

Strasburg 31J School District

Bullying Prevention and Education

The Board of Education, Administrators, Teachers, and Staff are committed to providing students with a school climate that is secure and conducive to teaching and learning. To that end, creating an environment that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior is a priority.

Bullying is the use of coercion or intimidation to obtain control over another person or to cause physical, mental, or emotional harm to any person.

Successful bullying prevention doesn't rely on punishment, it centers on social emotional intelligence and mental health. The District plan focuses on developing social emotional intelligence and providing the mental health support necessary to empower and increase self-advocacy skills.

Zero Tolerance & Parent Notification

Any form of bullying or retaliation is not and will not be tolerated. Bullying behavior, in most situations, can constitute a criminal act. Students and parents will be informed of their right to contact law enforcement when they feel they or their child have been a victim of bullying. District administration will notify law enforcement when behavior may be considered a criminal violation.

- Bullying behavior will not be ignored nor downplayed. Staff will conduct appropriate investigation for all reported accusations of or suspected bullying behavior.
- Parents/guardians will be notified when their child is suspected or accused of engaging in bullying behavior.
- Parents/guardians of students who have reported bullying will be contacted by administration.

The district bullying plan will be available in the student handbooks, during the enrollment process, and on the District website.

District Policy JICDE

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.

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 proactive 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.

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.

The district school(s) included in the district's bullying prevention and education grant shall appoint a team of persons to advise school administration concerning the severity and frequency of bullying incidents. The school team(s) may include, but need not be limited to, counselors, teachers, school administrators, parents, students, law enforcement officials, social workers, prosecutors, health professionals and mental health professionals.

Student and Staff Training

Education and support for students to identify, report, and prevent bullying is tailored to the developmental needs of students. The District recognizes that discipline/punishment doesn't stop or prevent bullying behavior. Students need the skills to identify when they are engaging in this behavior, behaviors to replace the behavior and a self-awareness of the consequences of the behavior.

Victims often find themselves feeling isolated and defenseless to the bullying behavior. Victims benefit from learning skills to identify bullying, address the behavior appropriately, and skills to recover from the behavior.

Counselors within the schools provide support to students through individual and group discussions. Students may be provided an opportunity for private, therapeutic sessions if appropriate.

Elementary School – Elementary students and staff utilize *Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms*. Students and staff utilize everyday events to cultivate emotional intelligence through a self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning and discipline. The cornerstone of the Conscious discipline program is creating a school family, where all members feel a sense of safety, belonging and ownership. This is established by the staff modeling and teaching the 7 key skills - Composure, Encouragement, Assertiveness, Choices, Empathy, Positive Intent and Consequences. Within the skills the students learn how to solve problems and come to a resolution on their own with little guidance from adults.

Middle School - Middle school students and staff utilize the Second Step curriculum that teaches students to gain confidence, set goals, make good decisions, collaborate with others, and navigate the world effectively. Skills learned through the modules empower students to understand that the choices they make have an impact on others as well as themselves. Words and actions have consequences, and advocating for yourself is important.

This curriculum gives students alternative language and options when they are confronted with a bullying situation and provides self-awareness to students who engage in bullying behavior.

Teachers deliver a concept within the curriculum through a multimodel approach using vocabulary, pictures, and videos. Students practice the concepts through group discussion, individual writing and partner work. Re-teaching is conducted as the teacher deems necessary.

Bullying is specifically addressed using relatable scenarios and are differentiated for age/grade appropriateness.

High School – High school students and staff utilize the TRAILS Program (Transforming Research into action to improve the Lives of students. TRAILS improves your access to effective mental health services by training school professionals in evidence-based practices that are appropriate for the school setting, such as cognitive behavioral therapy and mindfulness. These skills help students navigate common academic and social pressures, and reduce symptoms of more serious mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD.

Victims of bullying and those who bully often experience the same mental health issues, but display them differently. People who engage in bullying behavior lack appropriate empathy and problem solving skills and resort to inappropriate behavior including bullying. Victims often lack the ability to disengage in the control of the bully and begin to experience increased mental health issues.

Social and emotional learning promotes resiliency and builds self-regulation skills.

TRAILS provides targeted interventions for students experiencing difficulties and allows the staff to quickly and accurately identify students who are at risk of harm including suicide.

Safeguards for Student Accused of Bullying Behavior

The District recognizes that from time to time students are wrongly accused of bullying. Bullying can be difficult to prove and disprove. Staff will ensure that thorough investigations are conducted, including interviews with staff, students, and others who might have witnessed the behavior. Cameras will be used to gather evidence, and law enforcement will be contacted.

Students who falsely accuse another student or staff member will be subject to the district code of conduct.

Consequences of Bullying Behavior

The District believes punishment and discipline are not effective in preventing bullying. Education, problem solving skills, and empathy development are the most effective way to prevent bullying. The District is also aware that well developed programs will not completely eliminate all bullying within the schools and community. Students who engage in bullying behavior will be subject to the District code of conduct as defined in policy JICDA and JICDD.

Code of Conduct

In accordance with applicable law and Board policy concerning student suspensions, expulsions and other disciplinary interventions, the principal or designee may suspend or recommend expulsion of a

student who engages in one or more of the following activities while in school buildings, on district property, when being transported in vehicles dispatched by the district or one of its schools, during a school-sponsored or district-sponsored activity or event and off district property when the conduct has a nexus to school or any district curricular or non-curricular event.

