

BULLYING

LEARN is dedicated to promoting and maintaining a positive learning environment where all students are welcomed, supported, and feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe in school.

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased, or used by the local or regional board of education.

Bullying is also prohibited outside of the school setting if such bullying results in any of the following: (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Any form of discrimination and retaliation against an individual who report or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is strictly prohibited.

Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the LEARN policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

For the purposes of this policy “Bullying” is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students relatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. Place such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. Creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. Infringes on the rights of such student at school ,or
- E. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity of expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability , or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

For the purposes of this policy, “Cyberbullying” means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications. In addition, for the purposes of this policy “Teen dating valence” means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

As part of this policy, LEARN shall develop and implement a Safe School Climate Plan to address the existence of bullying and teen dating violence in its schools. The district's Safe School Climate Plan consists of this policy as well as the administrative regulations developed by the Executive Director to implement this policy. Such plan shall:

- 1.) Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees and require students and parents or guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which students may make such reports;
- 2.) Enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying or teen dating violence;
- 3.) Require school employees who witness acts of bullying or teen dating violence or receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence to orally notify the safe school climate specialist, or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report;
- 4.) Require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying or teen dating violence and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this section;
- 5.) Require the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- 6.) Include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence;
- 7.) Provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;
- 8.) Require each school to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation;
- 9.) Require each school to: (a) invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting to discuss disciplinary and other measures to prevent further acts of bullying and (b) invite the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student;
- 10.) Establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
- 11.) Direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents or incidents of teen dating violence by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
- 12.) Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 13.) Direct the development and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence;
- 14.) Require the principal of a school, or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying or teen dating violence constitutes criminal conduct;
- 15.) Prohibit bullying and teen dating violence (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;

- 16.) Require, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and
- 17.) Require that all school employees annually complete the training described in Connecticut General Statute §10-22a

The notification required pursuant to subdivision (8) (above) and the invitation required pursuant to subdivision (9) (above) shall include a description of the response of a school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.

The Board requires each school in the District, on and after July1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, to complete an assessment using school climate assessment instruments, including uniform surveys that collect information about students' perspectives and opinions about school climate at the school and allow students to complete and submit such surveys anonymously, approved and disseminated by the Department of Education pursuant to C.G.S. 10-222h, As amended by PA 11-232. The Board will collect the school climate assessments of each District school and submit them to the Department of Education.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

10-15b Access of parent or guardian to student's records.

10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160 and P.A. 11-232 and P.A. 14-172

P.A. 06-115 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in Schools and Notices Sent to Parents or Legal Guardians.

P.A. 11-232 An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws.

P. A. 13-3 An Act Concerning Gun Violence Protection and Safety

P.A. 14-172 An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities through Education and Ensuring Safe School Climates.

P.A. 14-234 An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

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