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WEST ELIZABETH - JEFFERSON HILLS - PLEASANT HILLS

POLICY 245 — BULLYING

1. Purpose

It is the policy of the West Jefferson Hills School District to provide a safe, positive and caring learning environment. The district recognizes that bullying is an interference with the educational process and the right to a safe, learning environment.

2. Definition*

A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students (Olweus 1986 and 1991). It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another.

Behavior is clearly bullying when:

There is intent to harm- the perpetrator appears to find pleasure in taunting and continues even when the target's distress is obvious. **Mutual "teasing" should not be confused with bullying behavior.**

There is intensity and duration- the taunting continues over a period of time, and is not welcomed by the target.

Types of bullying may include but are not limited to:

Direct bullying: A negative action when somebody hits, pushes, kicks, pinches, restrains or uses other forms of unwanted physical contact. Direct bullying can also be carried out by words (verbally), by threatening, taunting, teasing, and calling names.

Indirect bullying: Repeated over a period of time: negative gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group and spreading rumors.

Cyber-bullying: Using electronic device mediums such as but not limited to computers, cell phones and pagers to bully others through methods such as posting comments or pictures on blogs or websites, text messaging, instant messaging and email.

Relational aggression: Describes behavior which can undermine or destroy relationships and it can be either physical and/or psychological in nature.

This type of bullying may be carried out by a single individual or by a group. The target/victim of bullying can be a single individual or a group of students.

3. Authority

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student to bully another *student* on district grounds; at any school activity; on the way to and from school or activities; *or with the use of any school technology equipment*. Any violation of this policy could be considered an infraction of the West Jefferson Hills School District Board Policy, with discipline implemented accordingly.

“Bullying may include acts that occur outside of school if those acts are intentional, electronic, verbal or physical, are directed at another student or students, are severe, persistent or pervasive, and have the effect of (i) substantially interfering with a student’s education, (ii) creating a threatening environment, or (iii) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.”

4. Delegation of Responsibility

This policy shall be implemented through the cooperative efforts of the West Jefferson Hills Board of Directors, Superintendent, building administrators, school staff, parents/guardians, students and the community of the West Jefferson Hills School District.

This policy shall be available on the District’s website and shall be posted in every classroom and in a prominent location in every school building where notices are posted.

This policy shall be reviewed with students within ninety (90) days of its adoption and each school year thereafter.

This policy shall be reviewed every three (3) years.

A copy of this policy, a report of incidents of bullying, and any information relating to bullying prevention, intervention and education programs shall be submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Office of Safe Schools as part of the District’s annual report.

5. Guidelines

Reporting Procedures:

The West Jefferson Hills School District strongly encourages all students, parents/guardians and employees when they become aware of any act of bullying, to immediately report the incident to a building administrator. The District requires all employees to observe and be aware of bullying and to take immediate, appropriate steps to intervene. All reports of bullying shall be recorded in writing to the building administrator and investigated as necessary. Parents/guardians or students wishing to report an incident shall complete the Parent/Student Bullying Incident Report.

Investigation Procedures:

Each building principal is authorized to investigate reports of bullying brought to their attention by students, parents/guardians, employees, contracted individuals, vendors or volunteers. Any investigation will be consistent with federal and state law, including the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, as amended. The investigation of a report may include meetings with students, parents/guardians or employees, a review of student records, and any other reasonable efforts to understand the facts surrounding a reported incident. The principal will notify the parent/guardian of both the bully and the victim.

Discipline Procedures:

Students who bully others will be subject to disciplinary options that may include detention, suspension, or other consequences as provided in the Code of Student Conduct. In addition, a parent/guardian conference may be required. When deemed necessary by school officials, information will be filed with the Civil Authorities for Violations of the Pennsylvania Criminal Code.

Adopted per requirement of school code 9-25-12

Revision adopted: 12/2/08

Date adopted: 8/28/07

8/29/07