1. Causing or attempting to cause damage to district property or stealing or attempting to steal district property.
2. Causing or attempting to cause damage to private property or stealing or attempting to steal private property.
3. Willful destruction or defacing of district property.
4. Commission of any act which if committed by an adult would be robbery or assault as defined by state law.
5. Committing extortion, coercion or blackmail, i.e., obtaining money or other objects of value from an unwilling person or forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.
6. Engaging in verbal abuse, i.e., name calling, ethnic or racial slurs, either orally or in writing or derogatory statements addressed publicly to an individual or a group that precipitate disruption of the district or school program or incite violence.
7. Engaging in "hazing" activities, i.e., forcing prolonged physical activity, forcing excessive consumption of any substance, forcing prolonged deprivation of sleep, food, or drink, or any other behavior which recklessly endangers the health or safety of an individual for purposes of initiation into any student group.

8. Violation of the Board's policy on bullying prevention and education.
9. Violation of criminal law which has an effect on the district or on the general safety or welfare of students or staff.
10. Violation of any Board policy or regulations, or established school rules.
11. Violation of the Board's policy on weapons in the schools. Expulsion shall be mandatory for bringing or possessing a firearm, in accordance with federal law.
12. Violation of the Board's policy on student conduct involving drugs and alcohol.
13. Violation of the Board's violent and aggressive behavior policy.
14. Violation of the Board's tobacco-free schools policy.
15. Violation of the Board's policies prohibiting sexual or other harassment.
16. Violation of the Board's policy on nondiscrimination.
17. Violation of the Board's dress code policy.
18. Violation of the Board's policy on gangs and gang-like activity.
19. Throwing objects, unless part of a supervised school activity, that can or do cause bodily injury or damage to property.
20. Directing profanity, vulgar language or obscene gestures toward other students, school personnel or others.
21. Lying or giving false information, either verbally or in writing, to a district employee.
22. Engaging in scholastic dishonesty, which includes but is not limited to cheating on a test, plagiarism or unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work.
23. Making a false accusation of criminal activity against a district employee to law enforcement or to the district.

24. Behavior on or off school property that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or school personnel, including behavior that creates a threat of physical harm to the student exhibiting the behavior or to one or more other students.

25. Repeated interference with the district's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students.

26. Continued willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of proper authority including deliberate refusal to obey a member of the district staff.

Violent and Aggressive Behavior Policy JICDD

The Board recognizes there are certain behaviors that, if tolerated, would compromise the learning environment to which the students and staff of the district are entitled. These behaviors, categorized as violent or aggressive, will not be tolerated.

Students exhibiting violent or aggressive behavior or warning signs of future violent or aggressive behavior shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action including suspension and/or expulsion in accordance with Board policy concerning student suspensions, expulsions and other disciplinary interventions. As appropriate and in accordance with applicable law and Board policy, students may also be referred to law enforcement authorities. At the district's discretion and when appropriate, the student may receive appropriate intervention designed to address the problem behavior. The district may also conduct a threat assessment of the student.

Students shall immediately report questionable behavior or potentially violent situations to an administrator, counselor or teacher.

A staff member who witnesses or receives a report of a student's act of violence and aggression shall notify the building principal or designee as soon as possible.

An act of violence and aggression is any expression, direct or indirect, verbal or behavioral, of intent to inflict harm, injury or damage to persons or property. A threat of violence and aggression carries with it implied notions of risk of violence and a probability of harm or injury.

An act of violence and aggression includes but is not limited to the following behaviors:

1. Possession, threat with or use of a dangerous weapon — as described in the Board's weapons policy.
2. Physical assault — the act of striking or touching a person or that person's property with a part of the body or with any object with the intent of causing hurt or harm.

3. Verbal abuse — includes, but is not limited to, swearing, screaming, obscene gestures or threats directed, either orally (including by telephone) or in writing (including by text, social media or other electronic means), at an individual, his or her family or a group.
4. Intimidation — an act intended to frighten or coerce someone into submission or obedience.
5. Extortion — the use of verbal or physical coercion in order to obtain financial or material gain from others.
6. Bullying — as described in the Board's policy on bullying prevention and education.
7. Gang activity — as described in the Board's secret societies/gang activity policy.
8. Sexual harassment or other forms of harassment — as described in the Board's sexual harassment policy and nondiscrimination policy.
9. Stalking — the persistent following, contacting, watching or any other such threatening actions that compromise the peace of mind or the personal safety of an individual.
10. Defiance — a serious act or instance of defying or opposing legitimate authority.
11. Discriminatory slurs — insulting, disparaging or derogatory comments made directly or by innuendo regarding a person's race, color, ancestry, creed, sex, sexual orientation (which includes transgender), religion, national origin, disability or need for special education services.
12. Vandalism — damaging or defacing property owned by or in the rightful possession of another.
13. Terrorism — a threat to commit violence communicated with the intent to terrorize or with reckless disregard for the risk of creating such terror or to cause serious public inconvenience, such as the evacuation of a building.

Resources:

https://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss/model_bullying_prevention_policy