



WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BULLYING / HARASSMENT

Introduction To Brevard Public Schools

Bully Policy 5517.01

Offices of Student Services, Risk Management,
District & School Security, and Human
Resources/Labor Relations 2009-2010

Florida State Statute 1006.147

**Also called The Jeffrey Johnston
“Stand Up for all Students Act”**

Prohibits bullying or harassment to any student, school employee, volunteer, parent and/or school visitor.

Brevard's Bully Policy

Our Board is committed to a safe, secure, positive, productive and nurturing educational environment that is free from bullying or harassment of any kind for all of its students, employees, volunteers, parents and/or school visitors.

Definition of Bullying/Harassment

Bullying/Harassment means physically or verbally or emotionally hurting someone on purpose. It is unwanted and repeated, and can be written, verbal, or physical behavior...

“It may involve, but is not limited to:”

- (Unwanted) teasing
- Social exclusion
- Threat
- Intimidation
- Stalking
- Physical violence
- Theft
- Public humiliation

- Sexual, religious, or racial/ethnic harassment
- Damaging or destruction of property
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or property
- Cyber-bullying
- Cyber-stalking

Characteristics of Bullying

RIP

Repeated
Imbalance of Power
Purposeful

Cyber-bullying & Cyber-stalking

“Use of electronic communication or technological devices to include...”

- Email messages
- Instant messaging
- Text messaging
- Cellular phone communication
- Internet blogs
- Social websites

- Internet chat rooms
- Internet postings
- Digital pictures / images
- Defamatory websites to engage in acts of bullying and harassment

New addition regarding Cyber-bullying:

“The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action initiated under this section.”

What does that mean?

No matter where or what computer is used, if your child uses it to bully/harass a student and/or school based adult, if reported, disciplinary sanctions must be taken by the school administrator.

Characteristics of Bullying

RIP

Repeated
Imbalance of Power
Purposeful

Expected Behaviors from All

- No tolerance for bullying/harassment;
- Create a positive school climate, positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship, and academic success;
- All will demonstrate appropriate behavior and treat others with civility and respect.

What to tell your child to do if he/she is being bullied/harassed:

- Tell the bully to stop;
- Walk away;
- Seek help from a trusted school adult;
- If it is repeated then make a report.

Find out the circumstances of the bullying and what exactly transpired.

You may be able to pinpoint how your child could have avoided being bullied. For example, walking away or avoiding the bully could help... especially if you child is with a friend or in a public place. *Do not* tell your child that it is his fault he is being bullied.

Talk to your child about being with friends and knowing which friends he can count on.

Encourage your child to cultivate these positive relationships and not to hang out with kids who make him feel badly about himself.

If the bullying is taking place at school, find a teacher or other trusted adult in the school to talk to about the situation.

This can be helpful, especially if there is a particular child that is bullying your child. Although your child may not want you to get involved, if your child's safety is at risk, then you must bring it to the attention of the authorities at school if the bullying is taking place on school property.

How Students Report

- **Verbal**: In-person reporting;
- **Written**: BPS Bullying/Harassment Reporting form - Elementary or Secondary/Adult;
- **Anonymous**: Bully Box, Speak Out Hotline (1.800.226.7733), School-based website if applicable.

Incident Reporting and Immunity

- **GOOD FAITH** – Anyone making a report in good faith is immune from cause of action/damages. It will NOT affect employment, grades, learning/working environment or assignments.
- **WRONGFUL & INTENTIONAL** – Consequences and appropriate remedial action will apply.

Teach Your Child the POWER of Bystanders! Bystanders should:

- Express disapproval by not participating in the bullying behavior-
DO NOT laugh along, DO NOT tease, DO NOT watch, listen, or gossip!!!
- Tell the bully to STOP!
- Walk away (encourage the victim to go with you);
- If you see the bullying behavior repeated, REPORT the bully / bullies.

Actions taken for students who violate the policy...

- Counseling;
- Letters / phone calls to parents of both the bully and the victim;
- Suspension;
- Expulsion;
- Reported to law enforcement.

Consequences for Parents, Visitors/Volunteers who violate this policy...

- Determined by the School Administrator;
- Trespassed;
- If applicable, report to appropriate law enforcement agency.

Ways Parents of Elementary Students Can Help Prevent Bullying

- Model speaking and acting in respectful ways to solve problems
- Discuss bullying behaviors and how hurtful it can be
- Make behavioral expectations clear and consistent when siblings/peers engage in hurtful teasing and bullying
- Help children understand the meaning of friendship
- Urge children to report bullying

Ways Parents of Secondary Students Can Help Prevent Bullying

- Remain proactive and reinforce respectful behavior;
- Let them know that bullying is disrespectful, unacceptable, and can be dangerous;
- Tell them hazing is illegal, humiliating, and can be life threatening;
- Sexual harassment is illegal

More Ways for Parents of Secondary Students...

- Bullying on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation is a form of bias or hate and cannot be dismissed as teasing;
- Hate-motivated behavior often leads to Hate crimes and can be punishable by law.

All Parents Should Also...

- Know the school rules, expected behaviors and consequences of bullying/harassment
- Participate at school, offer services and attend school-sponsored activities
- Communicate regularly with teachers
- Report bullying behavior immediately
- Ask for and accept the school's help whether your youth is a target, a bully or a bystander

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Again! Expected Behavior in our Schools...

- Show NO tolerance for bullying/harassment;
and
- All will demonstrate appropriate behavior and treat others with civility and respect.