

Morrow County School District

GBNA/JFCF-AR
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Hazing/Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying/Menacing Complaint Procedures

The following definitions and procedures shall be used for reporting, investigating and resolving complaints of hazing, harassment, intimidation, bullying and menacing, **including cyberbullying.**

Definitions

1. “Third parties” include, but are not limited to, school volunteers, parents, school visitors, service contractors or others engaged in district business, such as employees of businesses or organizations participating in cooperative work programs with the district and others not directly subject to district control at interdistrict and intradistrict athletic competitions or other school events.
2. “District” includes district facilities, district premises and nondistrict property if the student or employee is at any district-sponsored, district-approved or district-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the control of the district or where the employee is engaged in district business.
3. “Hazing” includes, but is not limited to, any act that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or as a condition or precondition of attaining membership in, or affiliation with, any district-sponsored activity or grade level attainment, i.e., forced consumption of any drink, alcoholic beverage, drug or controlled substance, forced exposure to the elements, forced prolonged exclusion from social contact, sleep deprivation or any other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental or physical health or safety of a student; requires, encourages, authorizes or permits another to be subject to wearing or carrying any obscene or physically burdensome article, assignment of pranks to be performed or other such activities intended to degrade or humiliate.
4. “Harassment, intimidation or bullying, **including cyberbullying**” 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;
 - c. Creating a hostile educational environment.

(continued)

“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, disability and marital status.

“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.

“Cyberbullying” is the use of any electronic communication device to convey a message in any form (text, image, audio or video) that defames, intimidates, harasses or is otherwise intended to harm, insult or humiliate another in a deliberate, repeated or hostile and unwanted manner under a person’s true or false identity. In addition, any communication of this form which disrupts or prevents a safe and positive educational or working environment may also be considered cyberbullying. Staff and students will refrain from using personal communication devices or district property to harass or stalk another.

5. “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.

Retaliation/False Charges

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry is prohibited. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. False charges shall also be regarded as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.

Complaint Procedures

Building principals and the superintendent have responsibility for investigations concerning hazing, harassment, intimidation, bullying or menacing. The investigator(s) shall be a neutral party having had no involvement in the complaint presented.

Any student, employee or third party who has knowledge of conduct in violation of this policy or feels he/she has been a victim of hazing, harassment, intimidation, bullying or menacing in violation of this policy shall immediately report his/her concerns.

All complaints will be promptly investigated in accordance with the following procedures:

Step I Any hazing, harassment, intimidation, bullying or menacing information (complaints, rumors, etc.) shall be presented to the building principal or superintendent. Complaints against the building principal shall be filed with the superintendent. Information may be presented anonymously. Complaints against the superintendent shall be filed with the Board chair. All such information will be reduced to writing and will include the specific nature of the offense and corresponding dates.

Step II The district official receiving the complaint shall promptly investigate. Parents will be notified of the nature of any complaint involving their student. The district official will arrange such meetings as may be necessary with all concerned parties within five working days after receipt of the information or complaint. The parties will have an opportunity to submit evidence and a list of witnesses. All findings related to the complaint will be reduced to writing. The district official(s) conducting the investigation shall notify the complainant and parents as appropriate, in writing, when the investigation is concluded and a decision regarding disciplinary action, as warranted, is determined.

A copy of the notification letter to the complainant, together with any other documentation related to the incident, including disciplinary action taken or recommended, shall be forwarded to the superintendent.

Step III If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision at Step II, he/she may submit a written appeal to the superintendent or designee. Such appeal must be filed within 10 working days after receipt of the Step II decision. The superintendent or designee will arrange such meetings with the complainant and other affected parties as deemed necessary to discuss the appeal. The superintendent or designee shall provide a written decision to the complainant's appeal within 10 working days.

Step IV If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision at Step III, a written appeal may be filed with the Board. Such appeal must be filed within 10 working days after receipt of the Step III decision. The Board shall, within 20 working days, conduct a hearing at which time the complainant shall be given an opportunity to present the complaint. The Board shall provide a written decision to the complainant within 10 working days following completion of the hearing.

Documentation related to the incident may be maintained as a part of the student's education records or employee's personnel file. Additionally, a copy of all hazing, harassment, intimidation, bullying or menacing, **including cyberbullying** complaints and documentation will be maintained as a confidential file in the district office.