

## UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS OF DISCRIMINATION AND THREATENING BEHAVIOR

### IT'S THE LAW!

**Wisconsin Statute 118.13 prohibits discrimination against students in public elementary and secondary schools on the basis of:**

- sex
- race, national origin, ancestry
- creed
- pregnancy, marital or parental status
- sexual orientation
- physical, mental, emotional or learning disability
- religion

Discrimination prohibition applies to:

- curricular programs
- co-curricular activities
- student services
- recreational programs sponsored by the school board

**"Discrimination" includes bias, stereotyping and pupil harassment.**

### DISTRICT POLICY ON STUDENT HARASSMENT AND/OR BULLYING INCLUDING CYBERBULLYING

Harassment and/or bullying of students will not be tolerated in the Green Bay Area Public Schools, which includes any property or vehicles owned, leased or used by the schools. The School Board considers these actions to be detrimental to the health and safety of students, and disruptive to the educational environment.

The educational environment is defined as consisting of every activity under the supervision of each school. For purposes of this policy, harassment and/or bullying are defined as any conscious, willful, or deliberate act or attempted act, through the use of words or actions,

which are intended to cause physical injury, emotional distress/suffering or property damage or which impact the learning environment.

Harassment and/or bullying could include acts motivated by, but not limited to, hostility toward the victim's real or perceived sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, social, socio-economic or family status, physical attributes, disability/handicap or any other basis protected by state or federal law. Examples of acts of harassment and/or bullying include physical intimidation, force or assault, humiliation, bigoted epithets, vandalism, extortion, oral or written threats, taunting, put downs, name calling, threatening looks or gestures, false accusations, social isolation, retaliating against another student for reporting harassment or bullying, or any other behavior that substantially interferes with a student's school performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment.

All forms of harassment in cyberspace commonly referred to as cyber bullying are unacceptable and viewed as a violation of this policy. Cyber bullying includes but is not limited to the following misuses of technology: harassment, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person or group of people by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including blogs or any other messages via cyberspace. For purposes of this policy, "cyberspace" is defined as a global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent network of information technology infrastructures, including the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers.

In situations in which cyber bullying originated off school property or from a non-school computer or telecommunication device, but is brought to the attention of school officials, any disciplinary action shall be based upon whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the

educational process so that it markedly impedes the day to day operations of a school. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, harassment, bullying or making a threat off school grounds through cyberspace that is intended to endanger the health, safety or property of others at school, a District employee or a school board member.

Any student who believes he/she has been subject to harassment and/or bullying may file a complaint in accordance with established complaint procedures or may complain directly to the building principal or designee or the District Equity Coordinator. Filing a complaint or otherwise reporting harassment and/or bullying in good faith will not reflect upon the individual's status nor will it affect his/her grades or benefits provided by the District. The District shall respect the confidentiality of both the complainant and the accused consistent with the District's legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective and/or disciplinary action when this conduct has occurred.

Any student or parent/guardian who becomes aware of or witnesses harassment and/or bullying has an obligation to report and will be supported by involved staff members in reporting the bullying/harassment to the proper authorities. Any District employee who becomes aware of or witnesses harassment and/or bullying has an obligation to intervene and report.

Students who engage in harassment and/or bullying in violation of this policy and/or retaliating against an individual for reporting harassment and/or bullying shall be subject to school disciplinary measures consistent with District policies and procedures up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

*The Green Bay Area Public Schools do not discriminate against pupils on the basis of sex, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, religion, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability or handicap in their education programs or activities. Federal law prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap.*

## STAFF GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS

In any incident, there may be three groups of people involved, which are identifiable as follows:

- **Victim ...** the person who is hurt in the incident
  - **Aggressor ...** the person creating the incident
  - **Witnesses ...** individuals who observe the incident
- Don't ignore these incidents! To do so sends the message that you are in agreement with such behaviors or attitudes.
  - Respond immediately!
  - Give support to the victim.
  - Investigate the incident thoroughly.
  - Inform the aggressor that such incidents are unacceptable, have hurt the victim, and that consequences will follow.
  - Let onlookers see that some action has been taken.
  - Provide follow up with the aggressor. The victim and the aggressor should be counseled in ways to better respond to such incidents in the future.
  - Use these incidents as a basis for learning. It is recommended that these experiences be treated through class or school-based activities when warranted by the situation.
  - Remember that issues of human dignity, equality, and safety are non-negotiable. Individuals must respond to protect the safety of others. This can come in many forms by asking others to help including parents, staff or trusted community members. Parents and community members should request assistance in responding to incidents of threatening behavior or discrimination.
  - Follow district policy guides available through the school's main office.
  - When appropriate, students and others should also consider these guides to determine what actions to take. Requesting a conference with the building principal is an important first step.
  - All types of harassment should be treated following guides established by the District. Ask school officials for assistance.

Our goal is to ensure that all students learn to their fullest potential. One very important way to support learning is to have all students and staff feel safe in our schools. We need to provide a safe learning and work environment for everyone. To ensure this commitment, I ask the following:

1. For students, it is critical that you report to an adult as soon as possible any situation that causes you or others to feel unsafe. If you witness an act of bullying or violence, seek out an adult you trust and report what you saw. Also in conflict situations, the words you use can also make a difference. Choose your words carefully to avoid creating or adding to difficult situations.
2. As parents/guardians, please discuss with your children the importance of reporting unsafe situations. Also, please talk with your children about the need for their behavior to be safe for other students.
3. As staff, we need to be observant of stressful situations and report them to the administration. If you are not certain about a concern, err on the side of reporting. We also need to model for students and parents appropriate conflict resolution skills.

Together we must continue to work to ensure our schools are safe for everyone. We all need to play a part. As a District, we commit ourselves to maintaining safe schools.

### Address Inquiries to:

- Your child's building principal
- District Equity Coordinator  
(920) 272-2041

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## A COMMITMENT TO THE EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN AND RESPECT FOR EVERYONE



INFORMATION ON  
DISCRIMINATION,  
HARASSMENT AND/OR BULLYING  
AND SAFE SCHOOLS