

Regular Board Meeting – January 17, 2012

**SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF POLICY 5144 - BULLYING, HAZING,
HARASSMENT, AND/OR CYBERBULLYING**

The Board shall provide an educational environment for students free from bullying, hazing, harassment, and cyberbullying. The Board is committed to protecting its students from any form of physical, verbal, or mental abuse.

Definitions

1. Bullying

“Bullying” means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- (1) placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s or students’ person or property;
- (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s or students’ physical or mental health;
- (3) substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ academic performance; or
- (4) substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is illustrative and non-exhaustive.

2. Hazing

Hazing is any act that subjects a student to electronic, written, physical, or verbal harassment, mental or physical discomfort, intimidation, embarrassment, ridicule, or demeaning activity committed by an individual student or group of students for the purpose of initiation, maintaining membership, or holding office in any organization, club, or athletic team.

3. Harassment

Harassment includes any unwelcome electronic, written, physical, or verbal conduct, contact or communication that is motivated by or related to individual characteristics such as race, color, national origin, gender, economic status, disability, religion, religious affiliation, or sexual orientation and that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. Although harassment that creates a hostile environment may take many different forms, some examples include name calling and other derogatory comments, jokes, gestures or looks, posting or distribution of derogatory pictures, notes or graffiti, blocking, pushing, hitting, or other forms

of physical aggression. Where harassment is sexual, it may also include such conduct as persistent unwelcome attempts to interact with someone, spreading of rumors, aggressive physical contact such as kissing, touching, or pulling at clothes in a sexual way.

Sexual harassment also includes unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors when:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the receipt of educational or other school-related benefits, or
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for educational or other school-related decisions affecting that individual

4. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a subset of bullying, hazing, and harassment. For purposes of this policy, cyberbullying is defined as the use of e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, pagers, cell phones, or other forms of information technology to deliberately bully, haze, harass, threaten, or intimidate someone. Cyberbullying can include, but is not limited to, such acts as making threats, provocative insults, or demeaning remarks about another student's distinguishing characteristic such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, or unfavorable discharge from military services.

Regulations

1. It shall be a violation of the Board of Education policy for a student, employee or school visitor to bully on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic.

No student shall be subjected to bullying:

- (a) during any school-sponsored education program or activity;
 - (b) while in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities; or
 - (c) through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
2. It shall be a violation of the Board of Education policy for a student, employee or any school visitor to bully, haze, harass, or cyberbully a student or to engage in conduct which would actively or passively support acts of bullying, hazing, harassment, or cyberbullying.

3. It shall be a violation of the Board of Education policy for a student to report false allegations or a false complaint of bullying, hazing, harassment, or cyberbullying.
4. It shall also be a violation of the policy for an employee, student, or any school visitor to retaliate against a student for instituting a good-faith complaint of bullying, hazing, harassment, or cyberbullying.

Disciplinary Consequences

1. Violation of this policy may result in discipline. If the harasser is an employee, discipline will be determined in accordance with Board policy and the provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Students who violate the policy will also be subject to appropriate discipline in accordance with Board policy and the District's Code of Conduct. This may include suspension and/or expulsion.
2. Students may be disciplined for acts of bullying, hazing, harassment, or cyberbullying occurring on or off-campus and/or outside of school hours in the same manner they are otherwise subject to discipline for acts that violate School District policies and/or procedures when acts could: (1) affect the school climate or atmosphere; (2) affect the peace, health, safety, or welfare of students, teachers, or any other personnel, and/or (3) disrupt or interfere with school or school activities. Any violation is subject to suspension or recommendation for expulsion.
3. The parents/guardians of students who commit any act of bullying, hazing, harassment, or cyberbullying will be notified.
4. The School District reserves the right to make referrals for these students to appropriate mental health and law enforcement professionals.

Notification

The School District shall annually communicate this policy to students and their parents/guardians. This annual notification shall include disseminating information to all students and parents/guardians explaining the serious disruption caused by bullying, hazing, harassment, and cyberbullying and that these behaviors will be taken seriously and are not acceptable in any form.

Adoption and Update of Policy

The Board of Education shall update this policy beginning every two years after the policy's initial adoption and shall file this policy with the Illinois State Board of Education after the Board adopts or updates it.

Legal Ref: 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7

Adopted: 1/17/12