

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: BULLYING/
CYBERBULLYING

ADOPTED: September 22, 2010

REVISED: August 22, 2013

<p>1. Purpose</p> <p>2. Definitions SC 1303.1-A</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">249. BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING</p> <p>The School Reform Commission strives to provide a healthy, safe, positive learning environment for District students. The SRC recognizes the negative impact that bullying has on student health, welfare, and safety and on the learning environment at school. The SRC recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the SRC prohibits bullying by District students.</p> <p>Bullying can be exhibited by an intentional physical, psychological, verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Substantial interference with a student’s education. 2. Creation of a threatening and hostile learning environment. 3. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school. <p>Bullying is characterized by the following three (3) criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is intentional or deliberate aggressive behavior or harm doing, and 2. It is carried out repeatedly over time, and 3. It occurs within an interpersonal relationship where there is an imbalance of power (e.g. one (1) person is physically larger, stronger, mentally quicker or socially more powerful). <p>Bullying takes many forms and can include a variety of behaviors. As defined in this policy, bullying refers to direct or indirect action, which may include but is not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical – touching, hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, getting another person
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<p>Pol. 248</p>	<p>to hurt someone.</p>
<p>Pol. 815</p>	<p>2. Verbal –name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossiping, and spreading rumors.</p>
<p>SC 1303.1-A</p>	<p>3. Nonverbal – threatening, intimidation, obscene gestures, isolation, exclusion, stalking, cyber bullying (bullying that occurs by use of electronic or communication devices through means of social networking, e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, tweets, blogs, photo and video sharing, chat rooms, bash boards, or web sites).</p>
<p>SC 1303.1-A</p>	<p>School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, in transit to and from school or at any off-site activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.</p>
<p>3. Authority</p>	<p>Student shall mean an individual enrolled in a District school.</p>
<p>SC 1303.1-A</p>	<p>The SRC prohibits all forms of bullying by District students, and further prohibits reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report these acts or who are targets, witnesses and/or bystanders. The SRC encourages students or parents/guardians of students who have been bullied or witness bullying to immediately report such incidents to the school principal or designee, or to any other member of the school staff, including teachers, guidance counselors, coaches and administrators. Any staff member who receives such a report shall immediately notify the principal or designee of same. If the behavior continues or if the school does not take action, students or parents/guardians should report the incident to the District’s hotline at 215-400-SAFE (7233).</p> <p>The SRC directs that reports and complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly and thoroughly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district’s legal and investigative obligations. All parties will be treated with dignity and shall be afforded legally-required due process.</p> <p>No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.</p>
<p>4. Delegation of Responsibility</p>	<p>In order to maintain an educational environment that discourages and prohibits bullying, the SRC shall designate a District Compliance Officer to coordinate the District’s efforts to comply with this policy and applicable laws and regulations.</p> <p>The Compliance Officer shall publish and disseminate this policy and the complaint procedure at least annually to students, parents/guardians, employees, independent contractors, vendors, and the public. The publication shall include the position, office address and telephone number of the Compliance Officer.</p> <p>Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an</p>

<p>SC 1303.1-A</p> <p>SC 1303.1-A</p> <p>SC 1303.1-A</p> <p>5. Guidelines SC 1303.1-A Title 22 Sec. 12.3 Pol. 218</p> <p>SC 1302-A, 1303.1-A Pol. 236</p>	<p>atmosphere that is conducive to learning and free from bullying.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall develop Administrative Procedures to implement this policy.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and the Administrative Procedures are reviewed annually with staff, students, and parents/guardians.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy at least once every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the SRC.</p> <p>District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SRC’s Bullying Policy. 2. Report of bullying incidents. 3. Information on the development and implementation of any and all research-based bullying prevention and intervention programs. <p>The Code of Student Conduct, which shall incorporate this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students.</p> <p>This policy shall be accessible in every classroom, posted in a prominent location within each school building and posted on the District web site. The policy shall be made available in English and all other languages necessary to facilitate understanding by District students and residents.</p> <p>This policy shall be reviewed with District students within ninety (90) days after the adoption or revision by the SRC, and annually on during the first week of school thereafter.</p> <p><u>Education</u></p> <p>The District shall implement research-based bullying prevention and intervention programs. Students will be provided with instruction regarding the definition of bullying, the characteristics of a person who bullies, a person who is the target of bullying, and a bystander, and the reporting process. Schools will implement programs and activities that reduce the potential for bullying and identify those strategies annually in the School’s Safety Plan and School Improvement Plan.</p>
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Staff will be provided training and professional development for effectively preventing, intervening in, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Complaint Procedure

