



JICDE - BULLYING PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

Statement of Purpose

The Board of Education recognizes the negative impact that bullying has on student health, welfare, and safety and the repercussions it can have on the learning environment at school. The Board supports a secure and positive school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment, and any type of bullying behavior. The purpose of this policy is to promote consistency of approach and to help create a climate in which all types of bullying are regarded as unacceptable.

Bullying and other behaviors, as defined below, are prohibited on all Poudre School District property, at District or school-sanctioned activities or events, when students are being transported in District vehicles, on District-owned and –issued devices, and off school property when such conduct has a reasonable connection to school or any District curricular or non-curricular activity or event.

Prohibited Behavior by students, employees, and/or volunteers:

1. Bullying;
2. Retaliating against those reporting bullying; and
3. Making knowingly false accusations of bullying behavior.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, these terms have the following meanings:

- **“Bullying”** means to willfully cause physical, mental, or emotional harm to any student or to use coercion or intimidation to influence and/or obtain control over another person. This can occur through written, verbal, or electronically transmitted communications (i.e., cyberbullying) or by means of a physical act or gesture. This includes, but is not limited to, such expression, act, or gesture directed toward a student on the basis of that student’s academic performance, on the basis of the student’s weight, height, or body size, or on the basis of a protected class, as defined in District Policy AC – Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity, whether such characteristic(s) is actual or perceived.

For the purposes of this policy, bullying may occur between two or more students or between adults and students. However, harassing conduct between two adults

is addressed separately from this policy in Policy GBAA – Harassment or Discrimination of Employees.

There are three general types of bullying: physical, verbal, and relational. Physical bullying occurs when there is physical contact and it results in harm to a student or is unwelcomed; it also includes damage to property (e.g., hitting, kicking, spitting, giving a wedgie, or breaking something they own). Verbal bullying is harmful written or verbal communication (e.g., name-calling or threatening another student). Relational, or social, bullying occurs when a student's relationships or social status are harmed (e.g., spreading rumors or anonymously posting private or unflattering information online).

Bullying usually consists of three components that differentiate it from other forms of aggression or conflict. Bullying behavior is:

1. unwanted;
 2. repeated or likely to be repeated; and
 3. marked by an imbalance of physical, social, or socio-economic power (e.g., physical strength/size, access to private information, or perceived social status). Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same students.
- **“Cyberbullying”** is when students use technology to bully someone, verbally or relationally. Cyberbullying can happen off school grounds, on a personal device, and without connection to any school or District curricular or non-curricular activity or event. However, it may still be within the scope of the District's ability to respond when it affects a student's welfare, their ability to access their education, and/or the behavior has a nexus, or connection, to the school or District. The District will respond to any report of cyberbullying that:
 - Involves bullying during online instruction;
 - Involves bullying on District-owned and –issued devices; or
 - Any instance that has a nexus to the school or District.
 - **“Conflict”** means a disagreement or argument between two or more people in which all sides express their views. This occurs when individuals hold equal power in a relationship but have different points of view. Mean behavior and conflict is not bullying in and of itself.

“Harassment” Bullying may be considered or include acts of harassment when the behavior directed at a student is based on a protected class, as defined in District Policy AC – Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity. This may include acts

that could be considered micro-aggressions when they are repeated despite the student engaged in the acts being made aware that the behavior is not acceptable. In those circumstances, the behavior is subject to District Policy JBB – Harassment or Discrimination of Students and the process and procedures in District Regulation AC-R1 – Harassment and Discrimination Investigation Procedures for Students or District Regulation AC-R3 – Sex-based Harassment Investigation Procedures. Harassment is not in and of itself bullying.

- **“Retaliation”** means intimidating, threatening, coercing, or discriminating against an individual by the District, a student, or an employee or other person authorized by the District because the individual raised a good-faith concern about or participated in good faith in an investigation on an act of bullying. Retaliation can also include knowingly making false accusations of bullying or acting to influence the investigation of, or the response to, a report of bullying.
- **“Teasing”** means mocking or making fun of someone playfully. Signs that teasing may be bullying are when the teasing is hostile, the student teasing intends to hurt the student being teased, and/or the student being teased is harmed by the behavior. Teasing is bullying when there is an imbalance of power.
- **“False accusations of bullying”** means claims made by an individual or group of individuals with the purpose of causing harm to another individual and which are false.

Reporting

Any student who believes they have been a target of bullying and/or other behaviors prohibited by this policy (i.e., retaliation or making knowingly false accusations of bullying behavior), or who has witnessed such bullying and/or other prohibited behaviors, is strongly encouraged to immediately report it to an administrator, school counselor, teacher or other employees at their school. Any parent/caregiver who believes their student has been a target of bullying or other prohibited behaviors under this policy is strongly encouraged to immediately report it to an administrator, school counselor, teacher or other employees at their student’s school.

All District employees and authorized volunteers who have any incident of bullying reported to them, observe potential bullying behavior, or otherwise have reason to believe it is occurring must promptly forward the report(s) and/or other information to the school principal or principal’s designee for appropriate action.

