

Purpose

To state the Board's position regarding student harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, intimidation, or violence.

Definitions

Bullying is unwanted, demeaning behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or is highly likely to be repeated, over time. To be considered bullying, the behavior must be intentional and include: 1) an imbalance of power (students who bully use their physical, emotional, social, or academic power to control, exclude, or harm others), and 2) repetition (bullying behaviors happen more than once or are highly likely to be repeated based on evidence gathered).

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through texting, apps, or online via social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or hurtful content about another student. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.

Harassment includes actual or perceived negative actions that offend, ridicule, or demean another student with regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, family/parental or marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, or disability.

Intimidation is any communication or action directed against another student that threatens or induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority. Retaliation may be considered a form of intimidation.

Policy Statement

All students have the right to be free from bullying, harassment, or intimidation. The Board is committed to providing a safe, productive, and inclusive learning environment. Bullying problems are symptomatic of relationship problems best addressed holistically by students, schools, parents/caregivers, and the entire community. Allegany County Public Schools should be places where students are surrounded by caring adults who encourage students to treat others with kindness and empathy, while helping to build a relationship-focused, welcoming, supportive school environment fostering academic and personal growth for every student.

Limitations of Liability

In accordance with the statute, a school employee who reports an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation under Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 7-424.1 in accordance with the Board's policy is not civilly liable for any act or omission in reporting or failing to report an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

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| Legal Reference | | | § 7-424.1 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland |
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| Policy Cross Reference | Adopted | Reviewed | Revised Oct. 9, 2007, 1st Reading Nov. 13, 2007, 2nd Reading July 14, 2009, 1st Reading Aug. 11, 2009, 2nd Reading April 11, 2017, 1st Reading May 9, 2017, 2nd Reading June 13, 2017, Review only Jan. 11, 2022, 1 st Reading Feb. 8, 2022, 2 nd Reading |