

Bullying/Safe School Climate Plan**5131.911****Hazing/Bullying/Teen Dating Violence**

The Regional School District No. 1 Board of Education (Board) promotes a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

The Board believes that a school environment in which students feel safe, supported, engaged, and helpfully challenged is optimal for learning and healthy development. The Board seeks an environment in which students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically safe; an environment that is free of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Definitions

“Teen dating violence” means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

“Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the Region One School District that:

- a) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- b) places such student in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property,
- c) creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- d) infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- e) substantially disrupts the education process of the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

“Cyberbullying” means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices, or any electronic communications.

“Mobile electronic device” means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer,

Bullying/Safe School Climate Plan**5131.911**

equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

“Electronic communication” means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electro-magnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system.

“Hostile environment” means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to alter the conditions of the school climate.

“Outside of the school setting” means at a location, activity or program that is not school-related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education.

“School employee” means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional, or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his/her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.

“School climate” means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults (and reflects norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures).

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- 1) physical violence and attacks
- 2) verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
- 3) threats and intimidation
- 4) extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
- 5) exclusion from peer groups within the school
- 6) the misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school (“cyberbullying”)
- 7) targeting of a student based on the student’s actual or perceived “differentiating” characteristics such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic or academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and, therefore, bullying is not acceptable behavior in this district and is prohibited.

Bullying/Safe School Climate Plan**5131.911**

Students who engage in any act of bullying on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board, and outside of the school setting, are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials, if such bullying:

- 1) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- 2) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- 3) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Each school will develop a comprehensive program to improve school climate. The program will involve constituents in schools and the community to address bullying at all levels in order to reduce the instances of such bullying.

The District's program:

- 1) requires the development and implementation of a safe school climate plan by the Board to address the existence of bullying and teen dating violence in its school and requires at the beginning of each school year that students and their parents/guardians be notified of the process by which students may make such reports;
- 2) permits anonymous reports of bullying or teen dating violence by students to school employees and written reports of suspected bullying and teen dating violence by parents/guardians, and requires at the beginning of each school year that students and their parents/guardians be notified of the process by which students may make such reports;
- 3) requires school employees who witness acts of bullying or teen dating violence or receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence, to orally notify the safe school climate specialist or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one (1) school day after such employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying or teen dating violence, and to file a written report not later than two (2) school days after making such an oral report;
- 4) requires the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying or teen dating violence and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report, and that the parents/guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying or teen dating violence, and the parents/guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed, receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;
- 5) requires the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- 6) requires each school to have a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, as amended, for school employees to deal with bullying or teen dating violence, including language about bullying and teen dating violence in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;

Bullying/Safe School Climate Plan**5131.911**

- 7) provides for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying and teen dating violence;
- 8) requires each school to notify parents/guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying or teen dating violence, not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian with whom the student primarily resides and to the other parent/guardian, if requested. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 9) requires the school to invite parents/guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of student(s) against whom such an act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed and the policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 10) requires the school to invite the parents/guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting of the parents/guardians of the student against whom the act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 11) establishes a procedure for the school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in the school, and make such list publicly available; and report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
- 12) requires the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
- 13) prohibits discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 14) requires the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed that address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 15) requires the Principal of the school, or his/her designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such Principal, or his/her designee, believes that any act of bullying or teen dating violence constitute criminal conduct;
- 16) prohibits bullying and teen dating violence (a) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board, and (b) outside of the school setting, if such bullying or teen dating violence (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such

Bullying/Safe School Climate Plan**5131.911**

- bullying or teen dating violence was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process of the orderly operation of the school;
- 17) requires all school employees to annually complete the training required by C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended. Such training shall include identifying and responding to bullying and preventing and responding to youth suicide;
- certified employees are required to complete annual training on the prevention and identification of bullying and response to bullying and the prevention of and response to youth suicide.
 - The State Department of Education, within available appropriations, is required to provide annual training to non-certified school employees.
- 18) requires students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified at the beginning of the school year of the process by which they may make reports of bullying or teen dating violence.
- 19) requires that the Board shall approve the safe school climate plan developed pursuant to statute and submit such plan to the Department of Education for its review, analysis, cooperative assistance and approval not later than July 1, 2014; and
- 20) requires that not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the State Department of Education, the safe school climate plan shall be made available on the Board's and school's Internet website, and such plan is to be included in the District's publication of rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools, and in all student handbooks.

The Board expects prompt and reasonable investigations of alleged act of bullying and teen dating violence. The safe school climate specialist of the school is responsible for handling all complaints of alleged bullying and teen dating violence. The safe school climate specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and teen dating violence promptly.

In addition, the norms that are established by adults through consistent enforcement of all policies pertaining to conduct and modeling appropriate behavior at school and at home will reduce the instances and damage of bullying and teen dating violence. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that is accepted and encouraged.

Prevention and Intervention Strategy

The District shall implement, as required by C.S.G. 10-222d, as amended, a prevention and intervention strategy which may include, but is not limited to:

- 1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and support process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence identified by the Department of Education.

