35 schools, approximately 70% (or more) of student threats will be transient threats. If the student retracts, it is considered transient.

### **3. Bullying**

Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using word or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation, or harm. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involved an imbalance of power. Furthermore, it may be serious enough to negatively impact a student's educational, physical, or emotional well being. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as, but not limited to: age; national origin; race; ethnicity; religion; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability or disability; and social, economic, or family status; however this type of bullying behavior need not be based on any of the legally protected characteristics.

#### **Examples of Bullying:**

1. Physical- hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, pulling, taking and/or damaging personal belongings or extorting money, blocking or impeding student movement, unwelcome physical contact.
2. Verbal- taunting, malicious teasing, insulting, name-calling, making threats, intimidation.
3. Psychological- spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, coercion, or engaging in social exclusion/shunning, extortion, or intimidation.
4. Cyberbullying- the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others.

#### **Step Two- Provide Appropriate Consequences**

From Barbara Coloroso: The process of discipline is not judgmental, arbitrary, confusing, or coercive. It is not something we do to students. It is working with them. It is a process that gives life to a student's learning. It is restorative, and invites reconciliation. Its goal is to instruct, guide, and help students develop self-discipline—an ordering of the self from the inside, not an imposition from the outside. The process of discipline does four things the act of punishment cannot do:

1. Shows students what they have done.
2. Gives them as much ownership of the problem that they can handle.
3. Gives them options for solving the problem.
4. Leaves their dignity intact.

## **1. Response to Teasing/ Non-Bullying**

With teasing or non-bullying incidents conflict mediation can sometimes be used. The goal is to help the accused recognize how their actions effect others and to take responsibility for their actions. Using these instances as “teachable moments” is key to helping prevent the behavior from being repeated.

A variety of disciplines might be used to address teasing/ non-bullying incidents, including, but not limited to:

- Teachable moment
- Restorative Justice
- Detention
- Call home
- Notify school counselor and/or principal

Restorative Justice can be an effective tool in such cases. This means:

- The accused takes responsibility for their actions
- The accused makes a plan to "fix" things
- Both the accused and target move on

## **2. Response to Transient Threats**

There is no single, automatic response to a transient threat. The response depends on the context, whether the incident involved a disciplinary violation, and what is required to resolve the situation.

A transient threat often indicates a conflict or dispute between the student and the threat recipient. In such cases, there should be a dispute resolution effort, such as referral to conflict mediation or some other counseling designed to resolve the underlying problem. In addition, the administrator could provide other disciplinary action. For younger students responses may include teaching them appropriate social skills. The student may be required to make amends.

If a bullying investigation proves that the incident was one of a transient threat, the school administrator could follow up with a phone call home to the parents of both students involved. If a phone call home is made the parents should be informed how the incident was investigated, what was determined, how the incident was resolved, and what steps are being taken to address the underlying problem that stimulated the incident.

With transient threats the administrator should complete the Bullying Complaint Report form and maintain on file.

## **3. Response to Bullying**

Incidents of bullying must be dealt with swiftly, with the number one goal of making sure that the target is safe.

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. A police officer could issue a fine under Sec. 11-90. Misconduct on public grounds prohibited.

The administrator should consider if the incident could be a substantive threat. Serious and/or very serious substantive threats should be dealt with by following the District *Violence Risk Assessment Procedures for Responding to Violent Behavior or Serious Threats*.

**Step Three- If Bullying, Make Follow-up Parent Contact Regarding Investigation Results**

**Step Four- Complete all Paperwork. If Bullying, Submit Copies to Pupil Services**

**Step Five- Monitor Situation Until it is Determined That the Behaviors Have Stopped**

**Conclusion**

In educational settings that support climates of safety, adults and students respect each other. A safe school environment offers positive personal role models in its faculty. It provides a place for open discussion where diversity and differences are respected; communication between adults and students is encouraged and supported; and conflict is managed and mediated constructively. A culture of safety creates “shame free zones” in which daily teasing and bullying is not accepted as a normal part of the adolescent culture. School environments characterized by bullying and meanness can lead to student isolation and fear. Such environments allow behavior that fosters fear and that stunts the healthy development of the victims of that behavior, and may lead to psychological and physical violence. In a climate of safety, students have a positive connection to at least one adult in authority. Each student feels that there is an adult to whom he or she can turn for support and advice if things get tough, and with whom that student can share his or her concerns openly and without fear of shame or reprisal. Schools in which students feel able to talk to teachers, deans, secretaries, coaches, custodians, counselors, nurses, school safety officers, bus drivers, principals, and other staff support communication between students and adults about concerns and problems.

