

# DRAFT

## Livonia Public Schools BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY BULLYING

The Board of Education believes that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. It is the (policy) of the District to provide a safe educational environment for all of its students.

This policy applies to all activities in the District, including activities on school property, in a school vehicle, and those occurring 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 school's control, or where an employee is engaged in school business. Misconduct occurring outside of school may also be disciplined if it interferes with the school environment.

"Bullying" is defined as a person willfully and repeatedly exercising power or control over another with hostile or malicious intent (i.e., repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful individual by a more powerful individual or group) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic.

"Bullying" is conduct that meets the following criteria:

- A. is directed at one (1) or more students;
- B. substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one (1) or more students;
- C. adversely affects the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the school district's educational programs or activities by placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing emotional distress; and
- D. is based on a student's actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above), or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, psychological, written or a combination of all four.

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. Written - graphic or electronically transmitted.

Any student who believes s/he has been or is the victim of bullying, hazing, or other aggressive behavior should immediately report the situation. Every student, whether victim or not, should and every staff member **must**, report any situation that they believe to be bullying toward a student.

## Attachment C

The Administration will develop procedures to implement this policy which are consistent with other portions of the BOE policies for student discipline, discrimination and harassment.

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 behavior is prohibited. 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 behavior. Making intentionally false reports about bullying behavior for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

This policy is not intended to and should not be interpreted to interfere with legitimate free speech rights of any individual. However, the District reserves the right and responsibility to maintain a safe environment for students, conducive to learning and other legitimate objectives of the school program.

### **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.

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