M-DCPS Policy Against Bullying and Harassment

Division of Student Services
Ms. Deborah A. Montilla, District Director
Mr. Daniel R. Oré, Director
Maintaining a Safe Learning Environment.
Implies both physical and emotional safety.
THE DISTRICT POLICY INCLUDES PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION COMPONENTS.
Bullying and Harassment

- M-DCPS is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students.
- Bullying and harassment is prohibited in all schools.
- Awareness, prevention and education are provided to promote a school atmosphere in which bullying and harassment will not be tolerated by students, school board employees, visitors, or volunteers.
Policy Against Bullying & Harassment

- A result of a new Florida Law: “Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up For All Students (FL Statute 1006.147, June 2008)

- FDOE requires that all school districts adopt a policy prohibiting Bullying & Harassment of students and staff on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and through school computer networks by December 1, 2008.

- School Board Policy 5517.01
Bullying, Harassment, Cyberbullying, and Discrimination (as referred to and defined herein) encompasses, but is not limited to, unwanted harm towards a student or employee based on or with regard to actual or perceived:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>•sex</th>
<th>•disability (physical, mental, or educational)</th>
<th>•gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>•race</td>
<td>•marital status</td>
<td>•gender identity or expression</td>
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<tr>
<td>•color</td>
<td>•socio-economic background</td>
<td>•linguistic preference</td>
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<td>•religion</td>
<td>•ancestry</td>
<td>•political beliefs</td>
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<td>•national origin</td>
<td>•ethnicity</td>
<td>•sexual orientation</td>
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<td>•age</td>
<td>•social/family background</td>
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Bullying is Prohibited

- During any **education program or activity** conducted by M-DCPS;
- During any **school-related or school-sponsored** program or activity; or
- On a M-DCPS **school bus**;
- Through the use of **any electronic device** or data while on school grounds or on a M-DCPS school bus, computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer network of M-DCPS.
- **This includes threats made outside of school hours, which are intended to be carried out during any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity, or on a M-DCPS school bus.**
Critical Components of the Policy

- Seeks to provide intervention services for both the victim and bully
- **The Victim needs protection**, advocacy and intervention
- The Bully needs intervention services and consequences for the behavior
- The Policy is applicable to school employees and visitors

Safety First
Bullying Defined

Bullying means **systematically** and **chronically**, **inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress** on one or more students or school employees. It is further defined as a **pattern of unwanted** and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, dehumanizing gesture by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an **intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment**; cause discomfort or humiliations; or **unreasonably interfere with the individual’s school performance** or participation that includes a noted power differential.
Bullying ...

- Bullying can present itself in sophisticated, organized subtle forms.
- It can create an undercurrent of hostility, exclusion, and often utilizes multiple forms of interactions (i.e. Classroom, Facebook, Texting, etc.)
Examples of Bullying / Harassment

- Teasing
- Social exclusion
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Stalking
- Physical violence
- Theft
- Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- Public humiliation
- Destruction of Property
- Cyberstalking and Cyberbullying
Intention and Impact

Example: “Teasing”

- Consider the context of the act to determine if it should be deemed bullying
- What was the intent of the act?
- What was the impact of the act?
The Passive or Submissive Victim

- The typical victim is more anxious and insecure than students in general. They are often cautious, sensitive and quiet.
- They may have a negative view of themselves and low self esteem.
- They may be lonely or abandoned in school; without a single good friend in class.
- They often have a negative view about violence and are reluctant to retaliate.
The Victim May Have Special Needs

- Behavior may be characterized by both anxious and aggressive reaction patterns.
- These students may have problems with concentration and behave in ways that cause irritation and tension around them.
- May be characterized as hyperactive.
- Their behavior may provoke other students in class and results in negative reactions from peers.
Characteristics of Typical Bullies

- Aggression towards peers and adults.
- More positive attitude towards violence; characterized by impulsivity and a need to dominate others.
- Very little empathy and a relatively positive view of themselves.
- Aggressive reaction patterns combined with physical strength (in the case of boys).
- 60% of boys who were characterized as bullies in grades 6-9, will have at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24 yrs.
## Impact of Bullying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internalizing Effects</th>
<th>Externalizing Effects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Depression</td>
<td>• Aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anxiety</td>
<td>• Higher incidences of Substance Use/Abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Attention/Concentration Difficulties</td>
<td>• Attendance Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness</td>
<td>• Power and Control issues in Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Low Self Esteem</td>
<td>• Self Injury</td>
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<td>• Nightmares</td>
<td>• Academic Difficulties</td>
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<td>• Suicidal Thoughts, Gestures, Attempts</td>
<td>• Somatic Complaints</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hypervigilance</td>
<td>• Behavioral Concerns</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Withdrawal/Isolation</td>
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WHAT ARE MY OBLIGATIONS IN REGARD TO THIS POLICY?
• What is bullying?
• What is harassment?

