

ABINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
ABINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA

SUPERINTENDENT'S
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

REGARDING: **Bullying, Cyberbullying, and
Unlawful Harassment**

Section: **Students**

Effective Date: December 9, 2008

Reissued: 1/24/12, 4/4/12,
5/9/17, 8/20/19,
8/26/20

See Also: Related Board Policy;
School Code: Sections 1303.1-A
and 1302; Title 22 Section 12.3

Definitions

"Bullying" is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance, is repeated over time and that:

- occur during the school day, on school property, on a school bus, at a school-sponsored activity or event, going to and from school, or any location where the school has legal jurisdiction over a student's conduct; or,
- occur outside a school setting if those acts have the effect of doing any of the following:
 - Substantially interferes with a student's education;
 - Creates a threatening environment; or
 - Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school

Bullying shall mean harassment, attack(s), or intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act(s), perpetrated by a student or group of students, on another student or students, which meet all of the following criteria:

- are severe, persistent or pervasive; and
- are directed at another student or students; and
- include any written, verbal, or physical act including but not limited to:
 - Written intimidating/threatening, and/or demeaning letters, notes, messages, emails, and/or any other electronic communications
 - Verbally intimidating/threatening comments, slurs, innuendos, or taunting
 - Visual gestures
 - Physical hitting, slapping, kicking, and pinching, etc.
 - Making reprisals, threats of reprisal or implied threats of reprisal, social isolation, or manipulation of a student
 - Engaging in implicit or explicit coercive behavior to control, influence, or affect the

health and well-being of a student

- Any other behavior or act which has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment, or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school

Bullying includes cyberbullying to the extent that the District is able to lawfully regulate such conduct.

“Cyberbullying” is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

“Unlawful harassment” is a form of discrimination based on a protected class, such as race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or religion. Unlawful harassment consists of, on the basis of a protected class, unwelcome conduct such as graphic, written, electronic, verbal or nonverbal acts including offensive jokes, slurs, epithets and name-calling, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, or other conduct that may be harmful or humiliating or interfere with a person's school or school-related performance when such conduct:

Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects a student's educational performance or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment; and/or,

Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's educational performance; and/or,

Adversely affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or opportunities offered by the District.

“School setting” means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

Reporting Procedures

Students who believe they or others have been subjected to bullying or unlawful harassment are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to their principal, assistant principal, athletic director or school guidance counselor, coach/activity sponsor, or other trusted school official. In the event a report is received by an individual other than the building principal, the building principal shall be notified so that a proper investigation may begin. Students are also encouraged to report allegations of sexual harassment to the District's Title IX Coordinator. In the event a report of sexual harassment is received by an individual other than the Title IX Coordinator, the Title IX Coordinator shall be notified so that a proper investigation may begin.

Parents/guardians, coaches, activity sponsors, volunteers, District employees, representatives, agents and contractors shall be alert to incidents of bullying and unlawful harassment and shall promptly report such conduct to their immediate supervisor or the appropriate building principal. In the event a report is received by an individual other than the building principal, the building principal shall be notified so that a proper investigation may begin. Individuals are also encouraged to report allegations of sexual harassment to the District's Title IX Coordinator. In the event a report of sexual harassment is received by an individual other than the Title IX Coordinator, the Title IX Coordinator shall be notified so that a proper investigation may begin.

The person accepting the complaint shall handle the report objectively, neutrally and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor the student filing the complaint or those accused of a violation of this SAP or the accompanying Board Policy.

Complaints of bullying and unlawful harassment by a student against another student shall be handled in the same manner as other student disciplinary investigations, except that allegations of sexual harassment shall be investigated and handled by the Title IX Coordinator, in accordance with applicable legal obligations and the procedures outlined in the Board Policy and Superintendent's Administrative Procedure titled "Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Students."

Investigation and Response to Complaints

Reports of bullying or unlawful harassment can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws against discrimination, including, but not limited to claims of sexual harassment, shall be handled as a joint, concurrent investigation into all allegations and coordinated with the full participation of the Title IX Coordinator. If, in the course of an investigation, potential issues of discrimination are identified, the Title IX Coordinator shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of alleged discrimination as well as the incidents of alleged bullying and unlawful harassment, as required by Board Policy and applicable laws and regulations.