Prevention and Intervention

The District will maintain a comprehensive District-wide program to address bullying at all school levels and will ensure that the program is consistently applied across all students and employees. Procedures for immediate intervention, investigation, and

confrontation of students engaged in bullying behavior are contained below and in Policy AC-R1 – Harassment and Discrimination Investigation Procedures for Students. The program is aimed toward accomplishing the following goals:

1. To send a clear message to students, staff, parents/caregivers, families, and community members that bullying and retaliation against a student who reports bullying will not be tolerated.
2. To engage in restorative practices proactively to develop relationships, encourage a positive school climate, and address conflict. Mediation in response to bullying situations should be avoided.
3. To support positive school climate efforts that clearly define, teach, and reinforce prosocial behavior. This includes intentional efforts to promote positive relationships between employees and students as well as students with other students.

Goals Related to District Employees:

1. To train employees in taking proactive steps to prevent bullying from occurring. This includes but is not limited to, training on the District's policy, how to recognize and intervene in bullying situations, and positive school climate practices.
2. To designate a team of persons at each school who advise the school administration on the severity and frequency of bullying. This team may include, but need not be limited to, school resource officers, social workers, school psychologists, health professionals, mental health professionals, school counselors, teachers, administrators, parents/caregivers, and students.

Goals Related to Students:

1. To provide students engaged in bullying with education on acceptable behavior, discussions, counseling, and appropriate negative consequences. In instances that result in disciplinary action or negative consequences, educational interventions should still be applied, as appropriate.
2. To support targets of bullying through a layered continuum of supports that includes, but is not limited to, individual counseling and supports that may be short in duration or ongoing.
3. To survey students' impressions of the severity and frequency of bullying behaviors in their school, as well as include students in the development, creation, and delivery of bullying prevention efforts as developmentally appropriate.

4. To provide resources for students that include, but are not limited to, age-appropriate, evidence-based social and emotional behavioral learning as well as information on the recognition, intervention and prevention of bullying behaviors. The program will help develop peer support networks, social skills, and confidence for all students.

Goal Related to Families and Community Members:

1. To foster a productive partnership with parents/caregivers, families and community members in order to help maintain a bullying-free environment across all settings.
2. To empower parents/caregivers to report concerns about bullying to the District. The District will make allow for multiple avenues for reporting and account for barriers to reporting such as language access and time constraints during work hours.

Investigating and Responding

All District employees and authorized volunteers who witness student bullying in any such circumstance must immediately take appropriate action to stop the bullying, as prescribed by the District and the school principal, and must promptly report the bullying to the principal or principal's designee for appropriate action. Reports of bullying will be investigated per the procedures contained in Policy AC-R1 – Harassment and Discrimination Investigation Procedures for Students.

The District is obligated to follow state reporting procedures, and report required data on bullying to the state.

Supports and Referrals

As part of the District's comprehensive program to address bullying, District procedures that will be implemented at all schools will be developed with the aim toward accomplishing the following goals:

- Initiate efforts to change the behavior of students engaged in bullying behaviors through intervention and support;
- Support targets of bullying, so that the District and not the target of bullying can respond without the student feeling compelled to respond on their own; and
- Support witnesses of bullying.

A student who engages in any act of bullying or retaliation is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion. In addition, the principal

or designee must consider other actions that may be appropriate in response to student bullying, including but not limited to:

- Implementing educational opportunities and programming to inform students that bullying is prohibited, teach students about behaviors that constitute bullying, and advise them how to report and the response and consequences for engaging in bullying activity.
- Holding conferences with the parents/caregivers of students who continue to engage in bullying after intervention by District personnel, in order to develop cooperative strategies to address the students' behavior.
- Holding training and professional development to assist school employees in being alert to student bullying, taking appropriate action when bullying occurs, and creating an atmosphere where bullying is not tolerated at school or school-related activities.

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Revised by Board: November 14, 2023

Revised by Board:

Cross References:

AC – Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity

AC-R1 – Harassment and Discrimination Investigation Procedures for Students

AC-R3 – Sex-based Harassment Investigation Procedures

GBAA – Harassment or Discrimination of Employees

JBB – Harassment or Discrimination of Students

JICA – Student Dress

JICF – Secret Societies/Gang Activity and Dress

JICI – Student Conduct Involving Weapons

JK – Student Discipline

JKC – Discipline of Habitually Disruptive Students

JKBA – Disciplinary Removal from Classroom

JKD/JKE – Suspension/Expulsion of Students

JKDA/JKEA – Grounds for Suspension/Expulsion of Students

Legal References:

C.R.S. 22-2-144 (CDE model bullying prevention and education policy)

C.R.S. 22-32-109.1(1)(b) & (2)(a)(I)(K) (policy required as part of safe schools plan)
C.R.S. 22-93-101 et seq. (School Bullying Prevention and Education Grant Program)