
AURORA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Adopted November 2001
Revised April 2005
Revised June 2007
Reviewed February 2016
Reviewed April 2017
Revised December 2018

APS Code: JICDE

PREVENTION OF BULLYING

The Board of Education supports a secure school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. The purpose of this policy is to promote consistency of approach and to help create a climate in which all types of bullying are regarded as unacceptable.

Bullying is the use of coercion or intimidation to obtain control over another person or to cause physical, mental or emotional harm to another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal or electronically transmitted expression or by means of a physical act or gesture. Bullying is prohibited against any student for any reason, including but not limited to any such behavior that is directed toward a student on the basis of his or her academic performance or any basis protected by federal and state law, including disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation (which includes transgender), national origin, religion, ancestry or the need for special education services, whether such characteristic(s) is actual or perceived.

Bullying is prohibited on district property, at district or school-sanctioned activities and events, when students are being transported in any vehicle dispatched by the district or one of its schools, or off school property when such conduct has a nexus to school or any district curricular or non-curricular activity or event.

A student who engages in any act of bullying and/or a student who takes any retaliatory action against a student who reports in good faith an incident of bullying, is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the bullying behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made. Bullying behavior that constitutes unlawful discrimination or harassment shall be subject to investigation and discipline under related Board policies and procedures. Students targeted by bullying when such bullying behavior may constitute unlawful discrimination or harassment also have additional rights and protections under Board policies and procedures regarding unlawful discrimination and harassment.

LEGAL REF.: C.R.S. 22-32-109.1(2)(a)(I)(K) (policy required as part of safe schools plan)
C.R.S. 22-32-110(1)(k) (definition of racial or ethnic background includes hair texture, definition of protective hairstyle)

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CROSS REFS: AC, Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity
 ADH, District Philosophy Statement on Student Discipline
 JICC, JICC-R, Student Conduct on Buses
 JICF, JICF-R, Secret Societies/Gang Activity
 JICI, Weapons in School
 JK.1, JK.1-R, Student Discipline
 JKD.1 and JKD.1-R, Disciplinary Classroom Removal by Teacher

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EXAMPLES OF BULLYING

Examples of acts that may constitute bullying include:

- Derogatory written or pictorial communications in any media (e.g., letters, notes, cellphones, social networks, voice mail, text messages, pager messages, newspaper articles, invitations, posters, photos, cartoons);
- Derogatory verbal comments (e.g., name-calling, taunting, hostile teasing, spreading rumors, epithets, jokes, or slurs);
- Threats of force or violence against a person's body, possessions or residence (e.g., obtaining food or money by threats of force); or
- Physical conduct (e.g., provocative gestures, overly rough horseplay, restricting freedom of action or movement, violence, defacing or destruction of property).

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, cellphone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites, and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Cyberbullying includes sexting, which is defined in JBC-2-R.

Cyberbullying will not be tolerated and will constitute the same levels of disciplinary action as other types of bullying.

RESPONSES TO BULLYING

All administrators, teachers, classified staff and students share the responsibility to ensure that

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bullying does not occur at any district school, on district property, at district or school-related activities, in any district vehicle, and/or off school property when such conduct has a connection to school or any district curricular or non-curricular activity or event. Toward that end:

- All students who believe they have been victims of bullying in any such circumstance shall immediately report it to an administrator or teacher at their school.
- All students who witness student bullying in any such circumstance shall immediately report it to an administrator or teacher at their school.
- All building administrators and teachers who have any incident of bullying reported to them shall promptly forward the report(s) to the principal or principal's designee for appropriate action.
- All principals, administrators, teachers and classified staff who witness student bullying in any such circumstance shall immediately take appropriate action to stop the bullying, as prescribed by the district and building principal, and shall promptly report the bullying to the principal or principal's designee for appropriate action.
- Each building principal or principal's designee shall ensure that all reports involving student bullying in any such circumstance are promptly and thoroughly investigated, and that appropriate action is taken.
- Each building principal or principal's designee shall contact law enforcement officials, as appropriate.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR BULLYING