## **Appendix A**

### **Contact and Talking with Parents of Student Who Is Being Bullied**

Once a report has been received and an administrator has had opportunity to interview witnesses and the target, a call home to the target's parents is in order. Here are some guidelines from the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, on calling parents about a situation at school where their child is being bullied:

1. If the parents are not available, do not leave details of the bullying situation on the answering machine. Identify yourself and ask them to return your call regarding their son or daughter.
2. If a parent answers the phone, identify yourself and ask if this is a convenient time to talk about a situation regarding their son or daughter. If this is not a good time, ask when you can call back.
3. You may want to start the conversation by saying something like: "It has recently come to my/our knowledge that your son/daughter probably is being bullied by some of his/her schoolmates."
4. Briefly summarize the situation and ask the parent if he or she would like to continue the discussion by phone or would rather come to the school for a personal meeting.
5. Whatever choice is made, you may follow some or all of the talking points below:
  - Report the information you have regarding the situation and ask that parents to tell you what they know about the child's experiences. Answer any questions the parents may have. You may need to protect the privacy of the students and parents involved in bullying by not sharing their names. Please consult the District Administrator for guidance on this issue.
  - Invite the parents to work with you and the school to stop the bullying.
  - Say you're very sorry for the bullying their child has experienced, and assure them that you and your school will do everything possible to get the bullying stopped. Empathize with the parents and their child.
  - To the extent you are able, explain the next steps that will be taken with the bullying student(s) and the possible consequences for their actions.
  - Ask the parents to report any subsequent acts of bullying or retaliation so that you can take appropriate action.
  - Talk with the parents about the student's potential need for counseling and/or additional referral.
  - Explain that you are going to check in with their child at school in two to three days and at regular intervals thereafter to see how things are going.
  - Thank the parents for talking with you.
  - Call or meet with the parents later to follow up and inquire how their child is doing.

## **Appendix B**

### **Outline for Accused Interview**

Once you have had a conversation with the student who is being bullied and his or her parents, you will need to directly confront the accused.

#### **Review of incident**

1. What happened? What exactly did you say or do? What did you mean by that?
2. I know you must have had reasons to say/do that; can you explain what led up to it?
3. What do you think the school should do in a situation in which a student does something like this?
4. What were you feeling when this incident occurred? How do you feel now?
5. How do you think [the person bullied] felt? How did you know they felt that way? How did you respond when you saw how they felt?

#### **Relationship with intended victim(s); ask about the specific intended victim(s)**

1. How long have you known this person?
2. What has happened in the past between you and this person?
3. What do you think this person deserves?
4. Do you see any way that things could be improved between you and this person?

#### **Stress**

1. What kinds of things have been going on with you lately? What sorts of things have you worried about?
2. How has your schoolwork been going lately? Are there things you have been worried about with your schoolwork? Other things at school?
3. What is the worst thing that has happened to you lately? Have any other bad things happened? Is there something you regret or wish you could change?
4. Have there been any changes in your family? Has anyone been sick, moved away, or had anything bad happen to him or her?
5. Do you have any family members in jail or prison?
6. Do you take any medications?
7. Have you been involved in any counseling?

#### **Family support**

1. Whom do you live with in your family? Are there any other family members you don't live with? Have there been any changes in the past year?
2. Who in your family are you close to?
3. How well do your parents or guardians know you?
4. Where do you go after school? Where are your parents at this time? How much do your parents keep track of where you are or what you are doing?
5. How strict are your parents? What do they do to punish you? When was the last time you got in trouble with them? What was the worst time?
6. How did your parents react (or how will they react) when they found out about this situation?