Step 1 – Reporting

A student or his/her parent/guardian or third party who believes s/he has been subjected to conduct that may constitute a violation of this policy is encouraged to immediately report the incident to the building principal or designee, or to any other member of the school staff, including teachers, guidance counselors, **support staff, bilingual counseling assistants (BCAs)**, coaches, and administrators.

The complainant or reporting employee is encouraged to use the complaint form available from the building principal, but oral and electronic complaints shall be acceptable. The principal or designee shall complete the District’s complaint form if the complainant chooses to make an oral or electronic report. In each school building, to the extent practicable, complaint forms shall be readily available in any and all languages that are spoken by one or more students attending that school.

If the building principal is the subject of a complaint, the student, parent/guardian, or employee shall report the incident directly to the Compliance Officer.

Step 2 – Investigation

Upon receiving a complaint of bullying, the building principal or designee shall take immediate and appropriate action to investigate the complaint **or otherwise determine what occurred.**

The investigation should consist of individual interviews with the complainant, the accused, and others with knowledge relative to the incident. The investigator may also evaluate any other information and materials relevant to the investigation.

The investigator shall attempt to secure statements from all participants in, and witnesses to the incident(s). The complainant shall not be required to meet face-to-face with the accused.

When a student with limited English proficiency is a party to a complaint, interpretation and/or translation services shall be provided. The limited English proficiency of a complainant, witness, or the accused is not an acceptable reason for failure to secure a statement from him or her.

The obligation to conduct this investigation shall not be negated by the fact that a criminal or other investigation of the incident is pending or has been concluded.

All complaints should be forwarded and/or uploaded to the Compliance Officer for the purpose of monitoring, evaluating and providing District-level support to diminish bullying.

All investigations shall be completed by the assigned investigator within fourteen (14) days from the reporting of the complaint. Extenuating circumstances for not being able to comply with the deadline must be approved by the Compliance Officer. The extension must be a specified period of time not exceeding fourteen (14) days, and must be communicated to the complainant.

Step 3 – Investigative Report

The building principal or designee shall prepare a written report which shall include a summary of the investigation, a determination of whether the complaint has been substantiated as factual and whether it is a violation of this policy, and a recommended disposition of the complaint.

The findings of the investigation shall be provided to the complainant and his or her parent, if s/he is under 18 years old, the accused, and the Compliance Officer.

Step 4 – District Action

If the investigation determines that the accused engaged in conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy, the District shall take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the bullying, eliminate any hostile environment and its effects, and prevent the bullying from recurring. When appropriate, students who have been found to have violated this policy will receive instruction or training on why their actions were inappropriate and/or hurtful.

If the allegations are confirmed, the building principal or designee shall:

1. Inform the student(s) found to have violated this policy and his/her parents/guardians the results of the investigation, including the actions of the student and the consequences for his/her actions.
2. Review the definition of bullying and the district's policy on bullying with the student(s) and his/her parents/guardians.
3. Administer the consequences for the behavior relative to the number of offenses and the severity of the behavior.

<p>SC 1303.1-A Pol. 218, 233</p>	<p>A student who violates this policy, or who intentionally makes a false report or complaint, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which shall include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. First Offense - documented warning and parent/guardian notification.2. Second Offense - parent/guardian conference, loss of school privileges, exclusion from school-sponsored activities, detention, suspension, contract with intervention, and/or counseling within the school.3. Third Offense - suspension, contract with intervention, transfer to another classroom, school building or school bus.
<p>Pol. 233</p>	<p>If the first or second offense is notably severe, a student may immediately be disciplined in accordance to the Code of Student Conduct. This could result in a long-term out-of-school suspension (4-10 days) and a referral for placement in an alternative education program.</p> <p>References:</p> <p>School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 1302-A, 1303.1-A</p> <p>State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 12.3</p> <p>School Reform Commission Policy – 118, 218, 233, 248, 815</p>