

Policy Statement: Western School District will not tolerate any forms of bullying. Staff shall take appropriate action once made aware of an allegation that any form of school-related bullying behaviour has occurred.

1. Application

This policy applies to all students, employees, and volunteers under the Western School District while on school board property or while participating in a school-sponsored event, and includes all vehicles used to transport students to/from school a school-sponsored event. The policy also applies to school-related incidents that occur after school hours or away from school property.

2. Rationale

The Western School District recognizes that bullying and intimidation have a negative effect on students and on a school's climate. Violence in the form of bullying can create an atmosphere in schools that reduces everyone's sense of security and negatively influences students' opportunity to succeed. Every student has the right to an education within the context of an accepting, safe and secure environment.

3. Definitions

Bullying: A conscious, willful, and deliberately hostile act, intended to harm. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, physical intimidation or assault; extortion; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

4. Procedures

4.1 School Action Once Aware of Bullying

- a) Staff members who observe or become aware of an act of bullying shall take immediate and appropriate steps to intervene. If a staff member believes that the intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the bullying persists, the incident(s) shall be reported to the school principal for further investigation.
- b) The Western School District expects students and parents who become aware of an act of bullying to report it to the school principal for further investigation. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting bullying may be subject to the consequences listed in section 4.4.

- c) Upon receipt of a report of bullying, the school administration will undertake an investigation and act as noted:
 - i. The school administration may take immediate steps, at his/her discretion, to protect individuals pending the completion of the investigation.
 - ii. Upon completion of the investigation, the school administration will take appropriate action as outlined in 4.4.
 - iii. The school administration shall contact the parents of all students involved.

4.2 Determining Police Involvement

- a) Not every act of bullying should be reported to the police or school district officials. Research recommends four key areas be considered when assessing the level of intervention necessary and the decision for further referral. These are:
 - i. Severity of the incident
 - ii. Duration - how long has this been going on?
 - iii. Pervasiveness - home, school, community, etc.
 - iv. Frequency - how often is this happening?
- b) Referral to the police for criminal investigation **only applies to students 12 years of age or older**. Therefore, any investigation(s) of bullying activity involving these students that may be criminal in nature, based on the above assessment, shall be done in a manner that respects pending criminal investigation.
- c) Bullying activity that warrants a police investigation shall be reported to the Director (or designate).

4.3 Bullying Acts Involving Children Twelve and Older

- a) When investigating reports of bullying involving children twelve years of age and older that do not warrant a police referral, the protocol outlined in 4.1(c) shall apply.

- b) If the school investigation results in a referral to the police, the school shall cease their investigation and leave any further investigation to the police.

4.4 **Consequences**

School discipline codes/policies shall make reference to the fact that there will be a response to, and a consequence for, involvement in the act of bullying others using the rationale in section 2. Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- a) Counseling and/or a behavioral contract
- b) A parent conference
- c) Detention, suspension, and/or expulsion
- d) Implementation of a safety plan for student protection including:
 - i. Separation and supervision of the students involved
 - ii. Providing staff support for students as necessary
 - iii. Reporting incidents to law enforcement, if appropriate; and developing a supervision plan with the parents

Approved: March 7, 2012	Review Date: March 2015	Updated:
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