

## Preventing Bullying and Harassment

### **School Safety and Bullying Prevention Act (OKLA. STAT. tit. 70, § 24-100.2)**

The Oklahoma Legislature established the School Safety and Bullying Prevention Act with the express intent of prohibiting bullying in all schools. In addition to the prohibition listed in the student discipline code, above, the board has adopted a separate policy prohibiting bullying and outlining the district's plan to address it.

### **Bullying/Harassment Policy**

It is the policy of Grove Elementary School District that threatening behavior, harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students by other students, personnel, or the public will not be tolerated. Students are expected to be civil, polite, and fully engaged in the learning process. Students who act inappropriately are not fully engaged in the learning process. This policy is in effect while the students are on school grounds, in school vehicles, at designated bus stops, at school sponsored activities, or at school-sanctioned events, and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management, and welfare of the school district. Threatening behavior, harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students by electronic communication is prohibited whether such communication originated at school or with school equipment, if the communication is specifically directed at students or school personnel and concerns harassment intimidation or bullying at school.

Grove School believes respect for the dignity of others is a cornerstone of civil society. Bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, robs a person of his/her dignity, detracts from the safe environment necessary to promote student learning, and will not be tolerated. Students who bully another person shall be held accountable for their actions whether it occurs on school property or a school sponsored activity or event; or going to or from school or school activity.

**Bullying** means the recurring intentional harassment, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, defamation, or threat or incitement of violence by a student against another student or public-school employee by a written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that causes or creates a clear and present danger of:

1. Physical harm to a public-school employee or student or damage to the public-school employee's or student's property
2. Substantial interference with a student's education or with a public-school employee's role in education
3. A hostile educational environment for one or more students or public-school employees due to the severity, persistence, or pervasiveness of the act.
4. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or educational environment.
5. Examples of "bullying" may include (but are not limited to) a pattern of behavior involving one or more of the following:
  - a. Sarcasm about another student's personal appearance
  - b. Pointed questions intended to embarrass or humiliate
  - c. Mocking, taunting or belittling or name-calling
  - d. Non-verbal threats and/or intimidation such as "flexing," "fronting," or "chesting" a person
  - e. Demeaning humor relating to a student's race, gender, ethnicity or personal characteristics

- f. Blackmail or extortion
- g. Blocking access to school property or facilities
- h. Deliberate physical contact or injury to person or property
- i. Stealing or hiding books or belongings
- j. Threats of harm to others and/or their possessions

Students are encouraged to report behavior they consider to be bullying, including a single action, which if allowed to continue would constitute bullying, to their teacher, counselor, or administration. Parents or legal guardians may submit to the principal written reports of incidents they feel constitute bullying, or if allowed to continue would constitute bullying. We will listen to, treat seriously and act upon all reports of bullying. The person(s) reporting behavior they consider to be bullying shall not be subject to retaliation or reprisal in any form. Students found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, consideration may be given to other violations of the student handbook that may have simultaneously occurred. Combating bullying is the shared responsibility of the whole school community; students, staff, parents, and patrons working together in partnership. Grove School's administration, faculty, and staff are empowered to deal with bullying by the Board, to corrective or remedial action. Grove School provides a caring partnership where it is the responsibility of everyone, adults, and pupils, to respond positively to all incidents of bullying. Bullying will be addressed, and its unacceptability reinforced within academic and classroom guidance curricula and by the structures that support them.

**Harassment** is intimidation by threats of or actual physical violence; the creation by whatever means of a climate of hostility or intimidation; or the use of language, conduct, or symbols in such manner as to be understood to convey hatred, contempt, or prejudice or to have the effect of insulting or stigmatizing an individual. Harassment includes but is not limited to harassment on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, religion, marital status, or disability. As used in the School Bullying Prevention Act, "harassment, intimidation, and bullying" means any gesture, written or verbal expression, electronic communication or physical act that a reasonable person should know will harm another student, damage another student's property, place another student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or damage to the student's property, or insult or demean any student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student. Harassment, intimidation, and bullying include, but are not limited to, a gesture or written, verbal, or physical act, or electronic communication. Such behavior is specifically prohibited.

In administering discipline, consideration will be given to alternative methods of punishment to ensure that the most effective discipline is administered in each case. In all disciplinary action, teachers and administrators will be mindful of the fact that they are dealing with individual personalities. The faculty may consider consultation with parents to determine the most effective disciplinary measure.

In considering alternatives of corrective actions, the faculty/administration of the school district will consider those listed below. However, the school is not limited to these alternative methods, nor does this list reflect an order or sequence of events to follow in disciplinary actions. The board of education will rely upon the judgment and discretion of the administrator to determine the appropriate remedial or corrective action in each instance.

