

County Board Policy 5131.2: Bullying

Status: ADOPTED

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The Napa County Board of Education recognizes the harmful effects of bullying on student well-being, student learning, and school attendance and desires to provide a safe school environment that protects students from physical and emotional harm. No individual or group shall, through physical, written, verbal, visual, or other means, harass, sexually harass, threaten, intimidate, cyberbully, cause bodily injury to, or commit hate violence against any student or school personnel, or retaliate against them for filing a complaint or participating in the complaint resolution process.

Examples of Prohibited Conduct

Bullying is an aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power between individuals with the intent to cause emotional or physical harm. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social/relational, involves repetition or potential repetition of a deliberate act, and includes, but is not limited to, any act described in Education Code 48900(r).

Cyberbullying includes the electronic creation or transmission of harassing communications, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, or images. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account or assuming that person's online identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

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

1. Physical bullying that inflicts harm upon a person's body or possessions, such as hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking someone's possessions, or making cruel or rude hand gestures
2. Verbal bullying that includes saying or writing hurtful things, such as teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, or threats to cause harm
3. Social/relational bullying that harms a person's reputation or relationships, such as leaving a person out of an activity on purpose, influencing others not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors, or embarrassing someone in public
4. Sending demeaning or hateful text messages or emails, sending rumors by email or by posting on social networking sites, or posting embarrassing photos, videos, web site, or fake profiles

Measures to Prevent Bullying

The County Board encourages the involvement of students, parents/guardians, staff, social services, mental health services, law enforcement, courts, and other agencies and community organizations in the development and implementation of effective strategies to promote safety in schools and the community.

The County Board incorporates any strategies developed by the Napa County Superintendent of Schools implementing this policy, which may include, but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring that each school establishes clear rules for student conduct and implements strategies to promote a positive, collaborative school climate
2. Providing to students, through student handbooks and other age-appropriate means, information about Napa County Office of Education (NCOE) and school rules related to bullying, mechanisms available for reporting incidents or threats, and the consequences for engaging in bullying
3. Encouraging students to notify school staff when they are being bullied or when they suspect that another student is being bullied, and providing means by which students may report threats or incidents confidentially and anonymously
4. Conducting an assessment of bullying incidents at each school and, if necessary, increasing supervision and security in areas where bullying most often occurs, such as playgrounds, hallways, restrooms, and cafeterias
5. Annually notifying NCOE employees that, pursuant to Education Code 234.1, any school staff who witnesses an act of bullying against a student has a responsibility to immediately intervene to stop the incident when it is

safe to do so

6. Providing professional development to all school staff who have regular interaction with students, including information regarding staff's obligation to prevent discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students and annually making available the California Department of Education's online training module on the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying pursuant to Education Code 32283.5
7. Providing students with instruction, as appropriate, that promotes social-emotional learning, effective communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and appropriate online behavior and teaches students about the negative impact of bullying, discrimination, intimidation, and harassment based on actual or perceived immigration status, religious beliefs and customs, or any other individual bias or prejudice

Preventive strategies may be incorporated into schools' comprehensive safety plans and, to the extent possible, into the local control and accountability plan and other applicable NCOE and school plans.

Complaints

Any complaint of bullying shall be submitted to and investigated by the individual(s), position(s), or unit(s) designated by the County Superintendent and, if determined to be discriminatory, shall be resolved in accordance with law and BP 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures. If, during the investigation, it is determined that a complaint is about nondiscriminatory bullying, the principal or designee shall inform the complainant and shall take all necessary actions to resolve the complaint.

Discipline/Corrective Actions

A victim of bullying, witness, perpetrator, or other student affected by an act of bullying may be referred to a school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, school nurse, or other school support service personnel for case management, counseling, and/or participation in a restorative justice program as appropriate. (Education Code 48900.9)

In addition, corrective actions for a student who commits an act of bullying may include behavioral intervention and education and, if the behavior is severe or pervasive, may include notification of the student's parent/guardian, suspension or expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement.
