

STUDENTS and STAFF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Guiding Principle The Providence School Board believes that preventing bullying and/or harassment is critical for creating and maintaining a safe, secure, positive school climate and culture, which supports academic achievement, increases school engagement, respects the rights of all individuals and groups, and purposefully builds community.

Purpose The Providence School Board's Bullying and Harassment Policy aligns with the Statewide Bullying Policy that is promulgated pursuant to the authority set forth in § 16A-100 of the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut. The Safe School Act, which is a component of the state's anti-bullying legislation, recognizes that the bullying of a student creates a climate of fear and disrespect that can seriously impair the student's health and negatively affect learning. Bullying undermines the safe learning environment that students need to achieve their full potential. The purpose of the Policy is to ensure a consistent and uniform state and Districtwide approach to the prohibition of bullying at school.

To protect the rights of all individuals to engage in teaching and learning, bullying and/or harassment of/by any student, teacher, administrator, staff member, parent, or community partner, participating in any sanctioned school activity (as described under SCOPE below) is prohibited.

To clearly define what constitutes actions of bullying and/or harassment, to highlight the importance of responding to bullying and/or harassment behaviors, and to clarify the extent to which the Superintendent of the Providence Public School Department (PPSD) is directed to apply disciplinary actions, as specified in the following Providence School Board Policies and School District Procedures: Student Rights and Responsibilities, Code of Conduct, Student Discipline, and the Providence School Safety Plan.

Definitions BULLYING means the use by one or more individuals of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, that causes or has the potential to cause physical or psychological damage to his/

her property;

c. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment for the student;

d. Infringes on the rights of the student to participate in school activities; or

e. Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying most often occurs as repeated behavior and often is not a single incident between the bullying/cyberbullying offender(s) and the bullying victim(s). If a single incident is sufficiently severe it may be considered bullying.

Harrassment is bullying behavior as described above which includes the

CYBERBULLYING means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, any transmission, signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, texting or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Forms of cyberbullying may include but are not limited to:

- a. The creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- b. The knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages; or
- c. The distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of materials on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the creation, impersonation, or distribution results in any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (a) to (e) of the definition of bullying.

Cyberharassment is the behavior described as cyberbullying motivated by prejudice bias. (see definition of harassment above)

Hazing is defined as any activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses or endangers regardless of the persons willingness to participate.

Retaliation is defined as any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment by a PPSD community member directed against another PPSD community member for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, for cooperating in an investigation under this Policy, or for taking action consistent with this Policy.

Scope

Every form of bullying, harassment, cyberbullying, and/or cyberharassment is prohibited at in

for one or more individuals and/or the orderly day-day operations of any school or school program.

AT SCHOOL means:

a. on school premises,

b. X š v Ç • Z}} or •%o} v •} Œ š] À] štQ is held on school Á Z š Z Œ }

premises, X }v • Z}} or š Œ v •%o} Œ š š]v À Z] o U

d. at an official school bus stop,

e. using property or equipment provided by the school, or

f. acts which create material and substantial disruption of the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

District Procedures dZ ^μ%o Œ]v š v v š •Z oo ([v ^'μ] o]v • v W Œ } μ C

implement the Bullying and Harassment Policy and SD v P s}} o v W }o] Ç X _

The Superintendent shall provide appropriate guidelines for each school for reporting and investigating incidents of bullying or harassment. Specific persons responsible for receiving and following up on reports will be identified in these procedures. Such guidelines will include a standardized reporting form to be used by any member of the PPSD community.

The purpose of such a reporting form is to trigger an investigation, which protects the safety of the target, bystanders, and/or concerned family/guardian/community members. These guidelines shall include clear guidelines as to when and how reports on bullying or harassment should be made to law enforcement for investigation into possible criminal charge. Within the requirements of FERPA, the Guidelines and Procedures to Implement the Bullying and Harassment Policy and Dating Violence Policy shall include a specific amount of time within which parents will be informed of a complaint and a specific amount of time for investigations to be completed.

Additionally, the Guidelines and Procedures to Implement the Bullying and Harassment Policy and Dating Violence Policy shall also include a plan for communicating with parents/guardians, professional development for all staff, and instruction for students at all school levels in social learning and violence prevention.

