

BULLYING

It is the policy of this school district that bullying of students by other students, personnel, or the public will not be tolerated. Students are expected to be civil, polite, and fully engaged in the learning process. Students who act inappropriately are not fully engaged in the learning process. This policy is in effect while the students are on school grounds, in school vehicles, at school-sponsored activities, at school-sanctioned events, and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management, and welfare of the school district. Bullying of students by electronic communication including video content is prohibited whether or not such communication originated at school or with school equipment, if the communication is specifically directed at students or school personnel and concern bullying at school.

As used in the *School Safety Bullying Prevention Act*, bullying has been defined as a “pattern of harassment, intimidation, threatening behavior, physical acts, verbal or electronic communication, or directed toward a student or groups of students that results in or is reasonably perceived as being done with the intent to cause negative educational or physical results for the targeted individual or group and is communicated in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student.”

Discipline of Students

In administering discipline, consideration will be given to alternative methods of punishment to ensure that the most effective discipline is administered in each case. In all disciplinary action, teachers and administrators will be mindful of the fact that they are dealing with individual personalities. The faculty may consider consultation and parents to determine the most effective disciplinary measure.

In considering alternatives of corrective actions, the faculty/administration of the school district will consider those listed below. However, the school is not limited to these alternative methods, nor does this list reflect an order or sequence of events to follow in disciplinary actions. The board of education will rely upon the judgment and discretion of the administrator to determine the appropriate remedial or corrective action in each instance.

1. Conference with student.
2. Conference with parents.
3. In school retention.
4. Detention.
5. Referral to school counselor and/or outside counseling agency.
6. Behavioral contract.
7. Changing student's seat assignment or class assignment.

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8. Requiring a student to make financial restitution for damaged property.
9. Requiring a student to clean or straighten items or facilities damaged by the student's behavior.
10. Restriction of privileges.
11. Involvement of local authorities.
12. Requiring student to participate in anger management or other school counseling.
13. Referring student to appropriate social agency.
14. Suspension.
15. Other appropriate disciplinary action as required and as indicated by the circumstances which may include, but is not limited to, removal from eligibility to participate or attend extra-curricular activities as well as removal from the privilege of attending or participating in the graduation ceremony, school dances, prom, prom activities, and/or class trips.

A copy of this policy will be furnished to each student and teacher in this school district.

**REFERENCE: 210.S. § 850.0
70 O.S. § 24-100.2**

PROHIBITING BULLYING
(INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES)

The following procedures will be used by any person for the filing, processing, and resolution of a reported incident of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or threatening behavior. The procedures are to be followed by the administration of the school district in an effort to determine the severity of the incident and the potential to result in future violence.

Procedures

The procedure for investigating reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying or threatening behavior, is as follows:

1. The matter should immediately be reported to the building principal. If the bullying involved an electronic communication, a printed copy of the communication as well as identifying information such as e-mail address or web address shall be provided to the building principal in written form to allow for a thorough investigation of the matter.
2. Upon receipt of a written report, the building principal shall contact the superintendent and begin an investigation to determine that bullying occurred, the severity of the incident and the potential for future violence.

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3. The principal shall make a determination as to whether bullying has occurred. If it is determined that bullying has occurred the principal shall immediately contact the parent of the student bully, victim and any other students affected by the prohibited behavior.
4. If during the course of the investigation it appears that a crime may have been committed, the building principal and/or superintendent shall notify local law enforcement and request that the alleged victim also contact law enforcement to report the matter for potential criminal investigation.
5. If it is determined that the school district's discipline code has been violated, the building principal shall follow district policies regarding the discipline of the student.
6. Upon completion of the investigation, the principal or superintendent may recommend that available community mental health care options, substance abuse or other counseling options be provided to the student, if appropriate. This may include information about the types of support services available to the student bully, victim, and any other student affected by the prohibited behavior. If such a recommendation is made, the administration shall request disclosure of any information that indicates an explicit threat to the safety of students or school personnel provided the disclosure of information does not violate the provisions of requirements of the ***Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974***, the ***Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Section 2503 of Title 12 of the Oklahoma Statutes Section 1376 of Title 59 of Oklahoma Statutes***, or any other state or federal laws relating to the disclosure of confidential information.
7. The principal shall provide written documentation of the bullying incident, disciplinary actions taken, prevention steps, remediation steps and any other relevant documentation to the superintendent or designee upon completing the investigation.

