

**BULLYING**

The Governing Board recognizes the harmful effects of bullying on student learning and school attendance and desires to provide safe school environments that protect students from physical and emotional harm. District employees shall establish student safety as a high priority and shall not tolerate bullying of any student.

No individual or group shall, through physical, written, verbal, or other means, harass, sexually harass, threaten, intimidate, retaliate, cyberbully, cause bodily injury to, or commit hate violence against any other student or school personnel.

*(cf. 5131 - Conduct)*

*(cf. 5136 - Gangs)*

*(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)*

*(cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)*

*(cf. 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior)*

Cyberbullying includes the creation or transmission of harassing communications, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, or images on the Internet, social media, or other technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

*(cf. 5145.2 - Freedom of Speech/Expression)*

Strategies for addressing bullying in district schools shall be developed with involvement of key stakeholders, including students, parents/guardians, and staff, and may be incorporated into the comprehensive safety plan, the local control and accountability plan, and other applicable district and school plans.

*(cf. 0420 - School Plans/Site Councils)*

*(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)*

*(cf. 0460 - Local Control and Accountability Plan)*

*(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)*

*(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)*

*(cf. 6020 - Parent Involvement)*

As appropriate, the Superintendent or designee may collaborate with law enforcement, courts, social services, mental health services, other agencies, and community organizations in the development and implementation of joint strategies to promote safety in schools and the community and to provide services for alleged victims and perpetrators of bullying.

*(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)*

BULLYING (continued)

**Bullying Prevention**

To the extent possible, district schools shall focus on prevention of bullying by establishing clear rules for student conduct and implementing strategies to promote a positive, collaborative school climate. Students shall be informed, through student handbooks and other appropriate means, of district and school rules related to bullying, mechanisms available for reporting incidents or threats, and the consequences for engaging in bullying.

*(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)*

As appropriate, the district shall provide students with instruction, in the classroom or other educational settings, that promotes effective communication and conflict resolution skills, social skills, character/values education, respect for cultural and individual differences, self-esteem development, assertiveness skills, and appropriate online behavior.

*(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)*  
*(cf. 6142.94 - History-Social Science Instruction)*  
*(cf. 6163.4 - Student Use of Technology)*

Such instruction shall also educate students about the negative impact of bullying, discrimination, intimidation, and harassment based on actual or perceived immigration status, religious beliefs and customs, or any other individual bias or prejudice.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide training to teachers and other school staff to raise their awareness about the legal obligation of the district and its employees to prevent discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying of district students. Such training shall be designed to provide staff with the skills to:

1. Discuss the diversity of the student body and school community, including their varying immigration experiences
2. Discuss bullying prevention strategies with students, and teach students to recognize the behavior and characteristics of bullying perpetrators and victims
3. Identify the signs of bullying or harassing behavior
4. Take immediate corrective action when bullying is observed
5. Report incidents to the appropriate authorities, including law enforcement in instances of criminal behavior

Staff shall receive related professional development, including information about early warning signs of harassing/intimidating behaviors and effective response.

*(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)*  
*(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)*  
*(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)*

**BULLYING** (continued)

Based on an assessment of bullying incidents at school, the Superintendent or designee may increase supervision and security in areas where bullying most often occurs, such as classrooms, playgrounds, hallways, restrooms, and cafeterias.

**Intervention**

Students are encouraged to notify school staff when they are being bullied or suspect that another student is being victimized. In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall develop means for students to report threats or incidents confidentially and anonymously.

School staff who witness an act of bullying shall immediately intervene to stop the incident when it is safe to do so. (Education Code 234.1)

When appropriate, based on the severity or pervasiveness of the bullying, the Superintendent or designee shall notify the parents/guardians of victims and perpetrators and may contact law enforcement.

The Superintendent, principal, or principal's designee may refer a victim, witness, perpetrator, or other student affected by an act of bullying to a school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, school nurse, or other school support service personnel for case management, counseling, and/or participation in a restorative justice program as appropriate. (Education Code 48900.9)

*(cf. 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services)*

**Reporting and Filing of Complaints**

Any student, parent/guardian, or other individual who believes that a student has been subjected to bullying or who has witnessed bullying may report the incident to a teacher, the principal, a compliance officer, or any other available school employee. Within one business day of receiving such a report, a staff member shall notify the principal of the report, whether or not a uniform complaint is filed. In addition, any school employee who observes an incident of bullying involving a student shall, within one business day, report his/her observation to the principal or a district compliance officer, whether or not the alleged victim files a complaint.

