

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Briefly: This policy explains why a safe school environment free from bullying is necessary for pupils to achieve high academic standards and describes the due process to be observed in regard to informal and formal hearings when guidelines are violated.

Purpose

Creating and maintaining a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students is a high priority in our school district. A safe school environment free from bullying is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Bullying behavior disrupts the educational process, therefore it will not be tolerated on school property, in school vehicles, at school-sponsored events, or during travel to and from school.

Definition

Under this policy, bullying is a form of harassment in which the behavior is intended, or perceived to intend, to harm or cause distress to another. The action occurs repeatedly over time and, in addition to causing harm or distress, has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to cause disruption of the orderly operation of the school. Bullying may be physical, verbal, written, electronically transmitted or psychological. It may include, but is not limited to, actions such as verbal taunts, physical aggression, extortion of money or possessions, exclusion from peer groups within school, name-calling, and derogatory statements, including any discriminatory statements prohibited by and consistent with the District's Nondiscrimination in School and Classroom Practices Policy (#103) and Unlawful Harassment Policy (#248).

Authority

The School Board prohibits all forms of bullying behavior on school property, in school vehicles, at school-sponsored events, or during travel to and from school. Any violation of this policy shall be considered an infraction of the Student Code of Conduct, with discipline implemented accordingly. All bullying behavior that is a violation of the PA Crimes Code will be reported to the police.

Delegation of Responsibility

This policy shall be implemented through the cooperative efforts of the School Board, the building administrators, school staff, parents/guardians, students, the Mahanoy City Police Department and the school district's community.

Any person discovering bullying shall report the incident to a school teacher, counselor or administrator. School staff will provide immediate interventions consistent with this school policy. Students are also encouraged to immediately report bullying.

Implementation

The bullying prevention program shall consist of school-wide action, classroom-level activities, individual interventions and community involvement that are consistent with the training provided by the district. School wide action includes, but is not limited to, training for school staff and students and adoption of the district-wide anti-bullying rules:

1. We do not bully others.
2. We help students who are bullied.
3. We include students who are left out.
4. We tell an adult at school and an adult at home when someone is being bullied.

Classroom meetings are held once in the six-day schedule for all students in the middle school. These meetings include, but are not limited to, consistent interventions, use of rules, reinforcement of pro-social behavior and incorporation of bullying themes.

Individual interventions include, but are not limited to, follow up with both victims and bullies that may include consequences, provisions for making restitution, and counseling referrals, as appropriate. Community involvement encourages partnerships with families, community organizations and agencies to implement the District's Bullying Prevention Program.

Guidelines

1. When a student believes that he/she is a victim of bullying, the student shall report a complaint of bullying, orally or in writing, to the building principal, counselor, teacher or another school employee.
2. As it is unethical for failure to report suspected bullying, all school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the building principal or the principal's designee. Any employee who fails to report such incidents shall be subject to disciplinary procedures consistent with the current collective bargaining agreement.
3. The principal or principal's designee will investigate the incident and maintain a confidential record of the discipline – one or both the victim(s) and bully(ies).
4. The building principal or designee will contact the parent/guardian of both the bully and the victim.
5. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions range from positive behavioral interventions to and including suspension or expulsion, and may include separating the student(s) being bullied from the perpetrator(s). Any violation of the PA Crimes Code will be reported to the police department.
6. Victims and their parents shall be made aware of appropriate counseling agency services and safety plan developments described in the district's victimization procedures.

The District prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports a relevant act of bullying. The principal, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and/or other district policy, will determine the consequences and remedial actions. Any violation of the PA Crimes Code will be reported to the police department.

The principal, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and/or other school district policy, will determine the consequences and remedial actions for a pupil found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Any violation of the PA Crimes Code will be reported to the police department.

Consequence/Action Taken

Actions taken will include but are not limited to:

- _____ Conference with bully (warning) – parent notified by teacher
- _____ Conference with bully – parent notified by teacher-general detention assigned
- _____ Conference with bully and parent – ISS assigned
- _____ Conference with bully and parent at the discretion of the Administrator.

**** Mahanoy Area Middle School reserves the right to intervene each time and may not follow this plan, depending on the severity of the bullying action.*