

STUDENT HARASSMENT & BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION
(Dignity for All Students Act)

The Board of Education of the Patchogue-Medford School district is committed to providing an educational environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality. The Board recognizes that students' ability to learn and to meet high academic standards and a school's ability to educate its students are compromised by incidents of bullying or harassment. Such behavior affects not only the individuals who are its targets, but also those who participate in or witness such acts.

Therefore, it is the policy of the District to prohibit bullying and harassment on district property, district transportation, and at school-sponsored (on or off campus) events and functions. Acts of bullying and harassment are prohibited, whether they are committed directly or indirectly, in person (face-to-face), or remotely by use of electronic technology, and whether on school property, at a school function, on a school or coach bus, or off school property where there is a sufficient nexus to the school environment. The District prohibits acts of bullying and harassment that create a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringe on the rights of the victim at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.

The Board recognizes that, in some instances, acts of bullying and harassment may constitute discrimination in violation of state and federal law and regulation and/or District policy. The District strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination, including bullying and harassment. No student shall be subjected to discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex by school employees or students on District property or at a school function.

Additional information can be obtained by reviewing Board of Education Policy #5159-Bullying and Cyberbullying.

DEFINITIONS

“Bullying” and “Harassment”:

1. “Harassment,” and “Bullying,” as defined by the Dignity for All Students Act, mean the creation of a hostile educational environment by written, verbal, or physical conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse, including such behavior conducted via electronic communication:
 - a. That has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being;
 - b. That reasonably causes, or would reasonably be expected to cause, a student to fear for his or her physical safety;

Student Harassment & Bullying Prevention and Intervention (DASA) (Continued)

Definitions (Continued)

- c. That reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; **or**
 - d. That occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property.
- 2. “Bullying” includes “cyber bullying,” which is defined by the Dignity for All Students Act as meaning harassment or bullying (as defined above) where such harassment or bullying occurs through any form of electronic communication. Opportunities for cyber bullying exist both on and off of the premises of Patchogue-Medford Schools and may involve the use of, but not limited to, the Patchogue-Medford computer system, electronic mail system, or personal computers, cell phones, digital cameras. Cyber bullying using any of these methods shall be covered by this policy. Within the parameters of these definitions, cyber bullying may include, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student by way of any technological device or tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory electronic mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blog entries).
- 3. Within the parameters of the above definitions, “bullying” and “harassment” may take many forms including, but not limited to: slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendo, demeaning comments, drawing cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats, name-calling, insulting remarks, frightening phone calls, extortion, taunting, gossip, damaging or taking a student’s clothes or personal property, exclusion from a group, teasing, humiliating a student or other written, verbal, physical, or electronic actions.
- 4. The basis for such prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to, a person’s actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, physical or mental ability or disability, sexual orientation, gender, sex, marital status, gender identity, socio-economic status, and familial status.

Student Harassment & Bullying Prevention and Intervention (DASA) (Continued)

Definitions (Continued)

“Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, laptop, pager, or other hand-held device, communications transmitted through email, text message, instant message, voicemail, social networking sites, webpage, video, blogs, twitter, etc.

“Emotional harm” that takes place in the context of “harassment” or “bullying” means harm to a student’s emotional well-being through the creation of a hostile school environment that is so severe or pervasive so as to unreasonably and substantially interfere with a student’s education.

REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION OF REPORTS

In order for the Board to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures when the policy is violated, it is essential that all victims and persons with knowledge of bullying, harassment, or similar behavior report it immediately to District administrative staff. Students and parents may make an oral or written report of harassment, bullying, or discrimination to teachers, administrators or [other school personnel the District deems appropriate]. The Building Principal, Superintendent, or the Principal’s or Superintendent’s designee shall be charged with receiving reports of harassment, bullying, and discrimination. All employees who witness harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination or receive an oral or written report of such acts, are to promptly verbally notify the principal, superintendent, or their designee, not later than one (1) school day after witnessing or receiving a report of such acts, and must file a written report with the principal, superintendent, or their designee no later than two (2) school days after making such verbal report.

