

WEST CENTRAL C.U.S.D. #235

BULLYING PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PLAN



PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY EXPECTING EXCELLENCE

Adopted: September 25, 2019

Revised: November 27, 2023

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important District goals.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, academic status, pregnancy, parenting status, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is contrary to State law as well as the policy of the District. However, nothing in the District's bullying prevention and response plan is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution. Bullying is prohibited in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and it does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any non-school related activity, function, or program. Definitions from Section 27-23.7 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7)

Definitions

Bullying includes cyberbullying and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any

nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Examples of prohibited conduct include name-calling, using derogatory slurs, stalking, sexual violence, causing psychological harm, threatening or causing physical harm, threatened or actual destruction of property, or wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice of one of the characteristics stated above.

Restorative measures means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school, and (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

School personnel means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school district, including without limitation school district administrators, teachers, school guidance counselors, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

Filing a Bullying Incident Report

Anyone, including students, staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the building administrator, District Complaint Manager or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Reports may be made by contacting the Building Office to receive a Bullying Incident Report Form (Appendix A) or by accessing a Bullying Incident Report Form under the District tab on the District website at www.wc235.k12.il.us. All school staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. All contact information is available in the Staff Directory under the District tab on our District website at www.wc235.k12.il.us. Anonymous reports are

also accepted by phone call or in writing. The Bullying Incident Report Form will then be distributed to the designated building administrator to start the investigation process.

Complaint Managers:

Mrs. Kathy Lafary
1514 US Route 34, Biggsville, IL 61418
(309) 627-2339
lafary-kathy@wc235.k12.il.us

Mrs. Sara Ryner
215 W. South St, Stronghurst, IL 61480
(309) 924-1681
ryner-sara@wc235.k12.il.us

A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

Investigating a Bullying Incident Report

When a Bullying Incident Report is completed, it will then be distributed to the designated building administrator to start the investigation process described below. If a Bullying Incident Report is filed electronically, the building administrator will immediately receive an email notifying him/her of the report and the Bullying Report Assessment Process Action Steps in Appendix B will be followed. The forms in Appendix C will be used to conduct the investigation. The parents/guardians of students involved will be notified within 24 hours. The Building administrator will work to make all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within ten (10) school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying. The investigation will be consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights and providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation. Parents/Guardians will have an opportunity to meet with the building administrator or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying will be made available as appropriate. As part of the investigation, it will be determined whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the District's jurisdiction. If it is determined that the reported act of bullying is not within the permissible scope of the District's jurisdiction, the victim will be provided with information regarding services that are available within the District and the community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs. The administrator will have the final decision on the investigation unless an appeal is made (see below).

"Chain of command" for Who Will Handle the Bullying Investigation or an Appeal to the Investigation

- Report (online/paper copy)
- Administrator

- Complaint manager
- Superintendent
- School Board

Possible Interventions to Address Bullying

Possible interventions that can be utilized to address bullying include, but are not limited to the following:

- Social Work Services
- Restorative Measures
- Social-emotional Skill Building
- Counseling
- School Psychological Services
- Community-based Services
- Cease and Desist Order

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan Team Members

The District's Bullying Prevention and Response Plan team is composed of administrators, teachers, other staff members, and parents/guardians.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan Availability

The District's Bullying Prevention and Response Plan can be found under the District tab on the District website at www.wc235.k12.il.us. Information about bullying prevention is also included in the student handbook and in Board Policy 7:180.

Evaluation of the Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

The Bullying Prevention and Response Plan will be evaluated at a minimum of every two years to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy. The frequency of victimization, identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs, the types of bullying that are common or occurring, and bystander intervention or participation will be analyzed from a spreadsheet of the reports that have been submitted. Data regarding student, staff, and family observations of safety at each school will be collected as part of a survey.

This policy is consistent with the policies of the school board, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school.

Appendix A
West Central C.U.S.D. #235
Bullying Incident Report Form

Who is being bullied? _____

Grade Level/Approximate Age/Building of Person Being Bullied: _____

Who is doing the bullying? _____

Grade Level/Approximate Age/Building of Person(s) Doing the Bullying: _____

Date of Incident: _____

Time of Incident: _____

Location of Incident (Check all that apply.):

- | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria | <input type="checkbox"/> Gymnasium | <input type="checkbox"/> Hallway | <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bus Loading Area | <input type="checkbox"/> School Bus | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking Lot | <input type="checkbox"/> Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Trip/Special Event | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bus Stop | <input type="checkbox"/> Home | <input type="checkbox"/> Online | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

Bullying Behavior (Check all that apply.):

- | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shoved/Pushed | <input type="checkbox"/> Hit/Kicked/Punched | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened | <input type="checkbox"/> Stole/Damaged Possessions | <input type="checkbox"/> Excluding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation/Extortion | <input type="checkbox"/> Demeaning Comments | | <input type="checkbox"/> Told Lies or False Rumors | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/Graffiti | <input type="checkbox"/> Taunting/Ridiculing | <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber-bullying (Text) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber-bullying (Email) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber-bullying (Website) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber-bullying (Other) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Other People Present (Bystanders, Witnesses, Accomplices):

Description of the Incident:

I am:

- a teacher/staff member. a student. a parent/guardian. anonymous. other. _____

If you would like to be contacted by an administrator for further questions or follow up on this issue, please leave your contact information (name and phone number) below:

The link below will take you to the West Central C.U.S.D. #235 Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment Policy:

<http://www.wc235.k12.il.us/vnews/display.v/SEC/Bullying%20Prevention>

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1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Cyber-bullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying.

West Central C.U.S.D. #235 urges anyone that was a part of, or witnessed a perceived "Bullying Incident" to fill out the Bullying Report Form regarding the incident. This form does not require you to leave a name and allows for complete anonymity in reporting. However, if you wish to be contacted regarding this issue please include a name and contact information on the last question of the form.

A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

Illinois State Law mandates schools to make all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and take into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.