

Annual Prevention Training

Intentionally Improving School Climate by Targeting
Bullying and Harassment

Presented by the Offices for
Employee Relations and
Student Support Programs and Services and
Professional Development and School Supports
District School Board of Pasco County
Fall 2014



Why Focus on Preventing Bullying and Harassment?

- Short and long-term effects on students
- Impact on bystanders
- Improve school social climate
- School staff are obligated to comply with federal law, state statute, and Board policy



Why Focus on Preventing Bullying and Harassment?

- Short and long-term effects on students
- Impact on bystanders
- Negative impact on hope, engagement, well-being
- School staff can be held legally liable if demonstrating “deliberate indifference”



Our Commitment

- The District School Board of Pasco County does not tolerate bullying or harassment which includes sex-based harassment (gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression).
- The District is committed to taking immediate action to eliminate bullying and harassment, prevent its recurrence, and reduce its effects.



Essential Questions

- How do we define bullying and harassment, including sex-based harassment?
- How will we implement the District's anti-bullying and harassment policy?
- How can we foster safe learning environments while enhancing and supporting student achievement?



A Change in Perspective

- Bullying is a behavior that can be replaced or changed.



Overview of Bullying and Harassment



Bullying is...

Defined as ***systematically and chronically*** inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students.

It is further defined as ***unwanted and repeated*** written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, that is ***severe or pervasive*** enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; is carried out ***repeatedly*** and is ***often characterized by an imbalance of power***, or unreasonably ***interferes with the individual's school performance or participation***.



Bullying is...

- ▣ Aggressive behavior that **intends to cause harm or distress**. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or emotional.
- ▣ Usually **repeated** over time.
- ▣ Most often in a relationship where there is an **imbalance of power or strength**.
- ▣ P.I.C.= Purposeful, Imbalance of Power, Continual



Bullying is NOT...

- Usually an isolated incident
- Unintentional
- A form of conflict with two parties of equal status or power

Students may demonstrate undesired behaviors that do not fulfill the definition of bullying, but are nevertheless hurtful to peers. These behaviors affect the school climate and students' well-being, and must be addressed.



Harassment is...

Any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a student that places a student in **reasonable fear of harm** to his or her person or **damage to his or her property**.

Harassment is **usually** based on a **protected status** such as: race, color, sex or gender stereotypes, religion, national origin, marital status, or age.



Harassment has...

- the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits OR
- the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school



Harassment is NOT...

- Conflict in itself does not constitute harassment, but could turn into harassment if no steps are taken to resolve the conflict.
- Not all inappropriate comments/teasing constitute harassment, but could turn into bullying or harassment if no steps are taken to resolve the issue.



Types of Bullying/Harassment

- Verbal
- Social or relational
- Physical
- Cyber



Cyberbullying

- “The use of Internet, cellphones and related technologies to hurt, harass or embarrass another person in a deliberate, repeated and hostile manner,” including behaviors such as:
 - Creating a false online identity to trick another person into revealing information.
 - Impersonating someone using a false social networking page.
 - Spreading lies and rumors about someone by text message or over the Internet.
 - Sending threatening or hurtful text messages.
 - Posting online any embarrassing pictures of people without their consent.



Recognizing Bullying/Harassment

- Physical signs like torn, damaged, or soiled clothing; unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches; missing or damaged personal items like books or homework without a credible explanation
- Social isolation
- Truancy or frequent claims of physical ailments in order to be allowed to go home
- Declining school performance



Rough Play	Real Fighting	Bullying
Usually friends; often repeated (same players)	Usually not friends; typically not repeated	Typically not friends; generally repeated
Power relatively equal	Power relatively equal	Unequal power
No intent to harm	Intentional harm doing	Intentional harm doing
Affect is friendly; positive, mutual	Affect negative; aggressive, tense, hostile affect	Affect negative; aggressive & differs for victim and aggressor



BULLYING = PEER ABUSE



Where Does Sexual Orientation Fit In?

- If students are harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, their harassment is typically based on their failure to conform to cultural gender stereotypes.
- This harassment IS sex-based harassment and a violation of the student's civil rights.