*(cf. 1312.3 – Uniform Complaint Procedures)*

When the circumstances involve cyber bullying, individuals with information about the activity shall be encouraged to save and print any electronic or digital messages that they feel constitute cyber bullying and to notify a teacher, the principal, or other employee so that the matter may be investigated. When a student uses a social networking site or service to bully or harass another student, the Superintendent or designee shall file a request with the networking site or service to suspend the privileges of the student and to have the material removed.

## BULLYING (continued)

When a report of bullying is submitted, the principal or a district compliance officer shall inform the student or parent/guardian of the right to file a formal written complaint in accordance with AR 1312.3. The student who is the alleged victim of the bullying shall be given an opportunity to describe the incident, identify witnesses who may have relevant information, and provide other evidence of bullying.

### **Investigation and Resolution of Complaints**

Any complaint of bullying shall be investigated and, if determined to be discriminatory, resolved in accordance with law and the district's uniform complaint procedures specified in AR 1312.3.

If, during the investigation, it is determined that a complaint is about nondiscriminatory bullying, the principal or designee shall inform the complainant and shall take all necessary actions to resolve the complaint.

### **Discipline**

Corrective actions for a student who commits an act of bullying of any type may include counseling, behavioral intervention and education, and, if the behavior is severe or pervasive as defined in Education Code 48900, may include suspension or expulsion, in accordance with district policies and regulations.

*(cf. 5138 - Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation)*

*(cf. 5144 - Discipline)*

*(cf. 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)*

*(cf. 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process (Students with Disabilities))*

*(cf. 6159.4 - Behavioral Interventions for Special Education Students)*

Any employee who permits or engages in bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

*(cf. 4118 - Dismissal/Suspension/Disciplinary Action)*

*(cf. 4119.21/4219.21/4319.21 - Professional Standards)*

*(cf. 4218 - Dismissal/Suspension/Disciplinary Action)*

#### *Legal Reference:*

##### *EDUCATION CODE*

*200-262.4 Prohibition of discrimination*

*32282 Comprehensive safety plan*

*32283.5 Bullying; online training*

*35181 Governing board policy on responsibilities of students*

*35291-35291.5 Rules*

*48900-48925 Suspension or expulsion*

*48985 Translation of notices*

*52060-52077 Local control and accountability plan*

##### *PENAL CODE*

## BULLYING (continued)

422.55 *Definition of hate crime*647 *Use of camera or other instrument to invade person's privacy; misdemeanor*647.7 *Use of camera or other instrument to invade person's privacy; punishment*653.2 *Electronic communication devices, threats to safety*

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

4600-4687 *Uniform complaint procedures*

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 47

254 *Universal service discounts (e-rate)*

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 28

35.107 *Nondiscrimination on basis of disability; complaints*

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 34

104.7 *Designation of responsible employee for Section 504*106.8 *Designation of responsible employee for Title IX*110.25 *Notification of nondiscrimination on the basis of age*

COURT DECISIONS

Wynar v. Douglas County School District, (2013) 728 F.3d 1062

J.C. v. Beverly Hills Unified School District, (2010) 711 F.Supp.2d 1094

Lavine v. Blaine School District, (2002) 279 F.3d 719

*Management Resources:*

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

*Final Guidance: AB 1266, Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students, Privacy, Programs, Activities & Facilities, Legal Guidance, March 2014**Providing a Safe, Nondiscriminatory School Environment for Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Students, Policy Brief, February 2014**Addressing the Conditions of Children: Focus on Bullying, Governance Brief, December 2012**Safe Schools: Strategies for Governing Boards to Ensure Student Success, 2011**Building Healthy Communities: A School Leaders Guide to Collaboration and Community Engagement, 2009**Cyberbullying: Policy Considerations for Boards, Policy Brief, July 2007*

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

*Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008**Bullying at School, 2003*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS PUBLICATIONS

*Dear Colleague Letter: Bullying of Students with Disabilities, August 2013**Dear Colleague Letter: Harassment and Bullying, October 2010*

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>California Department of Education, Safe Schools Office: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss>Common Sense Media: <http://www.common Sense Media.org>National School Safety Center: <http://www.schoolsafety.us>ON[the]LINE, digital citizenship resources: <http://www.onthelineca.org>U.S. Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov>

Policy

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VACAVILLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Vacaville, California