

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Ida Public Schools board of education prohibits acts of harassment or bullying. The board of education has determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior.

Definitions:

"Harassment or bullying" is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e. internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (pda), or wireless hand held device) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic. Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying whether it takes place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function, or in a school vehicle.

"Harassment" is conduct that meets all of the following criteria:

- is directed at one or more pupils;
- substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more pupils;
- adversely affects the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the school district's educational programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities, because the conduct, as reasonably perceived by the pupil, is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive as to have this effect; and,
- is based on a pupil's actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above), or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

“Bullying” is conduct that meets all of the following criteria:

- is directed at one or more pupils;
- substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more pupils;
- adversely affects the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the school district’s educational programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities, by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing emotional distress; and,
- is based on a pupil’s actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above), or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

The Ida Public Schools board of education expects students to conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school staff, volunteers, and contractors.

The Ida Public Schools board of education sets standards for behavior for the purpose of producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for district and community property.

The Ida Public Schools board of education believes that the best discipline is self-imposed, and that it is the responsibility of staff to use disciplinary situations as opportunities for helping students learn to assume responsibility and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to *prevent* discipline problems and encourage students’ abilities to develop self-discipline.

Since bystander support of harassment or bullying can support these negative behaviors, the district prohibits both active and passive support for acts of harassment or bullying. The staff should encourage students to support students who walk away from these acts when they see them, constructively attempt to stop incidents of bullying or harassing, or report them to the designated authority.

Consequences:

Consequences for bullying or harassing behavior(s) will be left to the discretion of the building principal or his/her designee.

Factors for Determining Consequences

- Age, development, and maturity levels of the parties involved
- Degree of harm
- Surrounding circumstances
- Nature and severity of the behavior(s)
- Incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behavior
- Relationship between the parties involved
- Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student who commits one or more acts of harassment or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Consequences for a student who commits an act of harassment or bullying shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance, and must be consistent with the board of education's approved code of student conduct. The consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited to, those listed below:

Possible Consequences

- Admonishment
- Temporary removal from the classroom
- Loss of privileges
- Classroom or administrative detention
- Referral to disciplinarian
- Behavior plan and/or contract
- Community Service
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Legal action
- Expulsion

Examples of Remedial Measures

- Framing the aggressive behavior as a failed attempt to solve a real problem or reach a goal. The staff assists the misbehaving student to find a better way to solve the problem or meet the goal.
- Restitution and restoration
- Transformative conferencing/restorative justice
- Peer support group
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience
- Supportive discipline to increase accountability for the bullying offense
- Behavioral assessment or evaluation, including, but not limited to, a referral to the MCISD Anger Management Program.
- Behavioral Intervention Plan (B.I.P.)
- Student counseling

The Ida Public Schools board of education requires the principal and/or the principal's designee at each school to be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or the principal's designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The Ida Public Schools board of education requires the principal and/or the principal's designee to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the principal and/or the principal's designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. The parent or legal guardian of a victim of bullying and the student(s) that violated the policy must be notified after the investigation is completed. Furthermore, the principal and/or the principal's designee will document all incidents of bullying/harassment and report the instances annually on the School Infrastructure Database (SID) report.

The Ida Public Schools board of education prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

The Ida Public Schools board of education prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a *person* found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Any parent, student, employee, or other individual (such as a volunteer) acting in good faith that promptly reports an incident of bullying or harassment will be immune from being sued for damages for violation of the policy or for failing to remedy the situation.

The Ida Public Schools shall provide training for all personnel as well as an education program for parents and students on how to prevent and/or identify and address bullying.

An anti-bullying task force made up of administrators, district employees, students, parents and other interested parties will be created to address ongoing bullying issues. The task force will convene when necessary.

This policy shall be publicized in the Board of Education Policy Manual, posted on the district website, and summarized in the building handbooks.

The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented.

Adopted July 9, 2007
Updated February 13, 2012