Bullying/Safe School Climate Plan**5131.911**

- 2) school rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment, and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts.
- 3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom, and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence is likely to occur.
- 4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school.
- 5) individual interventions with the bully or student who commits teen dating violence, parents/guardians, and school employees, and interventions with the students against whom the acts of bullying and teen dating violence are directed, parents/guardians and school employees.
- 6) school-wide training related to safe school climate. (Funding for the school-based bullying intervention and school climate improvement may originate from public, private or philanthropic sources. For purposes of this section, “interventions with the bullied child” includes referrals to a school counselor, psychologist or other appropriate social or mental health service, and periodic follow-up by the safe school climate specialist with the bullied child.)
- 7) student peer training, education and support.
- 8) promotion or parent involvement in bullying and teen dating violence prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.
- 9) culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation.

District Safe School Climate Coordinator

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Superintendent of Schools shall appoint, from among existing District staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator.

The Coordinator shall:

- 1) implement the District’s safe school climate plan;
- 2) collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the Board and the Superintendent to prevent, identify and respond to bullying and teen dating violence in the District’s school;
- 3) provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education;
- 4) respond to bullying and teen dating violence in the District’s school;
- 5) meet with the safe school climate specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss bullying and teen dating violence issues in the District and make recommended changes to the District’s safe school climate plan;
- 6) successfully complete, for the school year commencing July 1, 2014, the mental health first aid training provided by the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services. (Such training is only required once.)

Bullying/Safe School Climate Plan**5131.911****Safe School Climate Specialist**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the school Principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe School Climate Specialist for the school.

The Specialist shall:

- 1) investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying or teen dating violence in the school in accordance with the District's Safe School Climate Plan;
- 2) collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in the school; and
- 3) act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying and teen dating violence reports in the school.

Safe School Climate Committee

For the school year commencing, July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Principal of the school shall establish a new committee, or designate at least one existing committee, that is responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying in the school. The committee must include at least one (1) parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, appointed by the Principal.

The Safe School Climate Committee shall:

- 1) receive copies of completed reports following investigations of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 2) identify and address patterns of bullying and teen dating violence among students in the school;
- 3) implement the provisions of the school security and safety plan (developed pursuant to Sec. 87 of P.A. 13-3) regarding the collection, evaluation and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying or teen dating violence (defined in C.G.S. 10-222d) and report such information, as necessary, to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator and to the school's security and safety committee.
- 4) review and amend school policies relating to bullying and teen dating violence;
- 5) review and make recommendations to the District Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the District's Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
- 6) educate students, school employees and parents/guardians of students on issues relating to bullying and teen dating violence;
- 7) collaborate with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying and teen dating violence; and

Bullying/Safe School Climate Plan**5131.911**

- 8) perform any other duties as determined by the Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying and teen dating violence for the school.

Parent members of the Safe School Climate Committee are excluded from activities #1 and #3, or any other activity that may compromise the confidentiality of a student.

Safe School Climate Plan

The Board shall develop and implement a Safe School Climate Plan to address the existence of bullying in its schools. Such plan shall:

- 1) enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying and teen dating violence to school employees and require students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make such reports;
- 2) enable the parents/guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying and teen dating violence;
- 3) require school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence to orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist, or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one (1) school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying or teen dating violence, and to file a written report not later than two (2) school days after making such oral report;
- 4) require the Safe School Climate Specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying or teen dating violence and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this section;
- 5) require the Safe School Climate Specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- 6) include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence;
- 7) provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying and teen dating violence;
- 8) require each school to notify the parents/guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence, and the parents/guardians of students against whom such acts were directed, not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation. The required notification and invitation shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying and teen dating violence;
- 9) require each school to invite the parents/guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence, and the parents/guardians of the student against whom such act was directed, to a meeting to communicate to such parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the student's safety and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;

Bullying/Safe School Climate Plan**5131.911**

- 10) establish a procedure for the school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying and teen dating violence in the school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying and teen dating violence in the school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education, and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
- 11) direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
- 12) prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 13) direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such student against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence.
- 14) require the Principal, or the Principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such Principal, or Principal designee, believes that any acts of bullying or teen dating violence constitute criminal conduct;
- 15) prohibit bullying and teen dating violence (a) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board and (b) outside of the school setting, if such bullying or teen dating violence (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
- 16) require, at the beginning of each school year, that the school provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the District's Safe School Climate Plan; and
- 17) require that all school employees annually complete the training described in C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended.

The Superintendent shall develop rules and procedures which carry out the provisions of this policy. In addition, the Superintendent shall provide that students and parents/guardians of students are notified of this prohibition against bullying and teen dating violence and the penalties for violating the prohibition by ensuring the posting of such information in the school and by ensuring inclusion of such information in student and parent handbooks.

This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate that is protected by state or federal law.

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes
10-15b Access of parent/guardian to student's records. Inspection and subpoena of school or student records.

STUDENTS

5000

Bullying/Safe School Climate Plan

5131.911

10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by P.A. 08-160, P.A. 11-232 and P.A. 14-172
P.A. 06-115 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in Schools and Notices Sent to
Parents/Guardians
P.A. 11-232 An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws
P.A. 14-172 An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities through Education and
Ensuring Safe School Climates
P.A. 14-234 An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Adopted: 01-05-2015