The District will promptly investigate all complaints, whether informal or formal, verbal or written. The Principal, Superintendent, or the Principal’s or Superintendent’s designee shall lead or supervise the thorough investigation of all reports of harassment, bullying, and discrimination and ensure that the investigation is completed promptly after the receipt of any written reports. School staff will utilize the flow charts and forms provided in the Anti-Bullying Implementation Plan and attached to this policy. All members of the school community will have access to the Bullying Complaint Forms (attached) and complaints will be treated confidentially to the extent possible but limited disclosure may be required to complete a thorough investigation. If, after investigation, the District finds that there has been a violation of this policy, prompt corrective action will be taken. This corrective action will be aimed at ending the harassment, bullying, or discrimination; eliminating any hostile environment; creating a more positive school culture and climate; preventing recurrence of the behavior; and ensuring the safety of the student or students who were the subjects of the harassment, bullying, or discrimination. However, the District cannot guarantee incidences will not recur, and parent(s), student(s), and employee(s) are encouraged to report any further incidents to the Principal as soon as practicable. Consistent with the District’s Code of Conduct, measured, balanced, and age-appropriate responses will be taken to instances of harassment, bullying and discrimination by students, and remedies and procedures will follow a progressive model that makes appropriate use of intervention, discipline, and

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Reporting and Investigation of Reports (Continued)

education, varying in method according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors. Upon completion of the investigation, all responding parties will complete the Bullying Determination Forms and subsequent Conduct/Action Plan forms if deemed necessary. Where required, material incidents of bullying and harassment will be reported to the State Education Department in the manner prescribed by the Commissioner. . The Principal, Superintendent, or their designee, shall promptly notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when it is believed that any harassment, bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.

Any person having reasonable cause to suspect that a student has been subjected to bullying or harassment who, acting in good faith, either reports such information to school officials, to the commissioner, or to law enforcement authorities, or otherwise participates in proceedings related to such bullying or harassment, shall have immunity from any civil liability arising from making such report or participating in the related investigation.

Retaliation for reporting incidents of bullying or harassment, or for participation in a related investigation is strictly prohibited. False reports or retaliation against the alleged bully or harasser also constitutes a violation of this policy. Acts of retaliation should be reported to the Administration. The District will investigate such reports and if, after investigation, the District finds that there has been a violation of this policy, prompt corrective action will be taken. Student violators of the policy may be subjected to disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Each building principal or his/her designee will submit the state mandated VADIR/DASA reports to the Superintendent of Schools or Superintendent's designee on an annual basis, denoting trends related to any harassment, bullying and/or discrimination.

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POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Superintendent of Schools shall implement regulations for reporting, investigating, and addressing allegations of harassment, bullying, and discrimination.

The Board recognizes that the effective implementation of this policy requires that it be part of a District-wide educational program that shall include elements of prevention, intervention and consequences:

Prevention will include:

- (1) training for administrators and staff to: promote a positive school environment that is free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination; discourage and respond to incidents of harassment, bullying, and discrimination; increase awareness of and sensitivity to the prevalence, causes, social patterns, identification, mitigation, and consequences of harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying, and discrimination; share strategies for preventing and effectively addressing such behavior, as well as problems of exclusion, bias and aggression in the educational setting; ensure the effective implementation of school policy on conduct and discipline; and include safe and supportive school climate concepts in curriculum and classroom management;
- (2) promoting student involvement in anti-bullying and anti-harassment efforts, peer support, mutual respect, and creating a culture which encourages students to report incidents of bullying and harassment, or similar behavior to an adult;
- (3) collaborating with families and the community to inform parents about the prevalence, causes, and consequences of bullying and harassment;
- (4) instruction for all students in civility, citizenship and character education, including, but not limited to, principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others (with an emphasis on discouraging acts of harassment, bullying, and discrimination), observance of laws and rules, courtesy, dignity, awareness and sensitivity to discrimination or harassment and civility in the relations of people of different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, genders, and sexes, and instruction of safe, responsible use of Internet and electronic communications.

