

VIGO COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

File: JFA

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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In accordance with state law (IC20-33-8.2) “bullying” is prohibited in the Vigo County School Corporation. Bullying is defined as any act that is repeated or chronic and of a threatening or intimidating nature with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate or harm another student. This includes engaging in the act of bullying while using school provided equipment or property. The act of “bullying” means overt, unwanted and repeated acts or gestures that may be verbal, written communications or images transmitted in any manner or physical acts or any other behavior that fits the definition above. In addition, bullying includes unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. It also includes any act of bullying using technology such as computers, cell phones, cyber-space, social media where such behavior has a “nexus” that connects the act to school and where such behavior has the potential to disrupt the safe and effective learning environment of the school. The bullying behavior may be subject to school disciplinary procedures regardless of where it happens if the behavior creates a substantial interference with school operations or involves an unreasonable threat to the rights of others to a safe and peaceful learning environment (IC 20-33-8-13.5) Behavior that creates a hostile school environment for a targeted student is considered bullying.

- a. This term may not be interpreted to impose any burden or sanction on, or include in the definition of the term, the following:
 - i. Participating in a religious event.
 - ii. Acting in an emergency involving the protection of a person or property from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or substantial danger.
 - iii. Participating in an activity consisting of the exercise of a student's rights protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I, Section 31 of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, or both.
 - iv. Participating in an activity conducted by a nonprofit or governmental entity that provides recreation, education, training, or other care under the supervision of one or more adults.
 - v. Participating in an activity undertaken at the prior written direction of the student's parent.
 - vi. Engaging in interstate or international travel from a location outside Indiana to another location outside Indiana.

Schools in the Vigo County School Corporation are encouraged to engage students, staff and parents in meaningful discussions about the negative aspects of bullying. The parent involvement may be through parent organizations already in place in each school. Parents or students who suspect that repeated acts of bullying are taking place should report the matter to the school principal or designee. ***The report or complaint shall name the alleged***

violator as well as the complainant unless the report is submitted anonymously. Upon receiving the report, the principal/designee will investigate the matter at the building level and school consequences will be assessed, as appropriate, according to Rule XII under Student Rights and Responsibilities as well as other consequences as noted in this policy. *A report of the investigation and consequences shall be made available to the Director of Secondary and Elementary Education, as appropriate as well as the Director of Student Services.*

Reporting alleged acts of bullying : *All employees, volunteers or contracted service providers with knowledge of a bullying situation are required to verbally report the incident to the school principal or designee immediately or as soon as possible. Such reporting may be made in person, by phone, by email, text or through the anonymous reporting boxes located in each school. In addition, the report may be made on-line at www.vigoschools.org. A written report shall be made by the reporting party to the principal/designee within 48 hours of the verbal report. Students, parents and visitors of a school within the school corporation are encouraged to submit a written report of alleged violations of this policy to the principal (or principal's designee) on the same day that an incident was witnessed or reliable information regarding the occurrence of an incident was received. Such a report may be made anonymously. Formal action for violations of the code of student conduct may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.*

When such a report is received by the school, the principal will initiate an investigation of the alleged incident. Others who may be involved include the school counselor, other administrators, a School Safety Specialist or law enforcement as deemed appropriate. The investigation should be completed within a 5 school day period of the initial report, if possible. A written report of such an investigation shall be maintained by the school and a copy forwarded to the Director of Student Services as well as the Director of the area (Elementary or Secondary). The determination of consequences shall be part of the written findings.

After initial investigation, the principal should notify parents of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator. This notification will be name specific only to the parent of the victim or perpetrator but not both. Names of the victim and perpetrator are confidential and only available to the parent of the individual involved.

Investigation of bullying may include:

- *Interviewing the alleged “victim” and the alleged “bully”.*
- *Taking statements from witnesses involved in the incident or who witnessed the incident.*
- *Reviewing school records of the student’s involved to detect a pattern of bullying behavior.*
- *Discussing the incident (s) with parents of the student (s) involved.*

The School Counselor may meet with the victim or perpetrator to assess the need for such follow-up services. The counselor will then inform the school principal of the recommendation as well as the parent(s) of the individuals involved. Follow up services may include support services provided by the School Corporation or a recommendation for outside agency support that may be initiated by the parent of the alleged victim or perpetrator.

Possible disciplinary and intervention actions and consequences for bullying may include:

- *Parent contact and conferences*
- *Referral to counseling or social skills training.*
- *Positive behavior supports*
- *Time out/detention, restrictions to activities, community service, Saturday or evening school or combinations of any of those listed. In addition, other options as discussed among parents, students and teachers.*
- *In-school suspension.*
- *Suspension from class*

- *Contact with BMV for denial of driving privileges.*
- *Out of school Suspension*
- *Modified schedule, delayed passing periods, alternative school placement, school probation.*
- *Request for expulsion.*
- *Other interventions as deemed appropriate*
- *A record made of an investigation, disciplinary or follow up action is not a public record under IC 5-14-3.*
- *Teachers or other school staff, including administrators who fail to initiate and/or conduct an investigation of a bullying incident are subject to discipline.*
- *Law enforcement will be contacted if the nature of the bullying incident rises to the level of a criminal offense.*

False Reporting: A person who knowingly makes a false complaint of a violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

The Superintendent will ensure that this policy is disseminated throughout the school community. The Superintendent is authorized to develop all procedures and forms necessary to administer this policy.

Annual training of school staff will take place in accordance with State laws

Each school within the school corporation shall record the frequency of bullying incidents in the following categories: verbal bullying, physical bullying, social/relational bullying and electronic or written communication bullying. Each school shall report this information to the school corporation superintendent, school board, and the Indiana Department of education. Information shall be submitted to the Indiana Department of Education by July 1 of each year

Adoption date: August 8, 2005 (revised 12/12)

Policy revision approved by Student Services Advisory Committee on 9/3/13

Legal Ref: I.C. 20-33-8-0.2, IC 20-33-8-13,5

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