

LEBANON SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY: 218.5
SECTION: PUPILS
TITLE: BULLYING/CYBERBULLING
ADOPTED: May 15, 2006
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218.5 BULLYING/CYBERBULLING

Purpose

The Lebanon School Board makes it a high priority to create and maintain a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students in all district schools. A safe school environment free from bullying is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying in any form by district students.

Definitions

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 occur within and outside the school setting. 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, or harassment and intimidation consistent with the district's policy on Student Discipline, Policy #218.

Bullying is defined as an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or series of acts:

1. Directed at another student or students;
2. Which occurs in a school setting and/or outside the school setting;
3. That is severe, persistent or pervasive; and

4. That has the effect of doing any of the following:
- i. Substantially interferes with a student's education;
 - ii. Creates a threatening environment; or
 - iii. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.¹

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: Bullying of the School District community through the use of any electronic communication device or platform by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or web site postings (including blogs), social media or online games.

All forms of bullying and cyberbullying are unacceptable and strictly prohibited by the Board. Offenders of this policy shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school (regardless of location) or conduct that is engaged in through the use of any school owned communication device, network, equipment, or platform.²

Bullying v. Conflict

Bullying is not to be confused with conflict. Bullying is a persistent pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behavior that often involves an imbalance of power, and/or the intention to harm or humiliate someone. Conflict is a disagreement or difference in opinion between peers who typically have equal power in their relationships.

Conflict is an inevitable part of group dynamics; bullying is not. Nevertheless, when conflict becomes such that it is interfering with a student's education, the Guidelines and Consequences of bullying, below,

¹ 24 P.S. 1303.1-A(d)-(e).

² 24 P.S. 1303.1-A(e).

may be implemented. Any student who is involved in or a witness of conflict is encouraged to report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

Authority

The School Board prohibits all forms of bullying by district students as defined in this policy and in accordance with Pennsylvania statutes and regulations.³

The Board encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee. Further, the Board encourages bystanders to report incidents of bullying to the building principal or designee to ensure a safe learning environment for all.

No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying. Any reprisals or retaliation associated with a report of bullying or cyberbullying will be defined as bullying.

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

Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of other students to ensure an atmosphere free from all forms of bullying.

Students shall be encouraged to report bullying or cyberbullying complaints to school district employees and adults at home.

This policy is a component of the district's comprehensive approach to the maintenance of a safe and orderly learning environment that is free of bullying and harassment. It is to be implemented in conjunction with the appropriate training of school district personnel and in partnership with the school community. All school district personnel are expected to support the safety and dignity of all members of the school community.

Each staff member shall be responsible to maintain an educational environment free of bullying.

³ 24 P.S. 1303.1-A

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students.⁴

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.⁵

District administration shall annually provide the following information with the safe School Report:

1. Board's Bullying Policy.
2. Report of bullying incidents.
3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.⁶

Implementation/Education

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 somebody is being bullied.

Classroom level activity includes, but is not limited to, consistent interventions, use of rules, reinforcement of pro-social behavior and incorporation of bullying themes.

The district may develop and implement additional bullying prevention and intervention programs. Such programs shall provide district staff and

⁴ 24 P.S. 1303.1-A.

⁵ 24 P.S. 1303.1-A.

⁶ 24 P.S. 1303.1-A.

students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Guidelines

The Code of Student conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students in either print or virtual form.⁷

The Board directs that all complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the school district's legal and investigative responsibilities.

A. Complaint Procedure

1. A student shall report a complaint of bullying, orally or in writing, to a school district employee.
2. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the building principal or the principal's designee. An employee shall be subject to disciplinary procedures consistent with the current collective bargaining agreement, as applicable, and district policy for failure to report.
3. The principal or principal's designee will investigate the incident and maintain a confidential record in the discipline file of both the victim(s) and bully(ies).
4. After the investigation, the building principal or principal's designee shall be notified in writing of the complaint and the results of the investigation and shall take corrective action to ensure that the conduct ceases.
5. The building principal or designee will contact and inform the parents/guardians of both the bully(ies) and victim(s) regarding the outcome of the investigation.

Victims and their parents/guardians shall be made aware of appropriate counseling, agency services, and safety plan developments described in the district's victimization procedures.

⁷ 24 P.S. 1303.1-A; 22 Pa. Code. 12.3.

Consequences

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include, but is not limited to:

1. Counseling;
2. Parental conference;
3. Loss of school privileges;
4. Exclusion from school sponsored activities;
5. Detention;
6. Suspension;
7. Expulsion; and/or
8. Referral to law enforcement officials.

Any violation of the PA Crimes Code will be reported to the police department.

False Reporting

The principal or designee, 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.