

BULLYING**Definitions**

Bullying is an unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves real or perceived imbalance of power between individuals with the intent to cause emotional or physical harm. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social/relational and involves repetition or potential repetition of a deliberate act.

Cyberbullying includes the creation or transmission of harassing communications, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, video, or images on the Internet, social media, or other technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device.

Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

Prevention

To the extent possible, Office of Education and school strategies shall focus on prevention of bullying by establishing clear rules for student conduct and strategies to establish a positive, collaborative school climate. Students shall be informed, through student handbooks and other appropriate means, of rules related to bullying, mechanisms available for reporting incidents or threats, and the consequences for perpetrators of bullying.

Students are encouraged to notify school staff when they are being bullied or suspect that another student is being victimized. In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall develop means for students to report threats or incidents confidentially and anonymously.

School staff who witness bullying shall immediately intervene to stop the incident when it is safe to do so.

Based on an assessment of bullying incidents at school, the Superintendent or designee may increase supervision and security in areas where bullying most often occurs, such as classrooms, playgrounds, hallways, restrooms, cafeterias.

Information and Resources

The Superintendent or designee shall post on the district's web site, in a prominent location and in a manner that is easily accessible to students and parents/guardians, information on bullying and harassment prevention which includes the following:

1. The district's policy on student suicide prevention, including a reference to the policy's age appropriateness for students in grades K-6
2. The definition of sex discrimination and harassment as described in Education Code 230, including the rights set forth in Education Code 221.8
3. Title IX information included on the district's web site pursuant to Education Code 221.61, and a link to the Title IX information included on CDE's web site pursuant to Education Code 221.6
4. District policies on student sexual harassment, prevention and response to hate violence, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and cyberbullying
5. A section on social media bullying that includes all of the references described in Education Code 234.6 as possible forums for social media
6. A link to statewide resources, including community-based organizations, compiled by CDE pursuant to Education Code 234.5.
7. Any additional information the Superintendent or designee deems important for preventing bullying and harassment

Student Instruction

The Office of Education may provide students with instruction, in the classroom or other educational settings, that promotes effective communication and conflict resolution skills, social skills, character/values education, respect for cultural and individual differences, self-esteem development, assertiveness skills, and appropriate online behavior. Such instruction shall also educate students about the negative impact of bullying, discrimination, intimidation, and harassment based on actual or perceived immigration status, religious beliefs and customs, or any other individual bias or prejudice.

Staff Development

The Superintendent or designee shall make the California Department of Education's online training module on the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, which includes the identification of bullying and cyberbullying and implementation strategies to address bullying, available annually to all certificated staff and to other employees who have regular interaction with students.

School staff shall receive related professional development, including information about early warning signs of harassing/intimidating behaviors and effective prevention and intervention strategies. Training includes awareness about the legal obligation of the district and its employees to prevent discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying of district students. Such training shall be designed to provide staff with the skills to:

1. Discuss the diversity of the student body and school community, including their varying immigration experiences
2. Discuss bullying prevention strategies with students, and teach students to recognize the behavior and characteristics of bullying perpetrators and victims
3. Identify the signs of bullying or harassing behavior
4. Take immediate corrective action when bullying is observed
5. Report incidents to the appropriate authorities, including law enforcement in instances of criminal behavior

Reporting and Filing Complaints

When a report of bullying is submitted, the principal or compliance officer shall inform the student or parent/guardian of the right to file a formal written complaint in accordance with AR 1312.4. The student who is the alleged victim of the bullying shall be given an opportunity to describe the incident, identify witnesses who may have relevant information, and provide other evidence of bullying.

Any student, parent/guardian, or other individual who believes that a student has been subjected to bullying or who has witnessed bullying may report the incident to a teacher, the principal, a compliance officer, or any other available school employee. Complaints may be submitted verbally or in writing. Complaints of bullying shall be investigated and

resolved in accordance with site-level grievance procedures specified in AR 1312.4 Uniform Complaint Procedures.

Within one business day of receiving such a report, a staff member shall notify the principal of the report, whether or not a uniform complaint is filed. In addition, any school employee who observes an incident of bullying involving a student shall, within one business day, report such observations to the principal, whether or not the alleged victim files a complaint.

Within two business days of receiving the report of bullying, the principal shall notify the district compliance officer identified in AR 1312.4.

However, if during the investigation, it is determined that a complaint is about nondiscriminatory bullying, the principal or designee shall inform the complainant and shall take all necessary actions to resolve the complaint.

When a student is reported to be engaging in bullying off campus, the Superintendent or designee shall investigate and document the activity and shall identify specific facts or circumstances that explain the impact or potential impact on school activity, school attendance, or the targeted student's educational performance.

When the circumstances involve cyberbullying, individuals with information about the activity shall be encouraged to save and print any electronic or digital messages sent to them that they feel constitute cyberbullying and to notify a teacher, the principal, or other employee so that the matter may be investigated.

If the student is using a social networking site or service that has terms of use that prohibit posting of harmful material, the Superintendent or designee also may file a complaint with the Internet site or service to suspend the privileges of the student and have the material removed.

Discipline/Corrective Actions

As appropriate, the Superintendent or designee shall notify the parents/guardians of victims and perpetrators. He/she also may refer a victim, witness, perpetrator, or other student affected by an act of bullying to a school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, school nurse or other school support

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service personnel for case management, counseling, and/or participation in a restorative justice program as appropriate.

Any student who engages in bullying on school premises, or off campus in a manner that causes or is likely to cause a substantial disruption of a school activity or school attendance, shall be subject to discipline, which may include suspension or expulsion, in accordance with Office of Education policies and regulations.