Intervention will include:

- (1) Training for school staff on how to respond appropriately to students who engage in bullying or harassing behavior, are victims of such behavior, and are bystanders who report such behavior;
- (2) Remedial measures designed to correct the bullying or harassing behavior, prevent another occurrence, and protect the victim;
- (3) Development of nondiscriminatory instructional and counseling methods; and
- (4) thorough training of at least one staff member at every school to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice,

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 Policy Implementation (Continued)

physical or mental ability or disability, sexual orientation, gender, sex, marital status, gender identity, socio-economic status, and familial status. This staff member will be designated the Dignity Act Coordinator. The school's Dignity Act Coordinator's contact information will be included in student registration materials, student, parent, and employee handbooks, and other appropriate school publications, and will be distributed to students and staff annually at the beginning of the school year.

(5) Instruction will also be directed at addressing the safe and responsible use of the Internet and electronic communications.

Consequences may include:

(1) Discipline, including suspensions and expulsions consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and all rights under law and other applicable agreements; and

(2) Recognition for positive behavior exhibited by students who take an active role in addressing prohibited behaviors.

Disciplinary sanctions and corrective actions will take into account the severity of incidents, frequency and duration. Furthermore, possible consequences include, but are not limited to:

- Parent notification
- Written warning
- Parent conference
- Detention
- In School Suspension (ISS)
- Exclusion from school program or activities
- Out of School Suspension (OSS)
- Expulsion
- Consequences as permitted by Board of Education policy and the Code of Conduct.
- Restoration or repayment

This policy shall be included in the code of conduct in plain language, student registration materials, student, parent and employee handbooks, and other appropriate school publications, and distributed to students and staff annually at the beginning of the school year. A summary of this policy shall be included as a part of the District's summary of the code of conduct.

Adopted:

July 3, 2012

Revised:

August 26, 2013

Revised: August 29, 2016

Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form
Patchogue-Medford Schools

Directions: Bullying, harassment or intimidation are serious and will not be tolerated. This is a form to report alleged bullying, harassment or intimidation that occurred on school property; at a school-sponsored activity or event off school property; on a school bus; or on the way to and/or from school, in the current school year. If you are a student victim, the parent/guardian of a student victim, a close adult relative of a student victim, or a school staff member and wish to report an incident of alleged bullying, harassment or intimidation, complete this form and return it to the Principal at the student victim's school. Contact the school for additional information or assistance at any time.

Bullying, harassment or intimidation means intentional conduct, including verbal, physical or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being and is:

* motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or,

* threatening or seriously intimidating; and,

* occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or,

* substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

"Electronic communication" means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer or pager.

Today's Date School

Person Reporting Incident (First and Last Name)

Telephone # E-mail address

Place an "x" in the appropriate box:

Student Student (witness/bystander) Parent/guardian Other Adult School staff member

Name of student victim (First and Last Name) Age

Name(s) of alleged offenders(s) (if known)	Age	School (if known)	Is he/she a student?	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

On what date(s) did the incident happen? Mo/Day/Yr Mo/Day/Yr Mo/Day/Yr

Where did the incident happen? (choose all that apply):

- On school property At a school-sponsored activity or event off school property
 On a school bus On the way to/from school

Place an "x" next to the statement(s) that best describes what happened (choose all that apply):

- Any bullying, harassment or intimidation that involves physical aggression
 Getting another person to hit or harm the student
 Teasing, name-calling, making critical remarks, or threatening, in person or by other means
 Demeaning and pointing inappropriate jokes towards victim
 Excluding or rejecting the student
 Making rude and/or threatening gestures
 Spreading harmful rumors or gossip
 Intimidating (bullying), extorting or exploiting

Electronic communications (specify)

Other (specify)

What did the alleged offender(s) say or do? (Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

What did the alleged offender(s) say or do? (Attach a separate sheet if necessary)	
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Why did the bullying, harassment or intimidation occur? (Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

Why did the bullying, harassment or intimidation occur? (Attach a separate sheet if necessary)	
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Did a physical injury result from this incident? Place an "x" next to one of the following:

No Yes, but it did not require medical attention Yes, and it required medical attention

If there was a physical injury, do you think there will be permanent effects? Yes No

Was the student victim absent from school as a result of the incident? Yes No

If yes, how many days was the student victim absent from school as a result of the incident?

Did a psychological injury result from this incident? Place an "x" next to one of the following: No

Yes, but psychological services have not been sought Yes, and psychological services have been sought

Is there any additional information you would like to provide? (Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

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Signature

Date

Updated 5/12/2012

Bullying Assessment Flow Chart