#### **Depression**

1. What has your mood been like the past few weeks? Have you felt down or depressed at times? How bad has it been? (Be alert for statements of pessimism and hopelessness that might indicate suicide risk.)
2. Have you felt nervous or anxious? Irritable or short tempered? How bad has it been?
3. Have you ever felt like life wasn't worth living? Like maybe you would kill yourself?
4. Have you ever done something to hurt yourself on purpose? Ever cut yourself on purpose?

5. Have you had any problems with your sleep? Appetite? Energy level? Concentration?
6. Have you been taking any medications to help with your mood or for any other reason?

Note that, if there are indications of suicidal thoughts or feelings, there should be a more extensive assessment of suicide risk. If necessary, develop a plan for protecting the student and making appropriate referrals.

### **Bullying**

1. Is there anyone who has threatened you recently? Is there anyone who makes you feel afraid? (Ask about sexual threats if appropriate to the situation.)
2. Is there anyone who has teased you or picked on you recently? Is there anyone who has beat you up or pushed you around? How about at home?

In response to any positive answer, follow up for more information: How often does it happen? What have you tried to do about it? Did you let any adult know about this, and, if so, what happened? Be alert to statements indicating that a bullied student feels like there is no solution to the problem or is contemplating revenge.

### **Aggressive behavior**

1. Do people treat you fairly? Who has been unfair with you lately? When people treat you unfairly, what do you do about it?
2. When you get angry, what do you do? Has your temper ever gotten you into trouble?
3. Do you get into fights? When was the last time? What happened?
4. Have you ever threatened to harm anyone before?
5. Have you thought about what it would be like to hurt someone really badly? Have you written any stories or made any drawings that are violent?
6. Have you ever set fire to things?
7. Have you damaged your own property or someone else's property?
8. Have you ever intentionally hurt an animal?

### **School Discipline**

1. When was the last time you got into trouble in school? What happened?
2. Have you ever been suspended or expelled?
3. Have your parents ever been called to school because of your behavior?
4. Do you ever cut school or certain classes?
5. Do you feel that the rules at this school are fair? What has been unfair?

### **Delinquent behavior**

1. Have you been in trouble with the law or with police before? What happened?
2. Have you ever gone to juvenile court? What was it about?
3. Have you done things that could have gotten you arrested or in trouble with the law? What was the worst thing? What else?
4. Do you drink beer, wine, or other alcohol? Have you ever? How often do you drink? When was the last time? Tell me about it.
5. Do you smoke marijuana? Have you ever? How often? When was the last time?
6. Have you used any other drugs? How often? When was the last time? Tell me about it.

### **Exposure to violence**

1. Do you see or hear of violence in your neighborhood?
2. Do you know anyone who was shot, stabbed, or beaten up really badly?
3. Do people argue much at home? Does anyone get physically aggressively?
4. What kind of movies do you like? What kind of video games do you enjoy playing? What are your favorite Internet sites?

Also ask the student about his or her reactions to any recent acts of violence in the news.

**Peer relations**

1. What are your friends like? Have you had any trouble with your friends lately? Who is your best friend?
2. How would your friends describe you?
3. Do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend? (Keep in mind that the student might not be heterosexual, and there may be concerns in this area.) How are things going with him or her? Did you have one before? What happened in that relationship?
4. Do you have friends who get in trouble?
5. Have you ever joined a gang or been part of a group like a crew, clique, posse, or mob?
6. Do any of your friends know about [refer to threat situation]? What was said about it? Is there anyone who feels the same way you do?

**Coping**

1. How do you like to spend your free time?
2. What kinds of things do you do well?
3. What are your hobbies and interests? What do you enjoy doing?
4. Can you think of a problem you faced in the past that worked out okay? Can you think of a problem that you solved? Can you think of a time when you went to someone about a problem and that person was able to solve it?
5. What are your plans for the future? What would you like to do when you finish school?
6. What could we do that would help with [refer to the problem that led to the threat]?