Upon receipt of a complaint of bullying or unlawful harassment, the building principal or designee shall determine what, if any interim measures should be put in place to protect students from further bullying or unlawful harassment. Such interim measures may include, but need not be limited to, the suspension of an adult who was involved, the separation of alleged victims and perpetrators, and the determination of what the complaining student needs or wants through questioning.

Disciplinary Consequences

Disciplinary consequences will be based on the seriousness and repetitiveness of the behavior and may include the following:

- Parent/guardian conference;
- Loss of privileges, including limitations on participation in extracurricular activities;
- In-school or out-of-school suspension;
- Risk assessment;

- Police contact; and
- Other appropriate interventions

Publicity

This Superintendent's Administrative Procedure, as well as the accompanying Board Policy, shall be posted on a publicly accessible page of the District's website.

At least once a semester, each school will review with its students these bullying and harassment procedures and explain the procedures for reporting allegations of bullying and unlawful harassment.

Building principals or designees will ensure that these procedures and the definition of bullying set forth in this Superintendent's Administrative Procedure are posted in each classroom and in a prominent location within the school building. An age-appropriate summary shall be included as part of this posting. The summaries for the elementary schools, junior high school, and senior high school are attached to this SAP as Attachment A and Attachment B.

Review of Harassment and Bullying Procedures

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this Superintendent's Administrative Procedure and the accompanying Board Policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.

Annual Reporting Procedures

Annually, incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and unlawful harassment will be incorporated into the District's Safe Schools Report to the Pennsylvania Department of Education as required by law.

BULLYING BEHAVIOR

Is a student displaying bullying behavior?

Sometimes students can display bullying behavior because of the things they say or write down. Sometimes they can exhibit a bullying behavior because of the things they do. Bullying behavior may be demonstrated if the student:

- Says things that hurt your feelings
- Calls you names
- Says scary things to you
- Tries to make you feel scared
- Tells you they are going to hurt you
- Teases you a lot
- Tells other kids bad things about you
- Tells other kids not to play with you or talk to you
- Gives you letters or notes in person or by any electronic means
- Makes mean faces at you
- Hits, kicks, slaps, punches, or pinches you on purpose
- Tries to hurt your body
- Makes you do something that you do not want to do
- Tells you lies
- Shares negative, harmful, or mean content about you, including through electronic posts

What should you do if someone is displaying bullying behavior?

If someone is displaying bullying behavior at school, or on your way home or to school, you should also tell your teacher right away and tell an adult at home.

What will the school do?

Sometimes the school will have a meeting with the parents/guardians of the student exhibiting bullying behavior.

Sometimes the school will take fun things away from the student demonstrating bullying behavior.

Sometimes the student displaying bullying behavior will have to stay home for a few days.

Sometimes a police officer will need to talk to the student displaying bullying behavior.

BULLYING BEHAVIOR

Definition of bullying behavior

Bullying behavior is when a student or a group of students intentionally and repeatedly uses hurtful or intimidating words, actions, or other behaviors against another student.

A student is bullying you if he/she does any of the following things **intentionally** and **repeatedly**:

- Says unkind, harsh, demeaning, or abusive things to you or calls you names
- Threatens or intimidates you in writing, email, social media, notes, or messages to you in person, or by any electronic means
- Teases, taunts, or harasses you
- Makes negative comments, slurs, or innuendos towards you
- Tells other people offensive or insulting things about you
- Ostracizes you, isolates you or tells other students not to talk to you, involve you, or be around you
- Writes threatening, demeaning, or intimidating letters or email messages to you
- Makes cruel faces or physical gestures at you
- Physically hits, kicks, slaps, punches, pinches or purposely hurts you in any way
- Forces, coerces, influences or manipulates you to do something that you do not want to do
- Frequently tells you lies that make you feel upset or that affect you in a negative manner
- Makes you feel uncomfortable to attend school or disrupts your concentration at school
- Sends electronic posts, or shares negative, harmful, or mean content about you

What should you do if you are being bullied?

If you think that someone is exhibiting bullying behavior during the school day, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, you should tell your teacher or an adult at school immediately.

What happens if you report a student who is exhibiting bullying behavior?

The school will investigate the situation.

The school may decide to have a conference with the parents/guardians of the student exhibiting bullying behavior.

The school may take privileges away from the student exhibiting bullying behavior, including

participation in extracurricular activities.

The student exhibiting bullying behavior may be suspended from school.

The police and law enforcement may need to be contacted, especially if the student exhibiting bullying behavior threatened someone or tried to hurt someone.