

STUDENTS

Bullying of Students

Prince William County Public Schools is committed to a school environment in which students are free from bullying. The school administrator shall take appropriate steps to prevent bullying and shall deal promptly and decisively with reported incidents of bullying. The purpose of this regulation is to provide guidelines to ensure appropriate preventative and corrective actions. Assistance with the identification of bullying behaviors is provided in Attachment I, Bullying Behavior Chart.

I. Definition of Bullying

Bully/victim violence occurs whenever a student intentionally, repeatedly, and over time inflicts or threatens to inflict physical or emotional injury or discomfort on another's body, feelings, or possessions.

A person is being bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons. Bullying behaviors include actions which cause the physical, verbal or emotional abuse of others and shall not be tolerated. Taunts, threats, insults, gossip, humiliation, teasing, pushing, tripping, and hitting are all considered bullying behaviors. Violators are subject to corrective action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

II. Complaint Procedure

All students shall be informed of their right to protection against bullying behaviors and the right to file a complaint if they believe they have been the victim of bullying behavior. School administrators are responsible for investigating each complaint, determining if the complaint is legitimate in accordance with the above definition, and taking appropriate corrective action. Any student may initiate a complaint by talking to an administrator or completing a complaint form, (Attachment II), and returning this form to a school administrator. All school staff members shall be informed of a student's right to initiate a complaint and shall be able to advise students as to how such complaints are initiated. School administrators shall respond to complaints of bullying according to the following guidelines.

III. Guidelines for Responding to Bullying Complaint

A. Meet with the Complainant

1. Ascertain basic information (who, what, when, where).
 2. Get a written statement from the student when possible.
 3. Ask about witnesses or corroborating information/evidence.
 4. Offer counseling services as appropriate.
 5. Offer assurance of protection against retaliation.
 6. Explain procedures for follow-up.
 7. Inform parent/guardian of the alleged bullying within 24 hours of the incident.
 8. Maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties to the extent possible.
 9. Complete and file incident report with the Department of Risk Management and Security within 48 hours of the incident.
- B. Review Evidence and Interview Witness
- C. Meet with the Alleged Bully
1. Explain bullying behavior and its seriousness.
 2. Present the allegation.
 3. Provide an opportunity for response/rebuttal.
 4. Explain investigation and follow-up procedures.
 5. Caution against retaliation.
 6. Inform parent/guardian of the alleged bullying behavior within 24 hours of the incident.
 7. Take appropriate corrective/disciplinary action.

8. Complete suspension/incident reports as necessary.

Staff shall be responsible for maintaining a written record of all meetings and conversations with students including notes of dates, times, places, witness names, and other information about interviews and incidents. Any departure from these guidelines must be justifiable based on unusual circumstances.

IV. Corrective Action

If a student is found guilty of bullying behavior, corrective action shall be taken in accordance with established disciplinary procedures. Corrective action may range from admonition to suspension or expulsion depending on the seriousness of the incident, prior incidents, and the need to protect the victim and other students from future bullying.

V. Protection Against Retaliation

Students shall feel free to report bullying incidents without fear of retaliation from the accused. Any attempt of retaliation shall be addressed by appropriate corrective actions up to and including expulsion.

VI. Appeal Procedure

Both parties have the right to appeal the decision of the school administration in any situation that involves bullying behavior. Appeals must be stated in writing by the parent/guardian or emancipated student and forwarded to the appropriate area associate superintendent. Parents/guardians and emancipated students have the right of further appeals to the Superintendent and the School Board in accordance with Policy 940, Public Concerns; Policy 731, Appeal of Student Matters; and Regulation 940.01-1, Child Advocacy.

VII. Notification

Students and parents shall be notified by the Code of Behavior that bullying behaviors shall not be tolerated. School administrators shall use announcements, newsletters, faculty meetings, or other appropriate means to inform all students and staff of the prohibition against bullying and the procedure for reporting complaints.