## **Appendix C**

### **Parent Contact of Accused**

Understandably, parents may feel apprehensive, guilty, or defensive when being interviewed about their child's behavior. It is important that the caller find ways to convey respect for the parent, from initial contact to the caller's conclusion. Also, it should be evident that the caller is interested in understanding and helping the child; otherwise, the parent may regard the call as an investigation designed to uncover evidence of wrongdoing by the student or incompetence by the parent. Overall, the caller should make every effort to engage the parent as an ally.

If the accused is known to come from an abusive home, the administrator may choose to deal with the discipline at school.

From Olweus Bullying Prevention Program here are some strategies for contacting and talking with parents of a student who is bullying others:

1. Prior to making contact, carefully consider ways that you can help to reduce parents' natural defensiveness. Also review in detail the known facts about their child's involvement in the situation.
2. If the parents are not available, do not leave details of the problem on an answering machine. Identify yourself and ask them to return your call regarding their son or daughter.
3. If a parent answers the phone, identify yourself and ask if this is a convenient time to talk about a situation regarding his or her child. You may want to say something like "It has recently come to my/our knowledge that your son/daughter has been involved in bullying (or being mean to) another student." Briefly summarize the situation.
4. If the bullying problem is judged to be serious, ask the parent to continue the discussion in person. If the problem can be considered relatively non-serious, the conversation can be conducted on the phone, at least as a first step.
5. Whether you meet in person or over the phone, here are some talking points you may like to follow:
  - Explain that you are aware of the bullying problem and their child's involvement (and others, if known).
  - Inform the parents that their child has been asked about his or her involvement in the situation.
  - You might say something like: "What your child did is an act of bullying, which is against school rules and Board policy. We need to work together to make sure that it comes to a stop. We assume that you will want to work with us to help your child stop this behavior."
  - You must be prepared for the possibility that parents of a student who bullies other students may try to deny that their child would do such a thing or will try to minimize their child's involvement. Be sure to have concrete examples of their child's behavior.
  - Explain possible steps with the student (consequences being imposed, if not already given, and monitoring of his or her behavior).
  - Ask what changes or actions the student and his or her parents believe are needed at this point to get the student to stop bullying the other student.
  - You may also want to tell the parents that research shows that students who bully other students are at a clearly increased risk of being involved in other antisocial and rule-breaking behaviors such as vandalism, fighting, and early smoking and substance abuse.
  - Support parents by saying that you believe that their son or daughter is capable of doing better and that you expect that he or she will do better. Note that with their help, you are certain that the bullying can be stopped.

- Discuss the student's potential need for counseling or additional referral.
  - Explain that you are going to check in with the child in two or three days and on an ongoing basis to make sure the bullying has stopped.
  - Invite the parents to call or email to discuss concerns regarding this issue or other issues at any time.
6. In the next couple of days arrange another follow-up meeting with the student who bullied to discuss how things are going. Before that meeting, you should have had a meeting with the target.
  7. Give another follow up call to the parents of the student who bullied to let them know their child's improved behavior. Monitoring should not end until it has been established that the bullying has stopped.

**Appendix D**



**Bullying Complaint Report Form**

To be completed by party wishing to report a bullying incident. This report **MUST** be completed to file a complaint relating to an incident of alleged bullying, and turned in to the school Principal/ designee of the target's home school or the appropriate area/ district office.

Check this box if you wish to remain anonymous.

<b>YOUR NAME (last, first) and GRADE</b>	<b>PRINCIPAL/ADMINISTRATOR</b>
<b>Please check if you are one of the following:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Target of bully</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Witness of bullying</b>	<b>INCIDENT DATE</b>
<b>TARGET NAME (last, first) and GRADE</b>	<b>ACCUSED NAME (last, first) and GRADE</b>

Describe the location where the incident took place:

Describe the incident:

List any other witness names and grades:

List evidence of bullying (notes, photos, etc). Attach evidence if possible.