Know the Policy

Your Classroom = Safe Zone

• Classroom Expectations
• Immediately Stop Bullying behaviors

Reporting Obligation

• 24 HR Initiation
• Parent Contact
• Documentation

Curriculum

• PK-12
• 5 Required Lessons
Know the Policy

- Participate in Annual Training
  Requirement- Power Point Presentation
  Available:
  http://studentservices.dadeschools.net/bullying/district.asp
  (for versions for All Staff, Parents/Volunteers, All Students)

- Understand Definitions:
  - Actions Direct and Indirect
The Prevention Component of the Policy
Classroom = Safe Zone

- Create rules that include concepts of both emotional and physical safety.
- Teach students that their words and behaviors have meaning. Words can hurt even worse than actual physical hurts.
- Observe unstructured and structured interactions and impact of behaviors. Bullying often occurs during “opportune” times.
Classroom = Safe Zone

- Take advantage of teachable moments.
- Maintain and teach appropriate boundaries.
- When you hear or see bullying behaviors, stop it immediately and consistently. A clear message is communicated that bullying will not be tolerated.
- Teach and model pro-social behaviors
Classroom = Safe Zone

- If you see a child isolated, being rejected or having difficulty relating, create a bridge. For example: make the child a helper; have students participate in activities where they can learn from one another; include cooperative activities; teach social skills; and/or join forces with your guidance counselor.
Curriculum

- Curriculum Implementation
  - PreK – 12 Prevention Lessons available:
    http://studentservices.dadeschools.net/bullying/b-h_policy_manual.asp
  - Principal designates teacher/counselor or combination.
  - Required implementation of all 5 lessons
The Intervention Component of the Policy
Reporting

- Employees are **REQUIRED** to report incidents
- Others are *strongly encouraged* to report incidences
Anonymous Reporting

- Each school is **required** to have a Bullying/Harassment Reporting Box located in a discrete location determined by the Principal
- Anonymous Bullying Report form provided in manual and on-line
- At each school, the Principal or designee is responsible for receiving complaints
- Reports can be made by students, parents/guardians, volunteers or visitors
Reporting Procedures: Employees

- If the alleged offense is against a school board employee, discipline may be taken consistent with any applicable bargaining agreement provisions, (Personnel Investigative Model – PIM), to resolve complaint of bullying or harassment.

- Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
What happens after a report?

- Initiation of investigation within 24 hour period of receipt of report
- Confidential Parent Contact (victim/bully) within 24 hours
- Interview and written statements of alleged bully, victim, and witnesses – (CONFIDENTIAL & INDIVIDUAL)
- Review of evidence/determination of founded or unfounded
- Services provided to both victim and alleged bully providing at least 2 community resources
- Consequences based on Code of Student Conduct
- Group interventions counter-indicated.
- Documentation on SCM form and in ISIS
Intervention and Counseling

- Both victims and bullies will be referred to the members of the school’s Student Services Team for counseling
- Parent / legal guardian must be notified
- Referrals to at least two different community based counseling agencies will be provided when additional counseling is warranted
- Mediation is not an appropriate intervention for most bullying situations.
Creative Sanctions

- Less focus on punitive consequences
- More focus on changing the culture of the school
- Have student (bully) create posters about the dangers of bullying to hang throughout the school
- Write an essay about bullying
Special Note on Best Practices

- Treat group complaints as a single process
- Cyberbullying is covered under this policy
- Involve law enforcement as appropriate (danger of harm)
- Multiple complaints from a grade level/classroom etc.? Best practice to remind students/staff of policy and expectations.
- Promptly address any suspicious behavior thereby building school culture where behavior is not tolerated
- Utilize helpful forms from website
BeSafe: Anonymous Reporting System

Send text to 274637 (CRIMES)
Then type in the word keyword: Besafe.
Then, type your tip, i.e. who, what, when, where. (Standard Text Message Rates Apply)

Submit Tip On-Line!
Go To www.dadeschools.net
Or Use the Website!
http://besafe.dadeschools.net

Call In Your Tip!
305-995-2677
Remain Anonymous!
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bullying and Harassment
Policy and Curriculum Manual

Artwork by: Kris Reig, Arvida Middle School
Manual

- Artwork on Cover
- District Policy
- Definitions – Bullying & Harassment
- Reporting Procedures
- Investigation Procedures
- Helpful Forms
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Curriculum
- Resources
Website

- Accessed through Students, Parents or Employee Portals
- On the Bullying and Harassment Policy homepage [http://studentservices.dadeschools.net/bullying/](http://studentservices.dadeschools.net/bullying/) you can find the complete manual, reporting forms, power point presentations, curriculum
- **Students:** reporting forms, reference documents and online resources
- **Parents:** reporting forms, reference documents and resources
It’s the Law

All staff are responsible for the information contained in the new Policy Against Bullying and Harassment
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