

STUDENTS

7:180 Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important Joint Agreement goals.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, academic status, pregnancy, parenting status, homelessness, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, order of protection status, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic **is prohibited** in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. 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.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the Joint Agreement or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This paragraph (item #4) applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require staff members to monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

Bullying includes *cyberbullying* and 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 meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. *Cyberbullying* includes the creation of a webpage or

weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*. *Cyberbullying* also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*.

School personnel means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in the Joint Agreement, including without limitation Joint Agreement administrators, teachers, school social workers, and school psychologists.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

The Bullying Prevention and Response Plan of member districts will be followed. Member district students participating in Joint Agreement programs are encouraged to immediately report bullying occurring in the Joint Agreement program, either orally or in writing, to the Nondiscrimination Coordinator identified below, Title IX Coordinator, member district building administrator, a Complaint Manager identified below, or any Joint Agreement employee with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including employees and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to a member district administrator or the Joint Agreement Nondiscrimination Coordinator or one of its Complaint Managers. Anonymous reports are also accepted; however, this shall not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers identified in Policy 2:260 will also serve as the Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers for administration of this policy.

If requested by the member district administration, Joint Agreement employees will assist in an investigation into any alleged bullying occurring in a Joint Agreement program. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying **is prohibited**.

The Special Education Director or designee shall post this policy on the Joint Agreement's publicly accessible website, if any. The policy must be distributed annually to Joint Agreement employees (including new employees when hired).

CROSS REF.: 2:240 (Board Policy Development), 2:260 (Uniform Grievance Procedure), 2:265 (Title IX Grievance Procedure), 2:270 (Discrimination and Harassment on the Basis of Race, Color, and National Origin Prohibited), 4:170 (Safety), 5:230 (Maintaining Student Discipline), 6:235 (Access to Electronic Networks), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited)

Adopted: June 4, 2025

Midstate Special Education Coop
