

# ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: PUPILS  
 TITLE: BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING  
 ADOPTED: 6/21/07  
 REVISED: 11/18/10, 08/25/14

## 249. BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

### Section 1. Purpose

The Allentown School District recognizes that creating and maintaining a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students is a high priority in all school district settings. Bullying and cyberbullying behavior may have the effect of interfering with learning and may present an obstacle to the academic, vocational, and social/emotional development of students. Bullying and cyberbullying may also escalate into unlawful harassment and other serious violent offenses. Therefore such behavior will not be tolerated in any school setting. 24 P.S. §13-1303.1-A.

Bullying and Cyberbullying are prohibited in all district school settings.

### Section 2. Definitions

Bullying - For the purposes of this policy, bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts (a) directed at a student or students (b) which occurs in a school setting, (c) that is severe, persistent or pervasive, and (d) that has the effect of doing any of the following:

- (1) Substantially interfering with a student's education;
- (2) Creating a threatening environment; or
- (3) Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school. 24 P.S. § 13-1303.1-A(e)

Bullying may include a wide variety of behaviors, and forms and examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

1. Physical – Hitting, kicking, spitting, pinching, pushing, shoving, pulling, taking or damaging personal belongings, and invasion of another's personal space.
2. Verbal/Written – Taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, making threats, demeaning or belittling innuendo or remarks.
3. Social/Psychological/Relational – Spreading rumors, shunning, engaging in behaviors with the goal of social exclusion, extortion of money or possessions, ridiculing or intimidating, placing another in reasonable fear of personal harm or property loss/damage and manipulating, undermining or destroying social relationships.

Cyberbullying – Using technology to promote or engage in physical, verbal, written or social/psychological/relational bullying. This may occur via use of the internet by email, instant messaging, personal profile websites, social networking, text messaging, or it may occur via use of other electronic equipment or means.

School Setting – school setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, with the use of school-issued equipment, or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school district. 24 P.S. §13-1303.1-A(e)

## 249. BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

### Section 3. Authority

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying and cyberbullying in any district school setting. Any student violation of this policy shall be considered an infraction of the Code of Conduct, with discipline implemented accordingly, and on a case-by-case basis. All bullying and cyberbullying behavior that is a violation of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code will be reported to the police. This policy shall be implemented through the cooperative efforts of the Superintendent, the Superintendent's Team, the building administrators, the school employees, the parents/guardians, the students, the school volunteers, the Allentown Police Department, and the school district's community. 24 P.S. §13-1303-A; Policy #218, Student Discipline

Any person discovering bullying shall report the allegation and incident to an Allentown School District teacher, counselor, or administrator who shall provide immediate interventions consistent with this policy and the Code of Conduct.

### Section 4. Delegation of Responsibility

Each student shall be responsible for respecting the rights of others, to maintain an atmosphere free from bullying. The Superintendent or designee(s) must (a) ensure that this policy is reviewed within ninety (90) days of adoption with students and at least annually thereafter and (b) ensure, in cooperation with other appropriate school district administrators, that this policy is reviewed every three (3) years and that necessary changes are recommended to the Board of School Directors. 24 P.S. §13-1303.1-A(e). The school district administrators must annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:

- a. The Board of School Directors' policy prohibiting bullying and cyberbullying;
- b. A report of the school district's bullying and cyberbullying incidents;
- c. Information on the development and implementation of the bullying and cyberbullying prevention, intervention, and education programs. 24 P.S. §13-1303-A and 24 P.S. §1303.1-A

### Section 5. Guidelines

#### Notices

The Code of Conduct, which shall contain a summary this policy, must be disseminated annually to students. 24 P.S. §13-1303.1-A, 22 Pa. Code §12.3. This policy must be accessible in every classroom. The policy must be posted in a prominent location within each school building where notices are usually posted, and posted on the school district's web site. 24 P.S. §1303.1-A

#### Bullying Prevention, Intervention, and Education Programs

The school district must educate students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response. 47 U.S.C. §254(h)(5)(B)(iii), Policy #815, Acceptable Use of Communications and Information (CIS) Systems. Bullying prevention, intervention, and education programs must also be provided that provide information about school-wide actions, classroom-level activities, individual interventions, and parent and community involvement. 24 P.S. §1303.1-A

- a. *School-wide actions* include, but are not limited to, training on how to recognize bullying/cyberbullying for school staff and students and adoption of the Code of Conduct.
- b. *Classroom level activities* include, but are not limited to, class meetings and discussions about bullying or harassment and its hurtful effects, consistent interventions, use of rules,

## 249. BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

social emotional learning activities, reinforcement of pro-social behavior and incorporation of anti-bullying themes.

- c. *Individual interventions* include, but are not limited to, follow up with both victims and bullies individually that may include consequences, provisions for making restitution, and counseling referrals, as appropriate.
- d. *Community involvement* encourages partnerships with families, community organizations and agencies to implement the school district's bullying recognition, prevention, intervention, and education programs.

### Complaint Procedure

When a student believes that s/he is a victim of bullying, the student shall promptly report a complaint of bullying, orally or in writing, to the building principal, counselor, teacher or another school employee. If the building principal is the subject of a bullying complaint, the student shall promptly report the complaint directly to the Superintendent, or Superintendent's designee. 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 school district policy for failure to report. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee shall investigate complaints of bullying and cyberbullying promptly, and such corrective action reasonably necessary to stop, remedy and prevent future occurrences and retaliation must be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties must be maintained, consistent with the school district's legal and investigative obligations. The incident must be maintained as a confidential record in the discipline file of both the victim and the bully. 20 U.S.C. §1232g. The building principal/principal's designee or Superintendent/Superintendent's designee will contact the parent/guardian of both the bully and victim.

### Consequences for Violation

A founded charge against a School District employee shall subject such employee to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Policies #317, Disciplinary Procedures (Administrative), #417, Disciplinary Procedure (Professional), #517, Disciplinary Procedure (Classified). A founded charge against a school district student shall subject such student to disciplinary action. Employees, students and families must be aware that even behavior that is less severe or pervasive than what is defined as bullying and cyberbullying under this policy may also subject the student or employee to consequences including disciplinary action, in order to promote a school setting that is safe and effective for learning. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions include positive behavioral interventions as well as disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion, and may also include counseling, parental conferences, separation of the student(s) being bullied from the perpetrator(s), usage restrictions, loss of privileges, reassignment and legal proceedings. Policy #218, Gangs and Policy #233, Suspension and Expulsion. Any violation of this policy shall be considered an infraction of the Code of Conduct and any other applicable school district policy, including Policy # 247.1, Unlawful Harassment, and Policy # 248, Sexual Harassment, with discipline implemented accordingly on a case-by-case basis. Any violation of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code will be reported to the police department. Victims and their parents/guardians shall be made aware of appropriate counseling, agency services and safety plan developments described in the School District's victimization procedures. 24 P.S. §13-1303-A

### Retaliation

The school district prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who in good faith reports an act of bullying or cyberbullying. The principal/principal's designee, in accordance with the Code of Conduct

## 249. BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

and/or other school district policy, will determine the consequences and remedial actions for students, and the Superintendent/Superintendent's designee for employees. Any violation of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code will be reported to the police department. 24 P.S. §13-1303-A

### False Reports

The principal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct and/or other school district policy, will determine the consequences and remedial actions for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The Superintendent or Superintendent's Designee will determine consequences and remedial actions for an employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Any violation of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code will be reported to the police department. 24 P.S. §13-1303-A, Policy #218, Student Discipline.