

Students

Prevention of Bullying

The Governing Board believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The district, schools, and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

The Mariposa County Unified School District will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate or harass another student through words or actions. Bullying behavior is defined as direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name calling; and social isolation or manipulation.

The Mariposa County Unified School District expects students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee. Staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while they are traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity off-site, during the lunch period whether on or off campus, and during a school-sponsored activity.

To ensure bullying does not occur on school campuses, the Mariposa County Unified School District will provide staff development training in prevention of bullying and cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff to develop each school's ability to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

Teachers should discuss this policy with students in ways appropriate to their ages and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Each school has adopted the *Standards of Behavior* to be followed by every student while he or she is on school grounds, when traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, and during lunch period, whether on or off campus. The *Standards of Behavior* is sent to each parent and student at the beginning of the school year. This document also includes the *District's Zero Tolerance Policy*.

Adopted: 5-20-04

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Bullying is considered a violation of the *Education Code* and *Penal Code*. It is further defined as harassment and/or intimidation of a student or students by another student or group of students in one or more of the following categories:

- A. Physical bullying is defined as any physical action meant to harm, intimidate or cause fear in another person. Examples include, but are not limited to: Hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, restraining, slapping, poking, scratching, choking.
- B. Verbal bullying is defined as any verbal or written communication meant to harm, intimidate, or cause fear in another person. Examples include, but are not limited to: Taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, threatening, sarcasm, the use of racial or ethnic slurs, and derogatory comments regarding a student's perceived sexual orientation, gender preference, and/or lifestyle choices.
- C. Psychological bullying is any action or communication meant to disrespect, harm, intimidate, or cause fear in another person. Examples include, but are not limited to: Spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, or promoting social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation.

Bullying prevention remedies as addressed in Standards of Behavior include, but are not limited to, the following actions and consequences:

- Any student who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee.
- Students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.

Disciplinary actions against a student for violation of *Education Code* sections that address bullying, intimidation, and/or harassment shall be administered in accordance with the District Board Policy 5144 and Administrative Regulations 5144.1, 5144.2, and the *Standards of Behavior Handbook*. Local law enforcement will be notified of all violations for investigation and prosecution pursuant to Penal Code sections including, but not limited to 240, 242, 245, 415, and 422.

If the complainant student or the parent of the student believes that the investigation or complaint was not resolved appropriately, the student or the parent of the student should contact the principal or the school office. The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

The procedures of interviewing in bullying behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- All staff, students, and parents will receive a summary of the policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year, as part of the student handbook and/or information packet, as part of new student orientation, and as part of the school system's notification to parents.
- The school will make reasonable efforts to keep confidential a report of bullying and the results of the investigation.
- Staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur.
- Schools are required to develop a process to provide support, intervention and counseling for students who feel they are victims of bullying.
- Schools are required to develop a process to involve parents in correcting behavior of students involved as perpetrators and victims of bullying.
- People witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the victim or witnesses in any way.
- Law enforcement agencies will be involved in school bullying incidents at the direction of the site principal.

Adopted: 5-20-04