Legal Issues and Liability



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**“Stand Up
for All
Students
Act”**

**1006.147,
F.S.**



*Jeffrey Scott Johnston
12/21/89—6/29/05*

*“For every action, there’s
reaction. Broken Hearts,
don’t just happen...”
www.jeffreyjohnston.org*

Jeffrey Johnston

“Stand Up for All Students Act”

1006.147, F.S

- ▣ Prohibits bullying and harassment of any student or employee of a public K-12 educational institution;
- ▣ provides definitions of bullying and harassment;
- ▣ requires each school district to adopt a policy prohibiting such bullying and harassment;
- ▣ requires annual training for all employees;



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“Stand Up for All Students Act” 1006.147, F.S

- ▣ Requires a procedure for reporting an act of bullying or harassment, including provisions that permit a person to anonymously report such an act;
- ▣ requires a procedure for the prompt investigation of a report of bullying or harassment and the persons responsible for the investigation;
- ▣ requires reporting to state DOE;
- ▣ requires districts' compliance to receive safe schools funds.



Pasco County: Office for Civil Rights Agreement

- The District will take prompt and effective responsive action reasonably designed to end, prevent, and remedy any effects of a hostile school environment.
- School Board Policy regarding bullying/harassment, including complaint procedures, will be provided to parents, students and employees
- District staff will be trained on recognizing, reporting and preventing bullying/harassment
- Complaints of bullying/harassment will be reported and monitored



Liability

The US District Court of Eastern Virginia entered a judgment against the principal who failed to believe a student's complaint of teacher abuse. She was ordered to pay the student \$350,000.

In *Davis v Monroe County Board of Ed*, the Court announced that a school could be found liable for monetary damages for student-to-student harassment if the school official had knowledge of the harassment, the authority to correct it and did not act.



Liability

- *Gebser v Lago Vista Independent School District* expanded the definition of “knowledge” to actual or what reasonably should have been known by the school staff.



Deliberate Indifference

Deliberate indifference is the failure to act or responding to bullying/harassment with a strategy known to be ineffective.

A common misperception with parents and others is that the school is liable for the behavior of the harassing student – it is not. The school is responsible for the **RESPONSE** to the complaint.



Non-Discrimination Statement

- The District School Board of Pasco County does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, or age in its educational programs, services, and activities.
- For additional information or to report any suspected violations of this policy please contact Sandy May, Title IX Coordinator/Equity Manager at (813) 794-2679 or smay@pasco.k12.fl.us.



Impact of Bullying and Harassment on Students



Students Who Bully/Harass Tend to:

- ▣ Have more positive attitudes toward violence than peers
- ▣ Be truant, drop out of school
- ▣ Report poorer academic achievement
- ▣ Perceive a negative climate at school



Bullying and Harassment Affects the Total School Climate

- It interferes with student learning
- It creates a climate of fear and disrespect
- Students may perceive lack of control/caring



Short-Term Effects of Being Targeted



- Lower self-esteem
- Depression & anxiety
- Absenteeism & reduced academic achievement
- Thoughts of suicide
- Illness



Effects on Bystanders

- **Bystanders may feel:**
 - Afraid
 - Powerless to change the situation
 - Guilty for not acting
 - Diminished empathy for targets over time
 - Pressured to participate in bullying or harassing behavior



Student Code of Conduct

- The District School Board of Pasco County does not tolerate sex-based harassment.
- Any student who believes he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based harassment, or other sex-based harassment should immediately report the harassment to the District.
- The District is committed to taking immediate action to eliminate the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and reduce its effects.



Student Code of Conduct

- Students found to have engaged in acts of sex-based harassment will be subject to prompt disciplinary action, including, if warranted, suspension or expulsion.
- Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to work together to prevent sex-based harassment.



Reporting Requirements



Reporting Procedures

- School personnel are legally mandated to report all bullying and harassment to the principal or designee
- Anyone can report suspected bullying or harassment
- Florida law allows reports to be made anonymously
- Anonymous reports may be made via the District web site,
<http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us>



Investigation

- The principal or designee will investigate all allegations of bullying or harassment to determine if the report is **substantiated** or **unsubstantiated**.
 - If an incident is not within the scope of the school, the administrator will refer to the appropriate jurisdiction.
- Students who have been affected by bullying or harassing behavior will be referred for counseling services, as appropriate.



Preventing and Intervening in Bullying and Harassment



What Is Our District Doing To Address Bullying?

