

Bullying Behavior In Schools

The Hartford Board of Education promotes a safe and secure school climate conducive to teaching and learning. In accordance with state law, it is the policy of the Hartford Board of Education that any form of bullying behavior, whether in the classroom, on school property, traveling to or from school, or at school-sponsored events, is prohibited. Such behavior is disruptive of the educational process and, therefore, not acceptable behavior in this district.

Definitions:

Bullying shall mean any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate, or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, traveling to or from school, or at a school-sponsored activity, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year.

Bullying could include such behaviors as physical intimidation or assault; extortion; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; threatening looks, gestures, actions, cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

School-sponsored activity means any activity that the Board of Education sponsors, recognizes or authorizes on or off school property, including travel between home and school.

Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline that may include expulsion in accordance with the Board's policy on student discipline.

This policy applies to staff as well, and personnel policies and practices will guide any disciplinary action against an employee.

To implement this policy, the Board of Education directs the Superintendent to develop and adopt regulations to address the existence of bullying in the schools. As provided by statute, these regulations will:

1. Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators and require that students be notified annually of the process by which they may make such anonymous reports;
2. enable the parents or guardians to file written reports of suspected bullying;
3. require teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying or receive student written reports of bullying to notify school administrators in writing;
4. require school administrators to investigate any written reports and to review any anonymous reports, provided that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
5. include a prevention and intervention strategy for school staff to deal with bullying;

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6. provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct, including student and parent handbooks and school compacts concerning bullying;
7. require each school to notify both the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were targeted and invite parents or guardians to attend at least one meeting [separately];
8. require each school within the district to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection;
9. direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline.

The notification required pursuant to subdivision [7] shall include a description of the response of school staff to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Any information provided under this policy shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the district's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.

Board Oversight:

The administration will report to the BOE annually on the number of investigations and verified acts of bullying in our schools.

Reference: Connecticut State Statutes:
 10-220a
 10-222d, 10-222g, 10-222h
 10-233a through 10-233f
 Public Act No. 08-160

Policy adopted: February 4, 2003
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HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 Hartford, Connecticut