

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES OF THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 8.52 STUDENT BULLYING

(1) GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Milwaukee Public Schools is committed and dedicated to the task of providing a safe environment for students to attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Student bullying behavior interferes with this mission by obstructing the school district's ability to maintain the safety ~~or~~ and welfare of students. Bullying interferes with the commitment to a safe environment for students and adults and disrupts productivity both inside and outside of the classroom.

(2) DEFINITION

(a) Bullying is defined as deliberate or intentional, often repeated, behavior using words or actions intended to cause fear, humiliation, intimidation, harm, or social exclusion. ~~Bullying often involves repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. Bullying may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic such as, but not limited to, age, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression/nonconformity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, and social economic, or family status.~~ Bullying occurs when a student uses an imbalance of power such as physical strength, group size, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others.

(b) Bullying behavior can be:

- the result of an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic such as, but not limited to, age, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression/nonconformity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, and social, economic, or family status;
- physical (assault, hitting, kicking, theft, etc.);
- verbal (threatening or intimidating language, name-calling, cruel rumors, racist remarks, etc.);
- ~~indirect (spreading rumors, social exclusion and isolation, using technology in a hurtful manner — cyber bullying, which includes, but is not limited to, use of email, instant messaging, text messages, digital pictures or images, cell phones, or website postings);~~
- ~~indirect (spreading rumors, social exclusion and isolation, etc.); using technology in a hurtful manner)~~
- cyberbullying (the use of electronic information and communication devices to willfully and repeatedly harm someone. Cyberbullying ~~which~~ includes, but is not limited to, use of social media, email, instant messaging, text messages, digital pictures or images, cell phones, or website postings); or
- bullying by proxy (i.e., someone engaging in bullying through another or on behalf of another) ~~;~~ or
- ~~between students and students, students and adults, or adults and adults (see Administrative Policy 6.03 for bullying involving employees). Included adults are defined as, but not limited to, employees, parents, and volunteers.~~

(3) PROHIBITION

(a) Bullying behavior by an individual student or a group of students, ~~or an adult (including employees~~

~~{see Administrative Policy 6.03 for bullying involving employees}~~ and non-employees) is prohibited in all schools, in school district buildings, in educational environments, and on school district property, including any property or vehicle owned, leased, or used by the school district. ~~Educational environments include, but are not limited to, every activity under school supervision. Bullying and harassment of students or employees (see Administrative Policy 6.03 for bullying involving employees) is also prohibited when perpetrated through electronic means (for example by phone or computer). Students' out of school speech or behavior that results in a "substantial disruption of the learning environment" is also prohibited.~~

(b) Educational environments encompass every activity under school supervision. This includes, but is not limited to, the regular school day, field trips, athletic and extra-curricular activities, school busses, and virtual classrooms.

(c) Cyberbullying is prohibited and shall be investigated to the same extent as allegations of bullying on MPS property. Students who engage in cyberbullying may also be reported to law enforcement.

(d) Students' out-of-school speech or behavior that results in a "substantial disruption of the learning environment" is also prohibited

(4) BULLYING PREVENTION

(a) The district shall make available evidence-based resources and comprehensive research-based programs to prevent bullying. Prevention activities may include, but are not limited to, social and emotional learning programming, proactive relationship and community building strategies, morning meetings, bullying reporting templates, surveys and evaluation tools, staff training, student skill training, and program implementation support.

(5) (4) PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION OF BULLYING

(a) It is the responsibility of all students, employees, and other adults who observe or become aware of acts of bullying to report these acts confidentially to a member of the school staff or administration.

(b) The school district ~~will~~ shall act to investigate all complaints of bullying and ~~will~~ shall take appropriate action against any student or adult who is found to have violated this policy.

(c) All schools ~~will~~ shall follow these Administrative Procedures 8.52 for handling reports of bullying when the act involves a student:-

(d) In cases involving employee bullying, reports shall be made by contacting the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer in the Office of Human ~~Capital~~ Resources and following the procedures as outlined in Administrative Policy 6.03 and the Employee Handbook.

(e) Individuals making such reports in good faith ~~will~~ shall be supported and protected against potential retaliation for making such a report.

(f) The school district ~~will~~ shall also take appropriate action against any student or adult who retaliates against any person who makes a good-faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation or hearing related to such bullying.

(g) The school and the district shall keep the complaint confidential for both the accused and the accuser, to the extent possible consistent with its investigative responsibilities and consistent with applicable laws.

(6) (5) SANCTIONS AND SUPPORTS

(a) Where it is determined that a student has participated in bullying behavior in violation of the policy, ~~the school district may take disciplinary action, including suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement officials for possible legal action, as appropriate.~~ the administrator shall make attempts to use disciplinary alternatives for students who engage in bullying or who retaliate against a student who reports a bullying incident.

(b) In situations where bullying continues despite use of alternative discipline, the administrator may take other disciplinary action, including suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law-enforcement officials for possible legal action, as appropriate.

~~(b)~~ (c) The school district will also take appropriate action against any student of the school district who retaliates against any person who makes a good-faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation or hearing related to such bullying.

(d) The administrator must take steps to promote safety for all parties involved including the student who engages in bullying behavior, the student who was bullied, and anyone who witnesses or reports the bullying.

~~(d)~~ (e) The district will make available evidence-based resources and comprehensive research-based programs to support students who engage in address bullying behavior and those who are bullied. Program supports may include, but are not limited to, coaching training, reporting templates, surveys and evaluation tools, staff training, and student skill training, and program implementation support.

~~(e)~~ (f) Employees found to have participated in bullying behavior or to have been aware that bullying was taking place and failed to report the behavior are considered to be in violation of Administrative Policy 8.52(5)(a) and may be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in Administrative Policy 6.07.

~~(6)~~ (7) DISCLOSURE AND PUBLIC REPORTING

(a) This policy will be annually distributed to all pupils enrolled in the school district, their parents and/or guardians, volunteers, and employees in the *Parent/Student Handbook on Rights, Responsibilities and Discipline*. It will also be distributed to charter and partnership schools and organizations in the community having cooperative agreements with Milwaukee Public Schools. The school district will provide a copy of the policy to any person who requests it.

(b) Records will be maintained by the Department of Family-Student Services on the number of bullying incidents reported ~~through the Incident Referral Form~~ following Administrative Procedure 8.52.

(c) Annually, in October (National Bullying Prevention Month), a report shall be made to the board on the district's bullying prevention efforts.

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