Definition of Terms

1. ***Statutory definition of bullying:***

70 Okla. Stat. § 24-100.3(C) of the ***School Safety Bullying Prevention Act*** defines the term "bullying" as a "pattern of harassment, intimidation, threatening behavior, physical acts, verbal or electronic communication, or directed toward a student or groups of students that results in or is reasonably perceived as being done with the intent to cause negative educational or physical results for the targeted individual or group and is communicated in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student."

2. *General Display of Bullying Acts*

Bullying, for purposes of this section of the policy, includes harassment and intimidation, and vice versa. According to experts in the field, bullying in general is the exploitation of a less powerful person by an individual taking unfair advantage of that person, which is repeated over time, and which inflicts a negative effect on the victim. The seriousness of a bullying act depends on the harm inflicted upon the victim and the frequency of the offensive acts. Power may be, but is not limited to the following: physical strength, social skill, verbal ability, or other characteristics. Bullying acts by students have been described in several different categories.

- a. ***Physical Bullying*** includes harm or threatened harm to another's body or property, including but not limited to, what would reasonably be foreseen as a serious expression of intent to inflict physical harm or property damage through verbal or written speech or gestures directed at the student-victim, when considering the factual circumstances in which the threat was made and the reaction of the intended victim. Common acts include tripping, hitting, pushing, pinching, pulling hair, kicking, biting, starting fights, daring others to fight, stealing or destroying property, extortion, assaults with a weapon, other violent acts, and homicide.
- b. ***Emotional Bullying*** includes the intentional infliction of harm to another's self-esteem, including, but not limited to the following: insulting or profane remarks, insulting or profane gestures, or harassing and frightening statements, when such events are considered in light of the surrounding facts, the history of the students involved, and age, maturity, and special characteristics of the students.
- c. ***Social Bullying*** includes harm to another's group acceptance, including, but not limited to the following: harm resulting from intentionally gossiping about another student or intentionally spreading negative rumors about another student that results in the victim being excluded from a school activity or student group; the intentional planning and/or implementation of acts or statements that inflict public humiliation upon a student; the intentional undermining of current relationships of the victim-student through the spreading of untrue gossip or rumors designed to humiliate or embarrass the student; the use of gossip, rumors, or humiliating acts designed to deprive the student of awards, recognition, or involvement in school activities; the false or malicious spreading of an untrue statement or statements about another student that exposes the victim to contempt or ridicule or deprives the victim of the confidence and respect of student peers; or the making of false statements to others that the student has committed a crime, or has an infectious, contagious, or loathsome disease, or similar egregious representations.

- d. ***Sexual Bullying*** includes harm to another resulting from, but not limited to the following: making unwelcome sexual comments about the student; making vulgar, profane, or lewd comments or drawings or graffiti about the victim; directing vulgar, profane, or lewd gestures toward the victim; committing physical acts of a sexual nature at school, including the fondling or touching of private parts of the victim's body; participation in the gossiping or spreading of false rumors about the student's sexual life; written or verbal statements directed at the victim that would reasonably be interpreted as a serious threat to force the victim to commit sexual acts or to sexually assault the victim when considering the factual circumstances in which the threat was made and the reaction of the intended victim; off-campus dating violence by a student that adversely affect the victim's school performance or behavior, attendance, participation in school functions or extra-curricular activities, or makes the victim fearful at school of the assaulting bully; or the commission of sexual assault, rape, or homicide. Such conduct may also constitute sexual harassment – also prohibited by the Poteau Public School District.

Procedures Applicable to the Understanding of and Prevention of The Bullying of Students

1. *Student and Staff Education and Training*

All staff will be provided with a copy of the ***District's Policy Prevention of the Bullying Students***. All students will be provided a summary of the policy and notice that a copy of the entire policy is available on request. Poteau Public School is committed to providing annual appropriate and relevant training to staff regarding identification of behavior constituting harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students and the prevention and management of such conduct.