In determining the appropriate action to be taken in response to incidents of student bullying, the building principal or principal's designee shall consider existing policies and regulations that address the type of conduct that may be involved in bullying. Such policies and regulations include, but are not limited to, JBB, (Sexual Harassment), JICC, JICC-R (Student Conduct on Buses), JICF, JICF-R (Secret Societies/Gang Activity), JICI (Weapons in School), JK.1, JK.1-R

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(District Conduct and Discipline Code), JKD.1 and JKD.1-R (Disciplinary Classroom Removal by Teacher (Suspension from Class). Any necessary discipline shall be imposed pursuant to existing policies.

In deciding on appropriate discipline, the circumstances surrounding the behavior, the severity of the conduct, and whether the conduct represents a pattern should be considered. Administrators shall also be mindful of the principles set forth in the District Philosophy Statement on Student Discipline (Policy ADH), including the concept that the discipline process should be instructive and corrective and that its focus should be on helping the student to change or control inappropriate behavior, rather than on punishment. In making determinations under this policy, due consideration will be given to the rights to freedom of expression of public school students under federal and state law.

Disciplinary interventions and consequences for student bullying may range from counseling, restorative justice and in-school suspension to suspension, and/or expulsion.

BULLYING PREVENTION EFFORTS

Bullying prevention efforts are most effective when implemented school-wide and are designed to send a message that bullying will not be tolerated in schools. Well-designed bullying prevention efforts can reduce, eliminate and prevent bully/victim problems, as well as significantly improve the overall school climate. Effective bullying prevention also requires a commitment on the part of all adults to reduce or eliminate bullying.

Effective prevention programs rely on a number of components to reduce and prevent bullying problems. Components may be implemented at the school level, the classroom level, or at the individual level. The use of particular components may vary according to maturity level of students, grade level, learning environment goal(s) for the school, etc.

Taking action at school, classroom and individual levels is vital to counteract any bully/victim problems. In this way, students will be exposed to consistent messages from different persons/sources and in different contexts regarding the district and school's views of and attitudes toward bullying.

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Monitoring data related to bullying is crucial to the bullying prevention efforts. Data may be collected and evaluated through surveys, questionnaires, analyzing discipline statistics, and data for the learning environment goal(s) in the annual school improvement plan.

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PREVENTION OF BULLYING: SEXTING

Sexting is sending, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, emails or other material of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form on a computer, cellphone, or other electronic device. Sexting is prohibited. Parents and the police will be contacted. Sexting may be reported as suspected child abuse/ neglect or child pornography.

In Colorado, a person 10 or older who sends or receives sexually explicit material of someone under the age of 18, such as photographs or videos depicting actions, poses or nudity by cellphone or computer could face felony child pornography charges. A person found guilty of this crime could also be labeled a sex offender and be required to register as a sex offender for life.

Even if a student is not the person who captures the photo or video, it is against the law to be in possession of or to share such items with other students.

If students take a photo of themselves and send it to someone else via cellphone or post it on a website, they are in possession of their own child pornography, which is also a felony. There are also risks that sexually explicit photos, meant to be shared with only one person, may be distributed to others and even posted on the Internet.

Students who come into possession of child pornography immediately should contact a trusted adult and notify police.

Students are hereby on notice that administrators may search cellphones if they have a reasonable suspicion that a student has been involved in sexting.

The consequences for sexting are the same as those for bullying.

Harassment and bullying related to sexting incidents are prohibited, and appropriate discipline will be imposed.

The operation of electronic communication devices with cameras is prohibited in locker rooms, bathrooms, or other locations where such operation may violate the privacy rights of another person.

LEGAL REFS: C.R.S. 22-32-109.1(2)(a)(X)

CROSS REFS: ADH, District Philosophy Statement on Student Discipline
JBB, Sexual Harassment

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PREVENTION OF BULLYING: SEXTING

JK.1-R, Student Discipline

JIH/JIHB, Student Interrogations, Searches and Arrests