

EACS Bullying and Harassment Guidelines

It is the intent of the East Allen County to provide all students with an equitable opportunity to learn. East Allen County Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. Bullying is detrimental to student learning and achievement. It interferes with the mission of our schools to educate our students and disrupts the operations of the school. Bullying affects not only students who are targets but also those who participate and witness such behavior.

EACS also believes that promoting ethical and responsible behavior is an essential part of our school's educational purpose. Ethics, responsible behavior and "character" are important if a student is to leave school as a "responsible contributor to the local and global society." Bullying and harassment interferes with the accomplishment of this mission. EACS will take action in response to conduct that interferes with students' opportunity to learn, our educational mission, and the operations of our schools.

Bullying Prohibited

Bullying/Harassment is not acceptable conduct in East Allen County Schools and is prohibited. Any student who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension and expulsion. A student's bullying behavior may also be addressed through other behavioral interventions. This prohibition includes physical, verbal, and psychological abuse as provided herein. The Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. This policy applies when a student is on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or, using property or equipment provided by the school. If the conduct occurs off school grounds and causes or threatens to cause a substantial disruption at school or interferes with the rights of students to be secure, school administration may impose consequences. The Administration may also report the cyber bullying or harassment to the police.

Bullying Defined

For the purpose of this policy, "Bullying" means overt, repeated acts or gestures, including:

- (1) Verbal or written communications transmitted
- (2) Physical acts committed
- (3) Any other behaviors committed; by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the other student.

Cyberbullying Defined

Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student or staff member by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs) which has the effect of:

1. Physically, emotionally, or mentally harming another student;
2. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical, emotional, or mental harm;
3. Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or
4. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities.

Application of policy

This policy applies to bullying that takes place at school or on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity or event, or while students are transported to or from school or school-sponsored activities or events. It also applies to bullying that occurs at any other time or place that substantially disrupts the instructional program, operations of the school, or welfare of students.

Examples of conduct that may constitute bullying include, but are not limited to:

- A. Humiliation, slander, or repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking, put-downs, or demeaning humor relating to a student's race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics whether or not the student actually possesses them that could reasonably be expected to result in disruption of the instructional program or operations of the schools, or that results in a hostile environment for the student.
- B. Physical contact or injury to another person or his/her property
- C. Threats of harm to a student, to his/her possessions, or to other individuals, whether transmitted verbally, in writing, or through cyberspace.
- D. Blackmail, extortion, demands for protection money, or involuntary loans or donations
- E. Non-verbal threats and/or intimidations such as use of aggressive or menacing gestures
- F. Stalking
- G. Blocking access to school property or facilities
- H. Stealing or hiding books, backpacks, or other possessions.

For the purpose of these guidelines, bullying does not mean mere teasing, put-downs, "talking trash", trading of insults, or similar interactions among friends.

The determination of whether particular conduct constitutes bullying requires reasonable consideration of the circumstances which include the frequency of the behavior at issue, the location in which the behavior occurs, the ages and maturing of the students involved, the activity or context in which the conduct occurs, and the nature and severity of the conduct.

Reporting

Any student or parent who believes he/she has been or is currently the victim of bullying should immediately report the situation to the building principal, assistant principal, or counselor. The student may also report concerns to a teacher who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator. All reports to staff of bullying must be reported to school administrators.

Complaints against the building principal should be filed with the Executive Director of School Management. Complaints against the Superintendent should be filed with the Board President.

Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an incident of bullying are prohibited. Any student who is determined to have falsely accused another of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Responding to Bullying

All complaints about bullying behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. Administrators are to record the bullying behavior on the Report Form for Complaints of Harassment/Bullying/Discrimination. This report must be filed with the Student Services office.

If the investigation finds an instance of bullying behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate disciplinary action. In determining the appropriate response to students who engage in bullying behavior, school administrators should consider the ages and maturity of the students involved, the type of behaviors, the frequency and/or pattern of behaviors, the context in which the incident occurred, and other relevant circumstances. Consequences may range from restorative conferences, positive behavioral interventions up to and including up to expulsion for students, up to discharge for employees, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors, and removal from any officer position and/or a request to resign for Board members. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

The complainant shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and as appropriate, that remedial action has been taken.

Should the findings of the investigation require remedial action, that plan of action must include but is not limited to the following: 1. Protection/support plan for the victim 2. Discipline for the bully as defined above 3. Inform the parents of both the victim and the bully

Internet Usage Policy: Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks is policy 6108.

School Supervision Plan

Each school is to have a written plan for increased supervision where data suggest based on school safety walkthroughs and focus groups data. This includes passing periods, cafeteria, play grounds, "dead areas", under stairwells, or any areas that do not include classrooms and have limited adult presence.