

Alexandria Community School Corporation

Bylaws & Policies

5517.01 - BULLYING

The School Board is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. Bullying behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Bullying prohibited by this policy includes conduct at all academic, extra-curricular, and school-sponsored activities; in school facilities, on school transportation, or any off campus conduct that has a continuing effect on campus or in a school program or activity.

Definition

Bullying as defined in State law means overt, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), physical acts committed, or any other behaviors committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:

- A. places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student's person or property;
- B. has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
- C. has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance; or
- D. has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school.

However, Indiana law exempts the following from the definition of "bullying":

- A. Participating in a religious event.
- B. Acting in an emergency involving the protection of a person or property from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or substantial danger.
- C. Participating in an activity consisting of the exercise of a student's rights protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I, Section 31 of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, or both.
- D. Participating in an activity conducted by a nonprofit or governmental entity that provides recreation, education, training, or other care under the supervision of one or more adults.

- E. Participating in an activity undertaken at the prior written direction of the student's parent.
- F. Engaging in interstate or international travel from a location outside Indiana to another location outside Indiana.

Education

The Corporation will provide training and/or instruction on anti-bullying prevention and policy to all students in grades 1 through 12, as well as staff, in accordance with Indiana law.

Reporting

Any student who believes s/he has been or is currently the victim of bullying should immediately report the situation to the building principal, assistant principal, or the Superintendent. The student also may report concerns to a teacher or counselor who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator. This report may be made anonymously. Complaints against the building principal should be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent should be filed with the Board President. A parent may file a complaint on behalf of a student in the same manner.

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that they believe to be bullying behavior directed toward a student. Reports may be made to those identified above. Bullying reports to the Department of Child Services and/or law enforcement must be made as required by law, such as when a staff member believes that a student is the victim of abuse or neglect. Staff members who fail to report bullying or who fail to conduct an investigation when assigned that duty are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Investigation

All complaints about bullying behavior that may violate this policy shall be investigated in an expedited manner. The investigation will be initiated within one (1) school day of the report to the designated school administrator and will ordinarily be completed within ten (10) school days. Information relating to the investigation will be gathered using means including, but not limited to: witness interviews, request for written witness statements, record identification and review, and an assessment of whether bullying occurred.

If, during an investigation of reported acts of bullying, the investigator believes that the reported misconduct may have created a hostile learning environment and may have constituted unlawful harassment, the investigator will report the act of bullying and/or harassment to one (1) of the Compliance Officers so that it may be investigated in accordance with the procedures set forth in Policy [5517](#) - Anti-Harassment.

If the investigator finds an instance of bullying behavior has occurred, prompt and appropriate action or responses shall be taken to address the bullying behavior wherever it occurs including, as appropriate, disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion for students or discharge for employees. In addition to discipline, remedial action may include support services for the targeted student and bullying education for the bully, among other actions. Bullying acts may be reported to law enforcement if deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or designee.

Parental Involvement

The parents of the targeted student and the reported bully shall be notified of the alleged bullying incident at the beginning of the investigation, the findings of the investigation at the conclusion of the investigation, and, as appropriate, any remedial action that has been or will be taken to the extent disclosure is permitted by law. Parent notifications will occur in an expedited manner, with initial notification occurring within two (2) school days after the designated school administrator receives the report of suspected bullying.

Retaliation and False Reporting

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of bullying is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as bullying. Making intentionally false reports about bullying for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and making intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

To the extent appropriate and/or legally permitted, confidentiality will be maintained during the investigation process. However, a proper investigation will, in some circumstances, require the disclosure of names and allegations.

Reporting to IDOE

Each school within the Corporation will record and report to the Superintendent or his or her designee the frequency of bullying incidents in the following categories: verbal bullying, physical bullying, social/relational bullying, and electronic/written communication bullying (or a combination or two or more of the above categories). The Corporation Lead Administrator or his or her designee shall report the number of bullying incidents by category for each school and the entire corporation for each school term to the Indiana Department of Education by July 1.

The Superintendent is directed to develop administrative guidelines to implement this policy. Guidelines shall include reporting and investigative procedures, as needed. The complaint procedure established by the Superintendent shall be followed.

I.C. 5-2-10.1-12, 20-20-8-8, 20-26-5-34.2, 20-30-5-5.5, 20-33-8-0.2, 20-33-8-13.5, 20-34-6-1

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