

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation of any person on school property or at school sponsored functions or by the use of electronic technology at a public school is prohibited in all Maryland schools. Reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation or who are victims, witnesses, bystanders, or other with reliable information about an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation is prohibited in all Maryland Schools.

The ***Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form*** (Attachment 1)

**Procedures**

- A. Communication regarding the availability of the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form
  - a. The ***Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form*** (Attachment 1) should be used by anyone reporting alleged incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.
  - b. Forms can be obtained at the school level from school administrators, school counselors and PPW's. Forms are also available in the Student Services Office (301-759-2001) and on the Allegany County Board of Education webpage.
  - c. Staff will be informed of the availability of the *Bullying Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* for use during opening-of-school meetings and then periodically throughout the school year.
  - d. Students will be informed about the availability of the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* and its use during the first week of school.
  - e. This policy and a description of the use and availability of the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* shall be published in the Student Code of Conduct.
  - f. This policy and a description of the use and availability of the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* shall be made available on the ACPS website. The form shall be made available on the ACPS website or ASPEN in a form that allows completion and submission of the form online.
- B. Report of Acts of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation
  - a. The *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* should be used to report alleged incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation that occurred during the current school year on school property, at a school-sponsored activity or even off school property, on a school bus, on the way to and/or from school, or through electronic communication on or off school property.
  - b. Upon request, students will be assisted in filling out the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* at school.

- c. Information obtained from the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* is confidential and may not be redisclosed except as otherwise provided under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and may not be made a part of a student's permanent educational record.
- d. Summaries of all reports shall be kept by a Superintendent's designee for reporting to the State Board in accordance with Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 7-424.

Building Level Reports of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation

- e. The building principal or designee is responsible for receiving incident reports. Any Board of Education employee who receives a report shall inform the building principal immediately.
- f. Under no circumstances, shall a student, who believes that they are the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, be required to first report to a principal if the principal is the alleged perpetrator. Any student who has a claim of harassment and/or violence to be filed against a principal shall contact a teacher, counselor or nurse who shall contact the Human Resource Department to file a complaint.
- g. Initial complaints may be given verbally or in writing. If a verbal complaint is made, a written statement will be obtained from the student in their own words on the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* identifying the alleged perpetrator and circumstances that led to the complaint. If due to a student's age or other mitigating circumstances, a written statement cannot be obtained from the student, the principal or designee will complete the above form using the student's own words identifying the alleged perpetrators and circumstances that led to the complaint.

County Level Reports of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation

- h. Any report that cannot be resolved at the school level should be forwarded to the Superintendent or designee.
- i. If the report involves the Superintendent's designee, the complaint shall be filed directly with the Superintendent.
- j. Submission of a good faith report will not affect the complainant's or reporter's educational opportunities.

**C. Procedures for Providing Notice of an Act of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation**

- a. A parent or guardian of the alleged targeted student must be notified within three business days after the date the act is reported.
- b. A parent or guardian of an alleged perpetrator must be notified within five business days after the date the act is reported.

- c. At the conclusion of the investigation, a parent or guardian of the alleged targeted student and a parent or guardian of the alleged perpetrator shall be notified of the outcome of the investigation.

D. Investigation of Acts of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation

- a. The principal or designee will address incidents that occur at school or have a connection or nexus back to the school setting that create a risk of harm to other students while they are at school or interfere with the educational environment.
- b. The incident must be promptly and appropriately investigated by the principal or designee consistent with due process rights, using the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Investigation Form* within two school days after receipt of a reporting form or as timely as possible for school administration.
- c. The principal or designee will determine whether bullying, harassment or intimidation occurred by taking steps to verify who committed the act of bullying, harassment or intimidation and whether others played a role in perpetuating this act. Other related complaints, if any, should be reviewed in making this determination.
- d. The principal or designee shall establish that neither the targeted student nor witnesses should be promised confidentiality at the onset of an investigation. It cannot be predicted what will be discovered or if a hearing may result from the ultimate outcome of the investigation. Efforts should be made to increase the confidence and trust of the targeted student and any witnesses. Students should be informed that any information discussed and recorded will be confined to "need to know" status.
- e. The principal or designee shall notify the parents/guardians of the targeted student and offender of the incident.
- f. The principal or designee shall apply consequences and/or remedial actions consistent with due process rights and the guidelines provided herein. The offender shall be informed that retaliation against a targeted student or bystander is strictly prohibited and that further administrative interventions may occur if the activity continues.
- g. The principal or designee shall conduct separate conferences with the targeted student and offender within two weeks after the investigation to determine whether the bullying, harassment, or intimidation has continued and whether there is a need for further additional interventions or supports. These conferences may occur as part of counseling intervention. Another follow-up conference or conversation will be held with the targeted student four weeks after the initial follow-up conference to determine if the bullying harassment, or intimidation has ceased.
- h. Any delinquent acts shall be reported promptly to the responsible law enforcement agency in accordance with Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.01.15.

**E. Standard Consequences and Remedial Actions**

- a. Consequences and remedial actions for students committing acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, students engaged in reprisal or retaliation, and students who have made false accusations shall be consistently and fairly applied after appropriate investigation has determined that such an offense has occurred. Guidelines on consequences and remedial actions include:
  - i. Avoid using exclusionary discipline measures when addressing bullying behavior, which should only be used after all other available and appropriate behavioral interventions have been exhausted or if a student's continued presence in school would pose a threat to the safety of others.
  - ii. Consequences for disciplinary infractions should be equitably, consistently, and fairly applied after an appropriate and thorough investigation has determined that a bullying offense has occurred.
  - iii. Schools are encouraged to choose rehabilitative interventions that seek to restore relationships and are designed so students have an opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Schools should assess each bullying situation to determine whether a restorative process is appropriate.

**Interventions and Supports for Students**

The following list identifies the types of support services available to the student bully, victim, witnesses, and any bystanders.

- a. Allegany County Public Schools
  - i. Counseling
  - ii. Conflict resolution
  - iii. Social skills training
  - iv. Anger management training
  - v. Educational programming
  - vi. Parent involvement
  - vii. Schedule modifications
  - viii. School Resource Officer programs
- b. Community and Family
  - i. Community-based mental health services
  - ii. Health Department Programs
  - iii. Community mediation
  - iv. Department of Juvenile Services
  - v. Department of Social Services
  - vi. Law enforcement agencies

**Prevention and Educational Programs**

ACPS shall develop a schoolwide evidence based educational program with at least annual training for students, staff, volunteers, parents, and caregivers.

**Professional Learning**

- A. Administrators shall be in-serviced annually on this policy. The in-service shall explain what constitutes bullying, harassment or intimidation and inform administrators of their duties, responsibilities, and potential liability.
  
- B. Faculty and staff will be in-serviced annually on this policy.

<b>Board Reviewed</b> 02/08/2022	<b>Superintendent Approved</b> 02/08/2022
-------------------------------------	--