

PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Students**Bullying****I. Purpose**

In accordance with state law, it is the policy of the Plainfield Board of Education that any form of bullying behavior, whether in the classroom, on school property or at school-sponsored events, **or via the internet** is expressly forbidden. Bullying activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school district and are prohibited at all times. Any individual who engages in bullying activity on school property or at a school sponsored activity may be subject to discipline. **Prevention and intervention strategies will be made clear to students, parents, faculty, staff, and administration to insure a safe and bully-free school climate for students in the Plainfield School District.**

II. Definitions

A. "Bullying" means any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, **harass**, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, **on a school bus**, or at a school-sponsored activity which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year.

III. General Statement of Policy

A. No student, volunteer, contractor or employee of the school district shall encourage, aid, or consent to bullying.

B. No student, volunteer, contractor, or employee of the school district shall permit, condone, or tolerate bullying.

C. Apparent permission or consent by a person being bullied does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

D. Bullying activities are seriously disruptive of the educational process in that they implicate student physical and emotional welfares.

E. Activities considered bullying include but are not limited to: personal or physical contact, written contact on paper or via electron means (i.e. email, Facebook, MySpace, Formspring, text messaging, etc) or third party related messages.

F. The school district administration will investigate all complaints **or written reports** of bullying and will discipline or take other appropriate action against any person who is found to have violated this policy.

G. A Prevention/Intervention plan for the district will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

H. In-service training for new or non-tenured teachers will be required on bullying prevention and intervention strategies.

IV. Reporting Procedures

A. Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying may report the matter to any teacher or member of the school district administration. Any school employee, contractor or volunteer with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying, whether by witnessing such conduct or by receiving student reports of bullying, shall report the alleged acts, **in writing**, immediately in writing to an appropriate school district official designated by this policy. Students may anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Parents or guardians of students may also file written reports of suspected bullying.

B. The building administration is responsible for receiving and investigating reports of bullying at the building level. However, any person may report bullying directly to the Superintendent or his/her designee.

C. The building administration will notify the Superintendent and the Director of Pupil Services of any reported incidents of bullying.

D. Teachers, administrators, other employees of the school district, volunteers and contractors shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances or events which might include bullying. Any such individual who receives a report of, observes, or who otherwise acquires knowledge or belief of, conduct which may constitute bullying must inform the building administration immediately.

E. Amendments to FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) clearly state that schools need not disclose the name of a student for related information to be “personally-identifiable” without the written consent of the parent/guardian; therefore information regarding disciplinary action or consequences can and will not be discussed.

F. Students shall be notified annually of the process by which they may make such reports of bullying. Not later than February 1, 2009, the school district shall submit this policy as amended to the Department of Education. Not later than July 1, 2009, the school district shall ensure that the policy is included in the school district’s publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

V. School District Action

A. Upon receipt of a written complaint or report of bullying school officials shall undertake or authorize an investigation and shall review any anonymous report.

- B. If upon investigation, it is determined that bullying has occurred, the superintendent or his/her designee will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, detention, suspension, or expulsion. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations.
- C. The parents or guardians of students who engaged in acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom acts were directed shall be notified by the superintendent or his/her designee of the results of the investigation, and shall invite them to attend at least one meeting. The notification shall include a description of the response of school staff to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying.
- D. A list of the verified number of acts of bullying shall be maintained and shall be available for public inspection. The school district shall report such number to the Department of Education, annually and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.
- E. The Superintendent shall be responsible for developing and implementing a prevention and intervention strategy for school staff to deal with bullying. Such a “prevention and intervention strategy” may include, but is not limited to, (1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education, (2) a school survey to determine the prevalence of bullying, (3) establishment of a bullying prevention coordinating committee with broad representation to review the survey results and implement the strategy, (4) school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (5) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur, (6) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, (7) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school staff, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school staff, (8) school-wide training related to safe school climate, including appropriate inservices for certified staff regarding the prevention of bullying, and (9) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.

Legal Reference: P.A. 02-119

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