**I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Completing this Form

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Person receiving Bullying Complaint Form/Title and School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

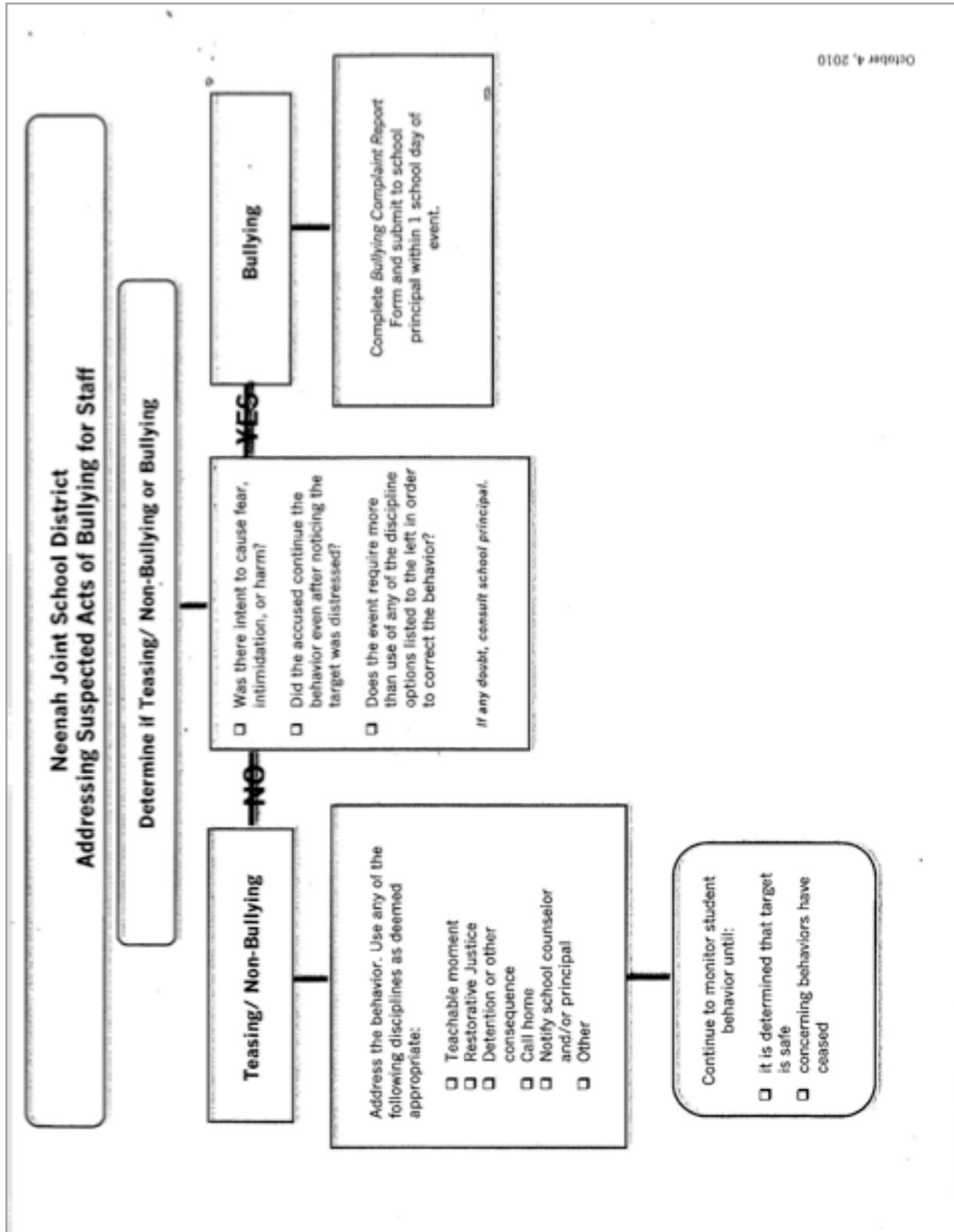
**This report will be followed up within 1 school day.**

