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## **Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying of Students**

The board is committed to a safe and civil educational environment that is free from the harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any student. As defined in Chapter 28A.600 RCW (Students), “Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act including but not limited to, one shown to be motivated by any characteristic in RCW 28A.640.010 and RCW 28A.642.010, or other distinguishing characteristics, when the act:

- A. Physically harms a student or damages the student’s property;
- B. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education;
- C. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- D. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Nothing in this section requires the affected student to actually possess a characteristic that is a basis for the harassment, intimidation or bullying.

“Other distinguishing characteristics” can include but are not limited to physical appearance, clothing or other apparel, socioeconomic status and weight.

“Intentional acts” refers to the individual’s choice to engage in the act rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s).

This policy and accompanying procedure do not govern harassment, intimidation, or bullying of an employee, volunteer, parent/legal guardian, or community member.

### **Behaviors/Expressions**

This policy recognizes that ‘harassment,’ ‘intimidation,’ and ‘bullying’ are separate but related behaviors towards a student. Each must be addressed appropriately. The accompanying procedure differentiates the three behaviors, however, this differentiation should not be considered part of the legal definition of these behaviors.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying can take many forms including, but not limited to, slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendoes, demeaning comments, drawings, cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats or other written, oral, physical or electronically transmitted messages or images directed toward a student.

This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the educational environment. Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may still be prohibited by other district policies or building, classroom or program rules.

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### **Training**

This policy is a component of the district's responsibility to create and maintain a safe, civil, respectful and inclusive learning community for students and will be implemented in conjunction with comprehensive training of staff and volunteers. Specific training requirements are included in the accompanying procedure.

### **Prevention**

The district will provide students with strategies aimed at preventing harassment, intimidation, and bullying toward students. In its efforts to train students, the district will seek partnerships with families, law enforcement, and other community agencies.

### **Interventions**

Interventions are designed to remediate the impact on the targeted student(s) and others impacted by the violation, to change the behavior of the aggressor, and to restore a positive school climate. The district will consider the frequency of incidents, developmental age of the student, and severity of the conduct in determining intervention strategies. Interventions will range from counseling, correcting behavior and discipline, to law enforcement referrals.

### **Students with Individual Education Plans or Section 504 Plans**

If allegations are proven that a student with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan has been the aggressor or target of harassment, intimidation or bullying, the school will convene the student's IEP or Section 504 team to determine whether the incident had an impact on the student's ability to receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). The meeting should occur regardless of whether the harassment, intimidation, or bullying incident was based on the student's disability. During the meeting, the team will evaluate issues such as the student's academic performance, behavioral issues, attendance, and participation in extracurricular activities. If a determination is made that the student is not receiving a FAPE as a result of the harassment, intimidation, or bullying incident, the district will provide additional services and supports as deemed necessary, such as counseling, monitoring and/or reevaluation or revision of the student's IEP or Section 504 plan, to ensure the student receives a FAPE.

### **Retaliation/False Allegations**

Retaliation is prohibited and will result in appropriate discipline. It is a violation of this policy to threaten or harm a student for reporting harassment, intimidation, or bullying, being identified as a targeted student, or participating in an investigation.

It is also a violation of district policy to knowingly report false allegations of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Students or employees who knowingly report or corroborate false allegations will be subject to appropriate discipline. However, students, or employees will not be disciplined for making a report in good faith.

### **Compliance Officer**

The superintendent will appoint a compliance officer as the primary district contact to receive copies of all formal and informal complaints and oversee policy implementation. The name and contact information for the compliance officer will be communicated throughout the district. The

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district compliance officer will participate in at least one mandatory training opportunity offered by OSPI.

The superintendent is authorized to direct the implementation of procedures addressing the elements of this policy.

- Cross References:
- 2161 - Special Education and Related Services for Eligible Students
  - 3205 - Sexual Harassment of Students Prohibited
  - 3210 - Nondiscrimination
  - 3211 - Gender-Inclusive Schools
  - 3241 - Student Discipline
- Legal References:
- WAC 392-190-059 Harassment, intimidation and bullying prevention policy and procedure – School districts.
  - RCW 28A.300.285 Harassment, intimidation, and bullying prevention policies and procedures — Model policy and procedure — Training materials — Posting on web site — Rules — Advisory committee
- Management Resources:
- 2023 – July Issue
  - 2019 - August Policy Alert
  - 2019 - July Issue
  - Office for Civil Rights Dear Colleague Letter: Responding to Bullying of Students with Disabilities (OCR 10/21/2014)
  - 2014 - December Issue
  - 2010 - December Issue
  - 2008 - April Issue
  - 2002 - April Issue

Classification: **Essential**

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Revised: May 26, 2011

Revised: December 11, 2014

Revised: September 24, 2015

Revised: October 12, 2023