

# WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: 6000 STUDENT SERVICES

TITLE: 6950 BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING

ADOPTED: JANUARY 29, 2000 (JAN 21, 2009)

REVISED: JULY 20, 2016, April 24, 2019

<p>1. Purpose</p>	<p>The West Allegheny School District is committed to fostering a safe, positive learning environment of mutual respect, honor, acceptance and encouragement, free from threat, harassment, and bullying/cyberbullying. West Allegheny recognizes that bullying/cyberbullying cannot only impede on the academic environment and growth, but also the vocational, social, emotional development of our students. Students and employees should be free from all types of bullying/cyberbullying stemming from peers and employees of the district; therefore bullying/cyberbullying will not be tolerated.</p>
<p>2. Definitions</p>	<p><b>Bullying/Cyberbullying</b> is intentional, unwanted, severe behavior between or among individuals or groups that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior may be repetitive, persistent and/or pervasive.</p> <p><b>Bullying</b> may include, but is not limited to, the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Physical</b> – including, but not limited to, hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, and taking personal belongings</li> <li>2. <b>Verbal</b> – including, but not limited to, taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, and making threatening statements or gestures</li> <li>3. <b>Psychological or Relational</b> - including, but not limited to, spreading rumors, and engaging in social isolations or intimidation</li> </ol> <p><b>Cyberbullying</b> may include, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, malicious teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student or employee of the school district by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures, images, videos or web site postings (including social media).</p> <p>These actions have the effect of doing any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interfering with a student’s education</li> <li>2. Creating a threatening environment</li> <li>3. Disrupting the orderly operation of the school</li> <li>4. Causing a negative change in the dynamics of the school culture or group</li> </ol> <p><b>School setting</b> includes school district property, at school-sponsored activities scheduled on or off school grounds, or during the time students spend traveling to and from school or school-sponsored activities, including bus stops and routes of travel to and from the bus stops, or to school property or school-sponsored activities.</p> <p>The term bullying/cyberbullying shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student’s right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.</p>

<p>3. Authority</p>	<p>All forms of bullying/cyberbullying by district students and employees are hereby prohibited. Anyone who engages in bullying/cyberbullying is in violation of this policy and shall be subject to appropriate discipline. The school district will not tolerate acts of bullying/cyberbullying occurring on school district property, at school-sponsored activities scheduled on or off school grounds, or during the time students spend traveling to and from school or school-sponsored activities, including bus stops and routes of travel to and from the bus stops, or to school property or school-sponsored events.</p> <p>Complaints of bullying/cyberbullying shall be investigated promptly by the school principal and/or his/her designee, and corrective action shall be taken.</p> <p>The West Allegheny School District shall at least annually inform students, parents and employees through awareness activities that bullying/cyberbullying will not be tolerated.</p>
<p>4. Delegation of Responsibility</p>	<p>Each student and employee shall be responsible for respecting the rights of all students/employees and to ensure an educational environment free from all forms of bullying/cyberbullying.</p> <p>Students and employees shall receive information regarding this policy and shall be expected to report to their school principal and/or his/her designee any suspected incidents of bullying/cyberbullying involving themselves or other district students or employees.</p> <p>Students or employees who have been bullied/cyberbullied are encouraged to report such incidents to a school employee, an administrator, or through another designated reporting system without repercussion.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians shall receive information regarding this policy, at least annually, and shall be encouraged to report to their administrator(s) any suspected incidents of bullying/cyberbullying involving their own child or other district students.</p> <p>Each employee of the West Allegheny School District shall be responsible for attempting to maintain an educational environment free of bullying/cyberbullying and ensure the rights of all students are respected.</p> <p>Employees shall be observant of bullying/cyberbullying, take appropriate actions to intervene upon observing or learning of a bullying/cyberbullying incident and report the bullying/cyberbullying to the school administrator(s).</p> <p>Upon learning of a bullying/cyberbullying incident, the school principal and/or his/her designee shall undertake a thorough investigation. The school principal and/or his/her designee will inform parents/guardians of any impacted student(s) and person(s) accused of the complaint. The administrator(s) will report incidents of bullying/cyberbullying to the superintendent or designee and the superintendent and/or designee will, where appropriate, notify the proper authorities.</p> <p>The district shall provide ongoing educational programs for employees, students and parents concerning the harmfulness of bullying/cyberbullying, the identification of bullying/cyberbullying, and appropriate responsive actions to address bullying/cyberbullying.</p>

5. Guidelines

Discipline

A violation of this policy shall subject the offending student to appropriate disciplinary action, consistent with the student code of conduct, which may include suspension or expulsion. Additionally, Act 26 of 2015 makes cyberbullying a crime, and issues of cyberbullying or bullying may be referred to law enforcement.

Confidentiality

The West Allegheny School District recognizes that both the reporting ~~complain~~ing students or employees and the alleged bully/cyberbully have a right to maintain the confidentiality of the allegations and related information. The privacy of the reporting person(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, any individuals impacted and the witnesses will be respected as much as possible, consistent with legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any discovery or disclosure obligations. As limited by FERPA protections, the principal or his/her designee may inform the complaining student/parents/guardians or employees of the outcome of the investigation.

Reprisal

Anyone who retaliates against another student and/or employee for reporting bullying/cyberbullying, assisting or testifying in the investigation or hearing will be subject to disciplinary action.

Display and Dissemination

This policy will be displayed and accessible for review in the following manners:

1. A copy of this policy shall be available on the school district's publicly accessible web site.
2. A copy of this policy shall be posted in every classroom.
3. A copy of this policy shall be posted in each school where notices are usually posted.
4. A copy of this policy shall be disseminated to parents annually along with a copy of the student code of conduct.

The terms of this policy shall be reviewed with students at least once every school year.