Students and parents, like staff members, shall participate in an annual education program which sets out expectations for student behavior and emphasizes an understanding of harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students, the district's prohibition of such conduct, and the reasons why the conduct is destructive, unacceptable, and will lead to discipline. Students shall also be informed of the consequences of bullying conduct toward their peers.

2. *Poteau Public School's Safe School Committee*

The District's Safe School Committee has the responsibility of studying and making recommendations regarding unsafe conditions, strategies for students to avoid harm at school, student victimization, crime prevention, school violence, strategies for faculty to recognize bullying, and other issues which interfere with and adversely affect the maintenance of safe schools.

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With respect to student harassment, intimidation, and bullying, the Safe School Committee shall consider and make recommendations regarding professional staff development needs of faculty and other staff related to methods to decrease student harassment, intimidation, and bullying and understanding and identifying bullying behaviors. In addition, the Committee shall make recommendations regarding: (1) identification of methods to encourage the involvement of the community and students in addressing conduct involving bullying; (2) methods to enhance relationships between students and school staff in order to strengthen communication; and (3) fashioning of problem-solving teams that include counselors and/or school psychologists.

In accomplishing its objectives, the Committee shall review the board policy on bullying, traditional and accepted harassment, intimidation, and bullying prevention programs utilized by other states, state agencies, or school districts. The Committee shall also review the Oklahoma State Department of Education's list of research-based bullying prevention programs.

Student Reporting

Students are encouraged to inform school personnel if they are the victim of or a witness to acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Any student who knowingly makes a false report of bullying, shall be subject to the district policies regarding the discipline of the student.

Staff Reporting

An important duty of the staff is to report acts or behavior that the employee witnesses that appears to constitute harassing, intimidating, or bullying. Employees, whether certified or non-certified, shall encourage students who tell them about acts that may constitute intimidation, harassment, or bullying, to complete a Report Form. For young students staff members given that information will need to provide direct assistance to the student.

Staff members who witness such events are to complete reports and to submit them to the employee designated by the superintendent to receive them. Staff members who hear of incidents that may, in the staff member's judgment, constitute harassment, intimidation, or bullying, are to report all relevant information to the superintendent or his/her designee.

Parental Responsibilities

Parents/guardians will be informed in writing of the district's program to stop intimidation, harassment, and bullying. An administrative response to a reported act of intimidation, harassment, or bullying may involve certain actions to be taken by parents. Parents will be informed of the program and the means for students to report bullying acts toward them or other students. They will also be told that to help prevent bullying at school they should encourage their children to:

1. Report bullying when it occurs;
2. Take advantage of opportunities to talk to their children about bullying;
3. Inform the school immediately if they think their child is being bullied or is bullying other students;
4. Watch for symptoms that their child may be a victim of bullying and report those symptoms; and
5. Cooperate fully with school personnel in identifying and resolving incidents.

Adopted: August 12, 2002
Revised: February 12, 2007
November 12, 2012

Revised: August 12, 2013

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BULLYING INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date: _____ **Time:** _____ **Room/Location:** _____

Student(s) Initiating Bullying:

_____ **Grade:** _____ **Class:** _____

_____ **Grade:** _____ **Class:** _____

Student(s) Affected:

_____ **Grade:** _____ **Class:** _____

_____ **Grade:** _____ **Class:** _____

Type of Bullying Alleged:

Racial _____ **Sexual** _____ **Religious** _____ **Other** _____

Check all spaces below that apply. Adult stated or identified inappropriate behaviors as:

_____ Name Calling	_____ Spitting
_____ Stalking	_____ Demeaning Comments
_____ Inappropriate Gesturing	_____ Stealing
_____ Staring/Leering	_____ Damaging Property
_____ Writing/Graffiti	_____ Shoving/Pushing
_____ Threatening	_____ Hitting/Kicking
_____ Taunting/Ridiculing	_____ Flashing a Weapon
_____ Inappropriate Touching	_____ Intimidation/Extortion
_____ Other	

Describe the Incident: _____

Witnesses Present: _____

Physical Evidence: **Graffiti** _____ **Notes** _____ **E-mail** _____ **Web Sites** _____ **Video/audio tape** _____

Staff Signature: _____

Parent(s) Contacted: **Date** _____ **Time** _____

Administrative response taken: _____