

BULLYING

The Katonah-Lewisboro School District community is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from bullying, one in which students, staff and community members interact respectfully.

To this end, the Board prohibits all forms of bullying on school grounds, school buses and at all school-sponsored activities, programs and events including those that take place at locations outside the district.

Definition:

For the purpose of this policy, the term bullying refers to:

- Systematically and intentionally inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on an individual or group of individuals.

It is further defined as:

- Unwanted purposeful written, verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior, including but not limited to any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment or cause long term damage; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation, is carried out repeatedly and is often characterized by an imbalance of power.
- Bullying may involve, but is not limited to; unwanted teasing, threatening, intimidating, stalking, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, sexting, physical violence, theft, sexual, religious, or racial harassment, public humiliation, destruction of school or personal property, social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion and rumor or spreading of falsehoods.

Cyberbullying is defined as: the repeated use of information technology, including e-mail, instant message, blogs, chat rooms, social networking, pagers, cell phones, and gaming systems to deliberately harass, threaten or intimidate others.

Sexting is defined as sending, receiving or forwarding sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude photos through text message or e-mail.

A single negative act as defined above may also constitute bullying based upon the particular circumstances such as the seriousness of the act and/or the intent of the actor.

If bullying is of a sexual nature, as defined by the Board of Education's sexual harassment policy, the district's Title IX coordinator will be notified, in accordance with Board of Education Policy 9110.2.

In order for the Board to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective action, it is essential that bullying be reported promptly to a building administrator. Specifically any student, staff member or community member who believes that he or she is being bullied, or any student, staff member or community member who observes or witnesses bullying should report the concern to a building administrator. All school personnel are responsible for taking action to prevent bullying and/or reporting such behavior to a building administrator.

Confidentiality:

Allegations of bullying will be treated as confidential and private to the extent possible.

Investigation of Complaints:

The Building Principal and/or his/her designee to whom the report is made shall investigate the complaint and take appropriate action. The investigation should begin with: a review of any written documentation; conducting separate interviews of the victim(s), alleged perpetrator, and witnesses, if any; providing the alleged perpetrator with a chance to respond; and notifying the parents of student victims and accused students of allegations that involve charges of serious or repeated conduct.

If the Building Principal believes that the alleged bullying may involve criminal activity, he/she should immediately notify the Superintendent who shall then contact law enforcement authorities. Disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report.

Corrective Action:

If an investigation results in a determination that bullying did occur, prompt corrective and/or disciplinary action must be taken to end the behavior. Building principals must ensure reasonable consequences and appropriate remediation for any student, staff member or community member who engages in bullying. Consequences and disciplinary actions shall be recommended and imposed in accordance with district policy, the applicable collective bargaining agreement and state law. Disciplinary action may range from, including but not limited to: warning, detention, in school suspension, suspension from school, termination of employment, or, for community members, denial of access to school property. Where appropriate, District investigators may suggest mediation as a means or exploring options of corrective action and informally resolving the complaint.

Dissemination:

Policies and procedures related to bullying shall be made public.

Professional Development:

The District will provide professional development and training to staff (a) to raise awareness of bullying (b) to provide information of bullying prevention and (c) to provide direction on how to identify bullying and how to respond and report.

The administration and faculty will review, enhance and develop anti-bullying programs and classroom activities so that all students receive instruction on (a) the nature and extent of bullying (b) how to prevent bullying (c) how and when to intervene and (d) how to report. Each school within the district will designate at least one staff member in each school to be trained in non-discriminatory instructional and counseling methods and handling human relations.

Retaliation:

The Board prohibits any retaliation directed at those who have been victim of, or who have been witness to instances of bullying.

Cross References:

Code of Conduct

Policy No. 9110.2 Sexual Harassment

Policy No. 1240Visitors to the Schools

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