Except as may be prohibited by law, the principal shall also immediately report any act that may constitute a criminal offense to the parents of any minor student who is the

victim of such act. The principal shall report that the incident has been reported to local law enforcement and that the parents may contact local law enforcement for further information, if they so desire.

VIII. Instruction

The inappropriateness of bullying shall be addressed through the Character Education program which is taught through the Social Studies and K-12 School Counseling Curriculum, as well as instruction in the Code of Behavior.

IX. Preventative Measures

A. Bullying may be prevented if all school staff assist in an effort to:

1. Communicate to students and staff:
 - a. What bullying behavior is (define).
 - b. That bullying shall not be tolerated.
 - c. What the consequences are.
 - d. How to report complaints.
 - e. How complaints are handled.
 - f. That parents shall be notified.

B. Monitor behavior and enforce rules

1. Act on complaints in a prompt, fair, and decisive manner
2. Inform students of the following actions to take if bullied:
 - a. Let the bully know very clearly that such actions are not wanted.
 - b. Tell the bully very firmly to stop.
 - c. Keep written notes of dates, times, places, witness names, and other information about actual incidents of bullying.

- d. Keep notes, letters, and other evidence of bullying.
- e. Talk with a counselor or administrator and, if appropriate, file a complaint.

Administrators and all school employees are responsible for the consistent application of this regulation within their respective areas of authority, and for assuring the confidentiality of students to the extent possible.

Area associate superintendents are responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

Legal References:

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972

Code of Virginia: §22.1-208.01, §22.1-279.3:1, §22.1-279.6

Supreme Court: 119S.Ct. 1661 (1999)

BULLYING BEHAVIOR CHART

Levels	PHYSICAL Harm to another's body or property		EMOTIONAL Harm to another's self-esteem		SOCIAL Harm to another's group acceptance	
	Verbal	Non-verbal	Verbal	Non-verbal	Verbal	Non-verbal
1	Taunting Expressing physical superiority	Making threatening gestures Defacing property Pushing/shoving Taking small items from others	Insulting remarks Calling names Teasing about possessions, clothes	Giving dirty looks Holding nose or other insulting gestures Saying someone has germs or is unclean	Gossiping Starting/spreading rumors Teasing publicly about clothes, looks, etc.	Passively not including in group Playing mean tricks
2	Threatening physical harm Blaming victim	Damaging property Stealing Initiating fights Scratching Tripping or causing a fall Assaulting	Insulting family Harassing with phone calls Insulting intelligence, athletic ability, etc.	Defacing school work Falsifying school work Defacing personal property, clothing, etc.	Insulting race, gender Increasing gossip / rumors Undermining other relationships	Making someone look foolish Excluding from the group
3	Making repeated and/or graphic threats Practicing extortion Making threats to secure silence: "If you tell, I will ..."	Destroying property Setting fires Biting Physical cruelty Making repeated, violent threats Assaulting with a weapon	Frightening with phone calls Challenging in public	Ostracizing Destroying personal property or clothing	Threatening total group exclusion	Arranging public humiliation Total group rejection/ostracizing

Source: No-Bullying Program, Johnson Institute

Complaint of Bullying

The Prince William County Public Schools Code of Behavior states, “Actions which cause the physical, verbal, or emotional abuse of others will not be tolerated. Taunts, threats, insults, gossip, humiliation, teasing, pushing, tripping, and hitting, are all considered to be bullying behaviors.” The principal and staff of this school are committed to enforcement of the Code of Behavior and will respond promptly and appropriately to complaints of bullying. Any student can file a complaint by talking to an administrator and/or completing this form and returning it to an assistant principal or principal.

PLEASE PRINT!

Name of Complainant: _____

School: _____

Name(s) of person(s) accused of bullying: _____

Description of Complaint (use specific dates, times, witness names, etc. if possible):

Signature of Complainant: _____

Date: _____

NOTE: All complaints will be followed by an investigation. Those accused as well as the parents of students involved will be informed of complaints, witnesses will be interviewed, and all information will remain confidential except for that which must be shared as part of the investigation.