**If you fear a student/staff member is in IMMEDIATE danger, please contact the police immediately.**

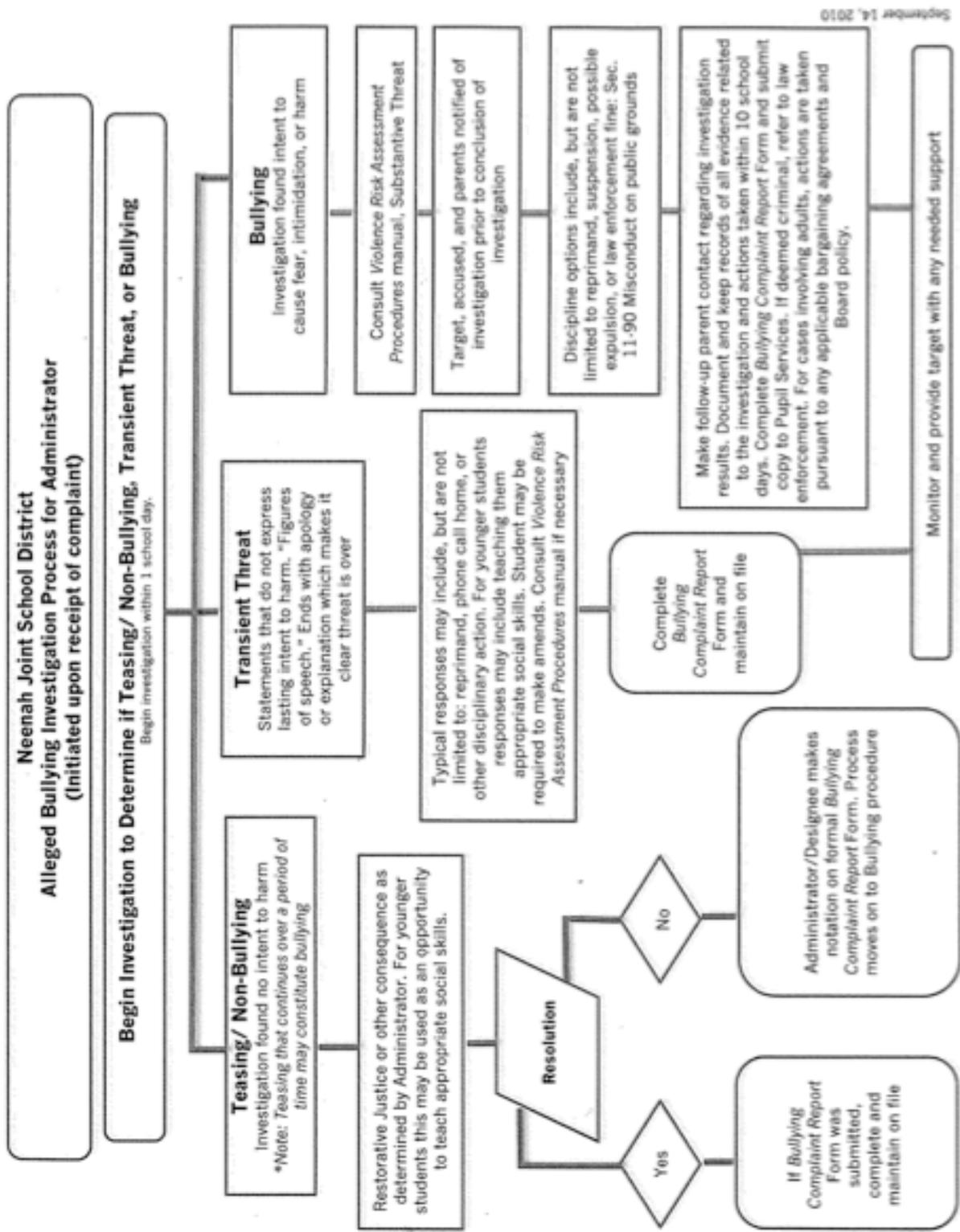
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**Office Use Only**

**Investigation Results and Action Taken:**

Appendix E



Appendix F



September 14, 2010