

Book Policy Manual

Section 5000 Students

Title BULLYING

Code po5517

Status Active

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Last Revised ~~January 11, 2021~~ July X, 2025

5517 - BULLYING

The Board of School Trustees is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. The Board encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations among members of the school community. Bullying behavior toward a student whether by other students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. The Board prohibits bullying through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through any computer, computer system, or computer network. This policy applies when a student is on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or using property or equipment provided by the school. Additionally, this policy applies regardless of the physical location when:

- A. the individual committing the bullying behavior and any of the intended targets of the bullying behavior are students attending a school within the Corporation; and
- B. the bullying behavior results in a substantial interference with school discipline or an unreasonable threat to the rights of others to a safe and peaceful learning environment.

Bullying as defined in State law means overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications transmitted in any manner (including digitally and electronically), physical acts committed, aggression, or any other behaviors committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the other student. And create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:

- A. places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student's person or property;
- B. has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
- C. has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance; or
- D. has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school.

Bullying behaviors based on the targeted individual's race, color, national origin, sex, gender, religion, or disability may be investigated and processed according to the Nondiscrimination/Anti-Harassment Policy.

Any student who believes s/he has been or is currently the victim of bullying should immediately report the situation to the building principal or assistant principal, or the Superintendent. The student also may 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 Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent should be filed with the Board President.

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation they believe to be bullying behavior directed toward a student. Reports may be made to those identified above. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the process of minimizing bullying. Parents should report suspected acts of bullying to an appropriate school official.

All complaints about bullying behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. The investigation should be facilitated by the building principal or designee. Information relating to the investigation will be gathered using means including, but not limited to: witness interview, request for written witness statements, record identification and review, and an assessment of whether bullying occurred. The investigation will be initiated within one (1) school day of the report to the principal or designee. The principal or designee will make a reasonable attempt to notify both the parent/guardian of a targeted student and the parent/guardian of an alleged perpetrator that the school is investigating a possible incident of bullying or similar misconduct before the end of the next school day after the school becomes aware of the possible incident. The investigation will be initiated within one (1) school day of the report to the building principal or designee and will ordinarily be completed with ten (10) school days. The Corporation shall inform the parents of all students in alleged incidents before the end of the next school day after the school becomes aware of the possible incident.

If the investigation finds an instance of bullying behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including, expulsion for students, 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. Bullying acts may be reported to law enforcement officials or the Department of Child Services.

~~The complainant shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and as appropriate, any remedial action that has been taken to the extent disclosure is permitted by law. The school principal or designee will be responsible for follow-up with students involved, counselor, and parents.~~ Timetables for reporting the conclusion of a bullying investigation will be communicated to both the parent/guardian of the targeted student and the parent/guardian of the alleged perpetrator in an expedited manner than is before the end of the next school day after the conclusion of the investigation. Parents will also be notified of the conclusion of the investigation before the end of the next school day after the conclusion of the investigation.

~~Parents are encouraged to be involved in the process of minimizing bullying. Parents should report suspected acts of bullying to an appropriate school official. In addition, parents of students suspected of bullying will be notified with a phone call or through other appropriated means of communication. Conversely, parents of students suspected of being the target of acts of bullying will also be notified with a phone call or through other means of appropriate communication. Parent notifications will occur in an expedited manner within two (2) school days after the designated school administrator receives the report of suspected bullying. Parents of students who are disciplined for acts of bullying will be involved in the disciplinary process consistent with the law and Corporation policy.~~

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participated 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 false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

Confidentiality

To the extent appropriate and/or legally permitted, confidentiality will be maintained during the investigation process. However, a proper investigation will, in some circumstances, require the disclosure of names and allegations.

It is the Board of Trustees' intent that full compliance be achieved with law in this regard. As such, administrative leaders will:

- A. Develop and implement bullying prevention programming using age-appropriate, research-based information in accordance with applicable Indiana Code.
- B. Establish investigative and reporting procedures related to bullying in accordance with applicable Indiana Code.
- C. Adopt discipline rules that comply with Indiana Code that prohibit bullying and include provisions concerning education, parental involvement, and intervention in accordance with I.C. 20-33-8-13.5(a)(2)(A).
- D. Establish bullying incident reporting procedures using four categories as outlined by the Indiana Department of Education; verbal bullying, physical bullying, social/relational bullying, and electronic/written communication bullying in accordance with applicable Indiana law.
- E. Provide training to the school corporation's employees and volunteers (who have direct, ongoing contact with students) concerning the school's bullying prevention and reporting policy ~~as per I.C. 20-26-5-34.2~~.
- F. Include in the school corporation's curriculum ~~Provide~~ age-appropriate, research-based instruction as provided under I.C. ~~10-21-1-14(d)5-2-10.1-12(d)(1)~~ focusing on bullying prevention for all students in grades 1 through 12 in accordance with I.C. 20-30-5-5.5 ~~by no later than October 15 of each year at each school in the school district.~~
- G. Ensure that training referenced in item f above is delivered by a school safety specialist, school counselor, or any other person with training and expertise in the area of bullying prevention and intervention in accordance with Indiana Code.

School Safety Committee

In accordance with State law, there shall be a *Safe School Committee* in each school within the Zionsville Community Schools.

~~Revised 3/14/16~~

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T.C. 1/19/18

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I.C. ~~5-2-10.1, 20-20-8-8,~~ 20-30-5-5.5, 20-33-8-0.2, 20-33-8-13.5, 20-34-6-1, 10-21-1-14