

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Lawrence County School District has an obligation to and is committed to providing a safe learning environment for each of its students. Student achievement is best attained in an atmosphere that is free from the fear of emotional and physical intimidations and threats. Bullying is a destructive behavior that will erode the foundational principles on which a school is built. This school will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying and will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior.

Believing that prevention is the strongest means available in eliminating bullying, this school will offer programs or educational material regarding the nature of bullying and its consequences should a child choose to engage in this type of behavior, and the procedures for reporting an incident which involves bullying. The information will emphasize that this district will not tolerate bullying, and that school employees, volunteers, and students are encouraged to report any instances of bullying without fear of consequences. Any reports will take into account the age of the offending student, the level of seriousness of the behavior, and the frequency of the bullying behavior. Appropriate measures will be taken in dealing with such students.

It will be considered a violation of this policy for any student to inflict bullying behavior upon another student (s) as defined in this policy. After completing an investigation of the reported incident, a student who has been found guilty of participating in bullying behavior will be subject to disciplinary action that is appropriate to the degree of seriousness of the bullying behavior which may include any of the following:

Detention

Saturday School

3 day suspension

Recommendation for expulsion with loss of credit

If it has been determined by the principal or building level administrator that a student has been a victim of bullying, the school shall provide the parents of the victim notification within five (5) days of the incident. The principal or designee will provide the parents of the victim details of the incident(s) and what measures may be taken. The administrator may recommend counseling for the victim if it is determined that it may be beneficial. The school shall not report to the victim or parents of the victim any disciplinary measures taken upon the student(s) found guilty of bullying to protect the rights of minor students.

The principal or building level administrator must prepare a written report of the incident which includes the following: Details of the incident(s), process by which the incident was reported and investigated, any true findings, actions taken by the administration, and any other pertinent information surrounding the incident.

“Bullying” means the intentional harassment, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, defamation, or threat or incitement of violence by a student against another student or public school employee by a written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that causes or creates a clear and present danger of

- (i) Physical harm to a public school employee or student or damage to the public school employee’s or student’s property;

(ii) Substantial interference with a student's education or with a public school employee's role in education;

(iii) A hostile educational environment for one (1) or more students or public school employees due to the severity, persistence, or pervasiveness of the act; or

(iv) Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or educational environment;

"Electronic act" means without limitation a communication or image transmitted by means of an electronic device, including without limitation a telephone, wireless phone or other wireless communications device, computer, or pager.

"Harassment" means a pattern of unwelcome verbal or physical conduct relating to another person's constitutionally or statutorily protected status that causes, or reasonably should be expected to cause, substantial interference with the other's performance in the school environment; and

"Substantial disruption" means without limitation that any one or more of the following occur as a result of the bullying:

(i) Necessary cessation of instruction or educational activities;

(ii) Inability of students or educational staff to focus on learning or function as an educational unit because of a hostile environment;

(iii) Severe or repetitive disciplinary measures are needed in the classroom or during educational activities; or

(iv) Exhibition of other behaviors by students or educational staff that substantially interfere with the learning environment.

BULLYING IS PROHIBITED:

- While in school, on school equipment or property, in school vehicles, on school buses, at designated school bus stops, at school-sponsored activities, or at school-sanctioned events; or by an electronic act that results in the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or educational environment. This shall apply to an electronic act whether or not the electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic act is directed specifically at students or

school personnel and maliciously intended for the purpose of disrupting school, and has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

- Bullying behavior will generally be established when an individual has exhibited a pattern of offensive behavior or when a single serious act is committed; (i.e. the threat of one's life, etc.) What is or isn't bullying will depend on the surrounding circumstances. Depending on these circumstances, examples of bullying include, but are not limited to: sarcastic statements or questions made with the intention of embarrassing, intimidating, or humiliating another student; mocking, taunting, or belittling another student, derogatory statements regarding a student's race, gender, ethnicity, or personal characteristics; deliberately excluding a student from an activity or group in order to embarrass or humiliate that student, deliberately injuring another student or their property, threatening to harm another student, non-verbal threats, intimidations, and harassment, stealing or hiding another student's belongings, blackmail, extortion, bribery, and "hazing" or demeaning "initiations".

- Students who believe they have been victimized by a bully or parents who believe their child has been victimized by a bully are encouraged to file a complaint by contacting a school counselor, teacher, principal or superintendent who will assist them in getting help for the child and take the appropriate steps to ensure that such behavior is stopped. To the extent possible, complaints will be treated in a confidential manner. Limited disclosure may be necessary in order to complete a thorough investigation. Students, parents, or teachers who file a complaint against a student who is guilty of being a bully, will not be subject to retaliation or reprisal in any form.

- Students or adults, who knowingly fabricate allegations and falsely accuse a student of being a bully, will be subject to disciplinary action which may include the following:

detention and parent notification

Saturday School

3-day suspension

recommended expulsion

- Individuals who withhold information, purposely provide inaccurate facts, or otherwise hinder an investigation of a student for the purpose of bullying, may be subject to disciplinary action which may include the following:

warning and conference

detention

Saturday School

3-day suspension