- Conference with student
- Conference with parents
- In-school restriction
- Detention
- Referral to counselor
- Behavioral contract
- Changing student's seat assignment or class assignment
- Requiring a student to make financial restitution for damaged property
- Requiring a student to clean or straighten items or facilities damaged by the student's behavior
- Restriction of privileges
- Involvement of local authorities
- Referring student to appropriate social agency
- Out of School Suspension
- Other appropriate disciplinary action as required and indicated by the circumstances which may include, but is not limited to,
  - removal from eligibility to participate or attend extracurricular activities as well as
  - removal from the privilege of attending or participating in the graduation ceremony, school dances, prom, prom activities, and/or class trips.

Harassment set forth above may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Verbal, physical, or written harassment or abuse;
2. Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
3. Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, etc.;
4. Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student;
5. Unwelcome physical contact.

Upon a report of harassment procedures will be followed which provide the following:

- Prompt investigation of allegations of harassment;
- The expeditious correction of the conditions causing such harassment;
- Establishment of adequate measures to provide confidentiality in the complaint process;
- Initiation of appropriate corrective actions;
- Identification and enactment of methods to prevent reoccurrence of the harassment; and
- A process where the provisions of this policy are disseminated in writing annually to all staff and students.
- A copy of this policy will be furnished to each student and teacher in this school district

REFERENCE: 21 O.S. §850.0 70 O.S. §24-100.2 Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

### **Investigation Procedures**

The following procedures will be used by any person for the filing, processing, and resolution of a reported incident of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or threatening behavior. The procedures are to be followed by the administration of the school district to determine the severity of the incident and the potential to result in future violence.

## Definitions

“Harassment, intimidation, and bullying” means any gesture, written or verbal expression, electronic communication, or physical act that a reasonable person should know will harm another student, damage another student’s property, place another student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or damage to the student’s property, or insult or demean any student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student. Harassment intimidation, and bullying include, but are not limited to, gestures, written, verbal, or physical acts, or electronic communications.

“Electronic communication” means the communication of any written, verbal, or pictorial information by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, a cellular telephone or other wireless communication device, or a computer.

“Threatening behavior” means any pattern of behavior or isolated action, whether it is directed at another person or not, that a reasonable person would believe indicates potential for future harm to students, school personnel, or school property.

## Procedures

The procedure for investigating reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying or threatening behavior, is as follows:

1. The matter should immediately be reported to the building principal. If the bullying involved an electronic communication, a printed copy of the communication as well as any identifying information such as email address or web address shall be provided to the building principal. As much detailed information as possible should be provided to the building principal in written form to allow for a thorough investigation of the matter.
2. Upon receipt of a written report, the building principal shall contact the superintendent and begin an investigation to determine the severity of the incident and the potential for future violence.
3. If, during the course of the investigation, it appears that a crime may have been committed the building principal and/or superintendent shall notify local law enforcement and request that the alleged victim also contact law enforcement to report the matter for potential criminal investigation.
4. If it is determined that the school district’s discipline code has been violated, the building principal shall follow district policies regarding the discipline of the student.
5. Upon completion of the investigation, the principal or superintendent may recommend that available community mental health care options be provided to the student, if appropriate. This may include information about the types of support services available to the student bully, victim, and any other students affected by the prohibited behavior. If such a recommendation is made, the administration shall request disclosure of any information that indicates an explicit threat to the safety of students or school personnel provided the disclosure of information does not violate the provisions or requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Section 2503 of Title 12 of the Oklahoma Statutes, Section 1376 of Title 59 of Oklahoma Statutes, or any other state or federal laws relating to the disclosure of confidential information.

## **Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Investigation Procedures**

The following procedures will be used by any person for the filing, processing, and resolution of a reported incident of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or threatening behavior. The procedures are to be followed by the administration of the school district to determine the severity of the incident and the potential to result in future violence.

## Definitions

1. “Harassment, intimidation, and bullying” means any gesture, written or verbal expression, electronic communication, or physical act that a reasonable person should know will harm another student, damage another student’s property, place another student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or damage to the student’s property, or insult or demean any student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student. Harassment intimidation, and bullying include, but are not limited to, gestures, written, verbal, or physical acts, or electronic communications.
2. “Electronic communication” means the communication of any written, verbal, or pictorial information by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, a cellular telephone or other wireless communication device, or a computer.
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3. If, during the course of the investigation, it appears that a crime may have been committed the building principal and/or superintendent shall notify local law enforcement and request that the alleged victim also contact law enforcement to report the matter for potential criminal investigation.
4. If it is determined that the school district's discipline code has been violated, the building principal shall follow district policies regarding the discipline of the student.
5. Upon completion of the investigation, the principal or superintendent may recommend that available community mental health care options be provided to the student, if appropriate. This may include information about the types of support services available to the student bully, victim, and any other students affected by the prohibited behavior. If such a recommendation is made, the administration shall request disclosure of any information that indicates an explicit threat to the safety of students or school personnel provided the disclosure of information does not violate the provisions or requirements of the Family

Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Section 2503 of Title 12 of the Oklahoma Statutes, Section 1376 of Title 59 of Oklahoma Statutes, or any other state or federal laws relating to the disclosure of confidential information.