

MIDDLETON-CROSS PLAINS AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative Policy and Procedure Manual

411.1

BULLYING OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

Policy

School districts must provide a safe, secure, and respectful learning environment. Bullying of students and staff will not be tolerated and is prohibited in the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District. All forms of harassment in cyberspace, commonly referred to as cyber bullying, are also unacceptable and viewed as a violation of this policy.

This policy applies to all educational activities and environments supported by the district. The Board of Education considers these actions to be detrimental to the health and safety of students and staff, and disruptive to the educational environment.

1. Definitions

- **Bullying:** any conscious, willful, or deliberate act or attempted act, through the use of words or actions, which is intended to cause physical injury, emotional distress/suffering or property damage or which impacts the learning environment. Bullying often involves an imbalance of power between the bully and the bullied, and is typically repeated over time. In determining whether bullying has occurred, administrators will consider that:
 - Bullying takes many forms, including, but not limited to, physical or verbal assaults, nonverbal or emotional threats or intimidation, social exclusion and isolation, extortion, and the use of a computer or telecommunications to send embarrassing, slanderous, threatening, or intimidating messages.
 - Bullying is a form of victimization and is not necessarily a result of or part of an ongoing conflict.
 - Bullying can also be characterized by teasing, put-downs, name-calling, cruel rumors, false accusations, and hazing.
 - Bullying is defined as any conscious, willful, or deliberate act or attempted act, through the use of words or actions, which are intended to cause physical injury, emotional distress/suffering or property damage or which impact the learning environment.
 - Bullying may be student-to-student, a student to an adult staff member, and/or an adult school staff member to a student or another staff member.
- **Cyber bullying:** Cyber bullying includes but is not limited to the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person or group of people by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or Web site postings, including blogs or any other messages via cyberspace.

In situations in which cyber bullying originated off school property or from a non-school computer or telecommunication device, but is brought to the attention of school officials, any student disciplinary action shall be based upon whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the educational process so that it markedly impedes the day to day operations of a

school. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, harassment, bullying or making a threat off school grounds through cyberspace that is intended to endanger the health, safety or property of others at school, a District employee or a Board member.

- **Cyberspace:** a global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent network of information technology infrastructures, including the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers.
- **Educational environment:** every building, environment or activity under the supervision of each school, regardless of location. This includes activities on school property including the playground, activities at other locations but sponsored by the District, and activities where students are being transported to a school or District-sponsored event using school buses, leased vehicles or contracted services.
- **Retaliation:** includes actions targeted against any reporter of bullying.

2. **Bullying Prevention**

As part of the District's implementation of the Comprehensive School Counseling Model, bullying awareness and prevention curriculum will be provided to students Kindergarten through grade Eight.

3. **Reporting and Investigation Procedures**

Any student or District employee who believes he/she has been subject to bullying, or witnesses bullying, may file a complaint directly with the building principal or designee, or, in accordance with established complaint procedures, may complain to any of the following District officials: the District Student Nondiscrimination Officer (Director of Teaching and Learning-Student Services), District Title IX Officer (Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services) or the District Staff Nondiscrimination Officer (Director of Employee Services). This complaint shall be documented in writing by either the reporter or the complaint recipient. The District Discrimination Complaint Form may be used, but is not required, to document a complaint. Complaints involving student or employee harassment shall be handled in accordance with the District's harassment policy (Policy 512).

Any student or parent/guardian who becomes aware of or witnesses bullying has an obligation to report and will be supported by involved staff members in reporting the bullying to the proper authorities. Any District employee who becomes aware of or witnesses bullying has an obligation to intervene and report this behavior immediately to the building principal or District officials referenced above.

Retaliation against an individual reporting bullying under this policy is prohibited. Filing a complaint or otherwise reporting bullying in good faith will not reflect upon the individual's status nor will it affect his/her grades or job, or benefits provided by the District.

Once received, an investigation of the bullying complaint will take place immediately or as soon as practicable in order to verify the validity and seriousness of the report as well as to derive appropriate

school or District response to the complaint. If a bullying complaint involves a District employee and a student, both the Director of Employee Services and the Director of Teaching and Learning-Student Services shall be involved in the complaint investigation process and follow-up activities.

The District shall respect the confidentiality of both the complainant and the accused consistent with the District's legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective and/or disciplinary action when this conduct has occurred.

4. Consequences for Policy Violations

Individuals engaging in bullying or retaliation against persons reporting bullying will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with established procedures. This may include the development of support and accommodation plans which will prevent future events or incidences.

Adults, including volunteers or staff members, who engage in bullying in violation of District policy and/or retaliation against individuals reporting this behavior, shall be subject to immediate discipline, up to and including termination of employment or involvement with the District. Employee discipline shall be carried out consistent with provisions of any applicable employee collective bargaining agreement.

5. Notice

Notice of this policy will be circulated to all schools and departments in the District on an annual basis. This policy will be incorporated in employee and student handbooks and be available on the District Web site and annual publications. It will also be available to all organizations in the community having cooperative agreements with the public schools. Failure to comply with this policy may result in termination of the cooperative agreement.

6. Disclosure and Public Reporting

Records will be maintained on the number and types of bullying reports made, and sanctions imposed for incidents found to be in violation of the bullying policy.

An annual summary report of bullying incidents shall be prepared and presented to the Board, which includes trends in bullying behavior and recommendations on how to further reduce bullying behavior. The annual report will be available to the public.

LEGAL REF.: Sections 118.46(2) Wisconsin Statutes
 120.13(1)
 947.0125
 947.013
 948.51(2)

CROSS REF.: 363.2, Acceptable Use of Electronic Communications
411, Equal Educational Opportunities.
443, Student Conduct and Discipline
443.5, Student Use and/or Possession of Two-Way Electronic Devices
443.6, Youth Gangs
443.7, Handling Threats to or by Students
511, Equal Opportunity Employment
512, Harassment
522.7, Staff Internet Acceptable Use
720, Safety Program
860, Visitors to the Schools
Student Code of Conduct
Current Employee Agreements

APPROVED: August 12, 2010