

SERIES 400 – STUDENTS

Student Rights and Responsibilities – 440

Bullying (448)

The Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton School District strives to provide a safe, secure and respectful learning environment for all students in school buildings, and on school grounds, on school buses and at school-sponsored activities. Bullying has harmful social, physical, psychological and academic impact on bullies, the victims and the bystanders. The district consistently and vigorously addresses bullying so that there is no disruption to the learning environment and learning process.

Definition

Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation or harm. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as, but not limited to: age, national origin; race; ethnicity; religion; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability or disability; and social, economic or family status.

Bullying behavior can be:

1. Physical (e.g. assault, hitting or punching, kicking, theft).
2. Verbal (e.g. threatening or intimidating, language, teasing or name-calling, racist remarks).
3. Indirect (e.g. spreading cruel rumors, intimidation through gestures, social exclusion and sending insulting messages or pictures by mobile phone or using internet – also known as cyber bullying).
4. Between students and students, students and adults, or adults and adults.

Prohibition

Bullying behavior is prohibited in all schools, buildings, property and educational environments, including any property or vehicle owned, leased or used by the school district. Educational environments include, but are not limited to, every activity under school supervision.

Procedure for Reporting/Retaliation

It is the responsibility of all school staff members, students and concerned individuals who observe or became aware of acts of bullying to report these acts confidentially to a school staff member or administrator designated by the Board of Education to recipient of such reports. All such reports, either verbal or in writing are to be taken seriously and a clear account of the incident is to be documented. There shall be no retaliation against individuals making such reports. Individuals engaging in retaliatory behavior will be subject to disciplinary action.

School Board Policy 448 – Bullying, Continued

Procedure for Investigating Reports of Bullying

An investigation to determine the facts will take place in a timely manner to verify the validity and the seriousness of the report. Affected parents and/or guardians will be notified that a report has been made. The district shall keep the complaint confidential to the extent required by law for both the accused and accuser.

Sanctions and Supports

If it is determined that students participated in bullying behavior in violation of this policy, the principal may take disciplinary action, including: detention, suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials for possible legal action as appropriate.

Students found in violation of the bullying policy may be referred to pupil services staff for counseling or other educational programming designed to prevent repetitive bullying behavior. Employees found to have participated in bullying behavior, or having become aware that bullying was taking place and failed to report the behavior, are considered to be in violation of the prohibition expressed by this policy. They may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the collective bargaining agreement or disciplinary action established by policy or practice.

Disclosure and Public Reporting

The policy will be distributed annually to all students enrolled in the Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton School District, their parents and/or guardians and employees. It will also be distributed to organizations in the community having cooperative agreements with the schools. The school district will also provide a copy to any person who requests it.

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

An annual summary report shall be prepared and presented to the school 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.

Approved: July 12, 2010