

## **BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND INTIMIDATION PREVENTION**

*(See Board Policy 3225)*

The policy of the Board of Trustees of Missoula County Public Schools is to provide students and staff with a school environment free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation. Missoula County Public School District will not tolerate bullying, harassment, or intimidation in any form at school or school-sponsored activities and events, including off-campus events, school buses, any event related to school business, or, through the use of electronic communications, that substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operations of the District.

Bullying is any harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening, insulting, or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication or threat directed against a student that is persistent, severe, or repeated and that:

- causes a student physical harm, damages a student's property, or places a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student or the student's property;
- creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's access to an educational opportunity or benefit; or
- substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying also includes acts of hazing associated with athletics or school-sponsored organizations or groups. Hazing includes, but is not limited to, any act that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or as a condition or precondition of attaining membership in or affiliation with any District-sponsored activity or grade-level attainment.

The District prohibits bullying for any reason, including but not limited to, race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, culture, social origin or condition, economic condition, political affiliation, mental, physical or sensory disability, or actual or potential marital or parental status.

A person, who cites, aides, coerces or directs others to commit acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation will be held responsible to the same extent as the person who commits the act.

### *Sexual Harassment Prohibited*

Sexual harassment of students is prohibited. Any person, including a district employee or agent, or student, engages in sexual harassment whenever he or she makes sexual advances, requests sexual favors, and engages in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature, imposed on the basis of sex, that:

Denies or limits the provision of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment; or that makes such conduct a condition of a student's academic status; or

Has the purpose or effect of:

- substantially interfering with a student's educational environment;
- creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- depriving a student of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment; or
- making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis for academic decisions affecting a student.

The terms "intimidating," "hostile," and "offensive" include conduct that has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort. Examples of sexual harassment include, but not limited to, touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics, and spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities. Sexual harassment includes sexual violence, which are physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the use of drugs or alcohol or intellectual or other disability. Sexually violent acts could include rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion.

### **Reporting**

1. The District encourages students who believe they are being subjected to bullying, harassment, or intimidation and students who have first-hand knowledge of such bullying, harassment, or intimidation, to report the matter promptly to their teacher, counselor, bus driver, coach, principal, or any responsible adult who is not involved in the alleged bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Reports of further bullying, harassment, or intimidation should continue to be made to the initial administrator receiving this information.
2. The District encourages staff who believe they are being subjected to bullying, harassment, or intimidation by anyone to report the matter promptly to the administration.
3. Any adult school employee, adult volunteer, district contractor or agent who witnesses, overhears or receives a report, formal or informal, written or oral, of bullying, harassment, or intimidation shall report it in accordance with procedures developed under this policy.

### **Responsibilities**

Each Administrator is responsible for maintaining a work environment and/or educational environment free of bullying, harassment, and intimidation. The Administrator shall take appropriate actions to ensure the School District's Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation policy and procedures are enforced. Complaints alleging sex discrimination or harassment shall be addressed through the District's Title IX Grievance Procedures. Complaints alleging disability discrimination or harassment shall be addressed through the District's Section 504 and ADA Grievance Procedures. All other complaints alleging bullying, discrimination, harassment, or intimidation shall be addressed through the District's Uniform Grievance Procedure.

These actions include, at a minimum:

1. Providing notification of the District's Title IX Grievance Procedures, Section 504 and ADA Grievance Procedures, and Uniform Grievance Procedure and in the Student and Staff handbooks of the rights and responsibilities of students and staff regarding bullying, harassment, and intimidation.
2. Acquainting new employees in the School District with this policy.
3. Taking prompt action to investigate/report complaints of bullying, harassment, and intimidation.
4. Promptly notifying the alleged victims and alleged perpetrators and their parents/guardians regarding the outcome of the report and investigation;
5. Taking appropriate disciplinary action.
6. Instructing employees and students regarding the procedures for reporting bullying, harassment, and intimidation within the educational setting.

In the event that a staff member or administrator knows or reasonably believes that the alleged behavior constitutes criminal activity or child abuse or neglect, the staff member or administrator shall report such activity to law enforcement and/or the Department of Public Health and Human Services. If it is determined that the alleged bullying, harassment, or intimidation did not occur at school or school-related activity or does not materially or substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the District, an administrator shall refer the matter, as appropriate, to other persons or entities with appropriate jurisdiction, including but not limited to law enforcement or the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

### **Consequences**

Any person who engages in bullying, harassment, and intimidation in the school setting shall be subject to disciplinary action. Any student who engages in bullying, harassment, and intimidation shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Any staff member who engages in bullying, harassment, and intimidation shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Any staff member who permits bullying, harassment, or intimidation of students or staff shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Any staff member who receives complaints of bullying, harassment, and intimidation and does not act promptly or does not forward the complaint to the staff member's supervisor shall be disciplined appropriately.

### **Retaliation and Reprisal**

Missoula County Public Schools prohibits retaliation and reprisal against any person who reports an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with district policy. Individuals who intentionally fabricate allegations of bullying, harassment, or intimidation shall be subject to disciplinary action.