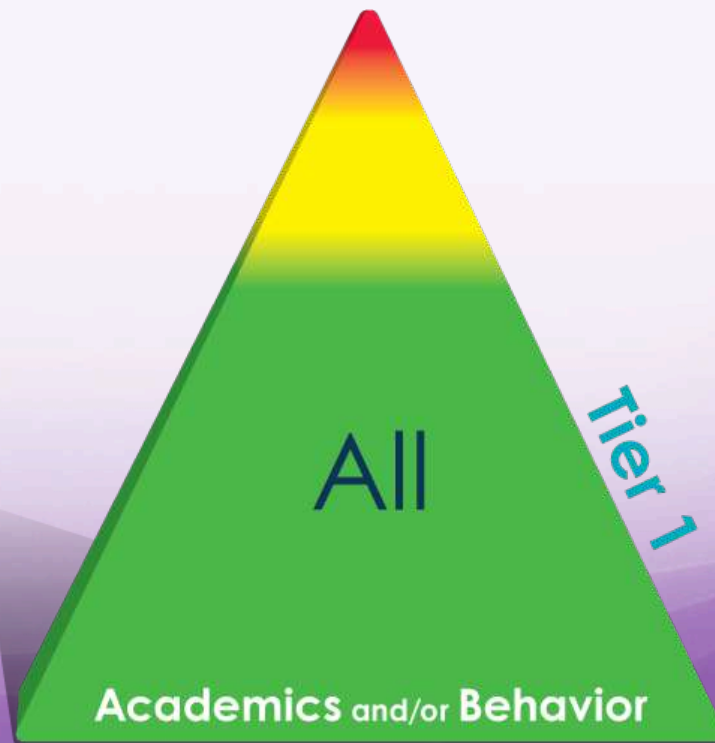
- Awareness-raising efforts
- Anonymous reporting via district web site
- Professional development for all staff
- Engagement surveys to identify strengths and needs
- For all students: bullying prevention lessons, opportunities for youth leadership, direct intervention in bullying/harassment incidents, follow-up support through Student Support Services
- Implementation of **district procedures** for reporting



What Can Schools Do To Address Bullying?

- **Tier I**

- Comprehensive approaches: school-wide efforts to create positive school climate
- Develop a positive school climate
- Build a comprehensive web of support to increase protective factors for all students



What Can Schools Do To Address Bullying?

- Tier II
 - Provide training/lessons for small groups of students
 - Identify problem areas and times to increase targeted supervision
 - Intentionally increase protective factors by rewarding prosocial involvement
 - **Avoid** “group treatment” for students who bully others



What Can Schools Do To Address Bullying?

- Tier III
 - Apply fair, consistent consequences
 - Individual work with students who have bullied
 - Individual work with students who have been targeted
 - Provide referrals to outside agencies
 - Mentoring
 - **Do not** require conflict resolution or peer mediation for bullying situations



What Can I Do When I Witness Bullying and Harassment?

On-the-Spot Bullying/Harassment Interventions

When you see behaviors happening:

Step 1: Stop the bullying/harassment.

Step 2: Support the target of the bullying/harassment.

Step 3: To the student(s) who bullied/harassed: Name the behavior and refer to the rules of the Student Code of Conduct.

Step 4: Empower the bystanders with appreciation if they were supportive to the student who was bullied/harassed or with information about how to act in the future.



What Can I Do When I Witness Bullying and Harassment?

On-the-Spot Bullying/Harassment Interventions

When you see behaviors happening (con't):

Step 5: Impose immediate and appropriate consequences for the student(s) who bullied/harassed.

Step 6: Take steps to make sure the student who was bullied/harassed will be protected from future targeting.

Step 7: Report the incident to the School Based Administrator.



**What Is Our School Doing To Address Bullying and Harassment?

- Who is the administrator contact for reporting?
- Does our school use bullying reporting boxes, or another anonymous procedure?
- Who will be conducting investigations (administrator)?
- What form must be completed for reporting?
- When do I report?
- What do I do if a parent reports bullying to me?



Academic Achievement and Safe Schools

The ability of students to learn, teachers to teach and all staff to work effectively is directly related to the safety of our schools and the health and well-being of our students and staff.

Together,
we can create safe
environments to work,
teach and learn!



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Reflection

- What is one thing you can intentionally do as part of your daily work to create a safe environment for all students?



Thank You for Participating!

