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**RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES – Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment**

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 state 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, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic 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 the School District or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This paragraph applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require staff members to monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.
5. Any other ~~manner~~ **instance** of bullying not defined herein.

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Definitions from Section 27-23.7 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7)

*Bullying* includes *cyber-bullying* 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 student's 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 communication. *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*.

*Restorative measures* means a continuum of school-based alternative 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

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students, families, schools, and communities, and (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.

*School personnel* means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school district, including without limitation school and 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.

#### **Bullying Prevention and Response Plan**

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the District's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan must be consistent with the requirements listed below; each numbered requirement, 1-12, corresponds with the same number in the list of required policy components in 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7(b) 1-12.

1. The District uses the definition of bullying as provided in this policy.
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this 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 1 of the Illinois Constitution.
3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the District Complaint Manager or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the District Complaint Manager or any staff member. Anonymous reports are also accepted. A Bullying Incident Reporting Form can be located on the District website under Information at [www.sps186.org](http://www.sps186.org).

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4. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Superintendent or designee shall promptly inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of every student involved in an incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.
5. The Superintendent or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying, by, among other things:
  - a. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of a bullying incident was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported bullying incident.
  - b. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.

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- c. Notifying the Building Principal or school administrator or designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- d. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Building Principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The Superintendent or designee shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the District’s jurisdiction and shall require that the District provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the District and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

6. The Superintendent or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, that may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

- a. Even in situations where the bullying report is unfounded, the principal or designee will take appropriate actions to assist the student making the complaint. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, contacting the parent/guardian of the person making the complaint and the alleged offender, notifying the appropriate staff to assist the person making the complaint, and taking additional actions when appropriate.

7. 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.

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

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9. The District's bullying prevention and response plan must be based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.
10. The Superintendent or designee shall post this policy on the District's website and include it in the Family and Student Handbook, and, where applicable, post it where other policies, rules and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy must also be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students and school personnel, including new employees when hired.
11. The Superintendent or designee shall assist the Board with its evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, without limitation:
  - a. The frequency of victimization;
  - b. Student, staff and family observations of safety at a school;
  - c. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
  - d. The types of bullying utilized; and
  - e. Bystander intervention or participation.

The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that the District already collects for other purposes. The Superintendent or designee must post the information developed as a result of the policy evaluation on the District's website, the information must be provided to school administrators, Board members, school personnel parents/guardians, and students.

12. The Superintendent or designee shall fully implement this Board policy.
13. The Superintendent or designee shall fully inform staff members of the District's goal to prevent students from engaging in bullying and the measures being used to accomplish it. This includes each of the following:
  - a. Communicating the District's expectation and State law requirements that teachers and other certificated or licensed employees maintain discipline.
  - b. Establishing the expectation that staff members: (1) intervene immediately to stop a bullying incident that they witness or immediately contact building security and/or law enforcement if the incident involves a weapon or other illegal activity, (2) report bullying, whether they witness it or not, to an administrator, and (3)

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inform the administration of locations on school grounds where additional supervision or monitoring may be needed to prevent bullying.

- c. Where appropriate in the staff development program, providing strategies to staff members to effectively prevent bullying and intervene when it occurs.
- d. Establish a process for staff members to fulfill their obligation to report alleged acts of bullying.

Citation: 405 ILCS 49/, Children's Mental Health Act.  
105 ILCS 5/10-20.14, 5/24-24, and 5/27-23.7  
23 Ill. Administrative Code 1.240 and 1.280

Cross Ref.: 275, 465.01, 500.20, 600.01, 600, 600.05, 645.06, 710.065, 710.07, 715, 730.02, 720.03

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