Information
Dissemination

The school principal, director, or head of school shall ensure that students, staff and parents/legal guardians are provided information regarding this policy. This information shall include methods of discouraging and preventing this type of behavior, the procedure to file a complaint, and disciplinary action that may be taken against those who commit acts in violation of this policy.

The policy shall be:

- a. Distributed annually to students, staff, volunteers and parent/legal guardians.
- b. Included in student codes of conduct, disciplinary policies and student

Reporting

Each member of the PPSD community is responsible for reporting knowledge of any behaviors covered in this Policy or credible information that such an act has taken place.

Each school principal shall establish, and prominently publicize to students, staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians, how a report of bullying may be filed and how this report will be acted upon. The reporting form can be found in our website or in Guidelines and Procedures to Implement the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

The victim of bullying/harassment, anyone who witnesses an incidence of bullying/harassment, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying/harassment has taken place may file a report of bullying. Any student or staff member who believes he/she is being bullied/harassed should immediately report such circumstances to an appropriate staff member, teacher or administrator.

Parents / Guardians

be made anonymously provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report

Prohibition against Retaliation Retaliation or threats of retaliation in any form designed to intimidate the victim of bullying/harassment, those who are witnesses to bullying/harassment, or those investigating an incident of bullying/harassment shall not be tolerated. Retaliation or threat of retaliation will result in the imposition of discipline in accordance with the school behavior code.

False Reporting/Accusations A school employee, school volunteer or student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying/harassment or retaliation shall be disciplined in accordance with the school behavior code.

Reports in Good Faith A school employee, school volunteer, student, parent/legal guardian, or caregiver who promptly reports, in good faith, an act of bullying/harassment to the appropriate school official designated in the school's policy shall be immune from a cause of action for damages arising from reporting bullying/harassment

Investigation/

Protection: If the investigation shows that

Wide Code of Conduct, Grades PK-X_Z
to intimidate the victim of bullying or harassment, those who are witnesses or those investigating an incident of bullying or harassment will be subject to Level Two or d Z CE]v š Z -Wide Code of Conduct, Grade-PKX _

Acts of bullying or harassment allegedly committed by adult members (including teachers, administrators, staff members, other school personnel, parents, community partners, or other visitors to the school) of the school community will be reported to school administrators and/or the designated office of the PPSD for investigation and consequences, in accordance with applicable procedures, including appropriate legal actions.

Retaliation or threats of retaliation by adult members (including teachers, administrators, staff members, other school personnel, parents, community partners, or other visitors to the school) of the PPSD community in any form designed to intimidate the victim of, witnesses or those investigating bullying or harassment will be subject to additional consequences, in accordance with appropriate procedures.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Students shall be prohibited from accessing social networking sites in school, except for educational or instructional purposes and with the prior approval from school administration.

Support for the Target including Social Services / Counseling

Since bullying and harassment puts the mental health of the target at risk, an appropriate referral for support services will be made. The school shall maintain ongoing support and communication with the target to ensure that retaliation for the reporting any behaviors covered in this policy is addressed promptly. The target and the

š OE P š [• % OE v š • Z } μ o (() OE OE v P } (} % š] } v • š % OE • } v [• u } š] } v o v % Z Ç •] o • (š Ç X

Referral to appropriate counseling and/or social services currently being offered by schools or communities shall be provided for bullying victims, perpetrators and appropriate family members of said students.

Policy Oversight & Responsibility

Each school principal shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight this bullying policy. Each school principal shall coordinate and timely report investigative findings to the District-wide Title 9/Equity coordinator also

shall provide the superintendent with a summary report of incidents, responses,
v v Ç } š Z Œ μ o o Ç] v P r Œ o ě annually. • š o • š š Á]

For public schools, the prevention of bullying shall be part of the school
district strategic plan § 16 7.1 2(e)) and school safety plan § 16 21 24).

Annually, the Superintendent shall also report to the School

US Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII (Employment Discrimination Based on Race, Color, Religion, Sex, National Origin)
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Gender Equity including Sexual