

Bullying Prevention and Education

The Board of Education supports a secure school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. The purpose of this policy is to promote consistency of approach and to help create a climate in which all types of bullying are regarded as unacceptable.

Bullying is the use of coercion or intimidation to obtain control over another person or to cause physical, mental or emotional harm to another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal or electronically transmitted expression or by means of a physical act or gesture. Bullying is prohibited against any student for any reason, including but not limited to any such behavior that is directed toward a student on the basis of his or her academic performance or any basis protected by federal and state law, including disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation (which includes transgender), national origin, religion, ancestry or the need for special education services, whether such characteristic(s) is actual or perceived. *[Note: At the Board's discretion, the policy may state "or against whom federal and state laws prohibit discrimination upon the bases described in C.R.S. 22-32-109(a)(II)(I)" instead of listing the specific classes protected by federal and state discrimination laws.]*

Bullying is prohibited on district property, at district or school-sanctioned activities and events, when students are being transported in any vehicle dispatched by the district or one of its schools, or off school property when such conduct has a nexus to school or any district curricular or non-curricular activity or event.

A student who engages in any act of bullying and/or a student who takes any retaliatory action against a student who reports in good faith an incident of bullying, is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the bullying behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made. Bullying behavior that constitutes unlawful discrimination or harassment shall be subject to investigation and discipline under related Board policies and procedures. Students targeted by bullying when such bullying behavior may constitute unlawful discrimination or harassment also have additional rights and protections under Board policies and procedures regarding unlawful discrimination and harassment.

The Superintendent shall develop a comprehensive program to address bullying at all school levels. The program shall be aimed toward accomplishing the following goals:

1. To send a clear message to students, staff, parents and community members that bullying and retaliation against a student who reports bullying will not be tolerated.
2. To train staff and students in taking pro-active steps to prevent bullying from occurring.

3. To implement procedures for immediate intervention, investigation, and confrontation of students engaged in bullying behavior.
4. To initiate efforts to change the behavior of students engaged in bullying behaviors through re-education on acceptable behavior, discussions, counseling, and appropriate negative consequences.
5. To foster a productive partnership with parents and community members in order to help maintain a bully-free environment.
6. To support victims of bullying by means of individual and peer counseling.
7. To help develop peer support networks, social skills and confidence for all students
8. To recognize and praise positive, supportive behaviors of students toward one another on a regular basis.

Adopted: 10/22/01

Revised: 11/26/07, 7/25/11, 7/12 legal ref/note, 11/28/16, 2/20 legal ref

LEGAL REFS.: CRS. 22-32-109.1 (2)(a)(K) (policy required as part of safe schools plan)

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity
ACE, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability
JB, Equal Educational Opportunities
JBA, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex
JBB, Sexual Harassment
JICDA, Code of Conduct
JICDD*, Violent and Aggressive Behavior
JICDE*-E-1, Bullying Report Form – Exhibit
JICDE*-E-2, Bullying Investigation Form – Exhibit
JK, Student Discipline
JDK/JKE, Suspension, Expulsion of Students (and other Disciplinary Interventions)
JLDAC, Screening/Testing of Students (And Treatment of Mental Disorders)
JS, Acceptable Use Policy (Student Use of Technology Resources)

Note 1: State law establishes a school bullying prevention and education grant program in the Department of Education. Under the program, a school or group of schools may apply for a grant to fund efforts to reduce the frequency of bullying incidents. C.R.S. 22-93-102.

Pursuant to the State Board of Education's rules for the grant program, districts that apply for the grant must adopt specific policies that include: provisions for adequate due processes and safeguards for students accused of engaging in bullying behavior; provisions for the administration of surveys of students' impressions of the severity of bullying in their schools; and the designation of a team of persons at each district school who advise the school administration concerning the severity and frequency of bullying incidents. 1 CCR 301-99, Rule 3.03.5.

[NOTE: For districts applying for a bullying prevention and education grant pursuant to the State Board rules, the following language is required. If the district does not intend to apply for this grant, the Board may adopt all, some or none of the following policy language.]

The district's comprehensive program to address bullying shall incorporate provisions for adequate due processes and safeguards for students accused of bullying behaviors, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.

The district shall administer surveys of students' impressions of the severity of bullying in their schools. Such surveys shall be conducted in accordance with applicable law and Board policy. Students' survey responses shall be confidential. Participation in the surveys shall not be required and students shall voluntarily "opt in" to participate in the survey.

Note 2: Each school district is encouraged to incorporate into policy provisions for biennial surveys of students' impressions of the severity of bullying in their schools, character building programming, and the designation of a team of persons at each school in the district to advise the administration concerning the severity and frequency of bullying incidents that occur in the school provided in C.R.S. 22-32-109.1(2)(a)(I)(K).

If the Board elects to adopt provisions regarding surveys, it must do so consistent with C.R.S. 22-1-123(5)(a), which requires districts to secure written consent prior to requiring students to complete surveys on "illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior."

For those districts that pursue funding under the grant program mentioned above, surveys and advisory teams are required to be included in the district's bullying prevention and education policy.

Sargent School District RE-33J, Monte Vista, Colorado