

# QUINCY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Definition of Terms:

**BULLYING:** Any written or verbal expression, or physical acts or gestures, directed at another person(s) to intimidate, frighten, ridicule, humiliate, or cause harm to the other person, where the conduct is not related to the person's membership in a protected class (e.g. race, sex). Bullying may include, but is not limited to, repeated taunting, threats of harm, verbal or physical intimidation, cyber-bullying through e-mails, instant messages, or websites, pushing, kicking, hitting, spitting, or taking or damaging another's personal property. Bullying behavior may also constitute a crime. Experts have determined that bullying is a form of aggression involving a power imbalance between the bully and the victim, where the bully has actual or perceived physical, social, and/or psychological power over his or her target(s). Bullying generally involves a pattern of conduct that is directed at a victim, rather than a single incident.

**CYBER-BULLYING:** Sending mean, hurtful or threatening messages or images about another person; posting sensitive, private information about another person; pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.

**SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEMBER:** Any student or school system employee on school premises or at a school-related or school-sponsored function or activity.

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The Quincy Public Schools is committed to creating a safe and nurturing learning environment in which students may achieve their individual maximum potential. The Quincy Public Schools expect all members of our community to treat each other with dignity and respect. It is the policy of the Quincy Public Schools to strictly enforce a prohibition against bullying, including cyber-bullying and all forms of violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior throughout the school system. Bullying by a student against another student may occur outside of the school setting and concerns or evidence may be brought to the attention of teachers or school staff. Bullying occurs across all geographic, racial and socio-economic segments of society. There is not just one typical profile of a student who is bullied – any student can be singled out for any reason.

The Quincy Public Schools is aware of the effects of bullying on the school system and community and is committed to establishing both policies and educational programs to address this serious issue. Recognizing that education is an important component of any effort to combat bullying, school-based initiatives that are designed to keep students safe and teach them to act responsibly are encouraged and supported by district administrators. At the same time, professional development activities designed to train school personnel to recognize, respond to, and report instances of bullying are conducted.

For purposes of this policy, the term *school* includes school buildings; school grounds; and school-sponsored and sanctioned activities such as social events, field trips, sports events, concerts, cultural events, and other similar functions even when held off school property. This policy also applies to school-sanctioned transportation and travel to and from school.

Bullying in the schools will not be tolerated by the Quincy Public Schools. The school system takes allegations of bullying seriously and will respond promptly to complaints and allegations of bullying. Where it has been determined that bullying behavior has occurred, the Quincy Public Schools will act promptly to eliminate the bullying and will impose corrective action, as necessary and appropriate to the circumstances. Such corrective action will be in accord with the judgment of the administrators charged with resolving the issue and may range from mediation to counseling or educational approaches to formal discipline such as a reprimand, detention, suspension, or legal involvement.

Retaliation is forbidden against any person who has alleged or reported bullying, provided information, or participated in an investigation. Any allegation of reprisal will be subject to investigation and disciplinary action.

### **Procedures for Handling Incidences of Bullying**

- Students with any knowledge of student-to-student bullying are taught, reminded, and strongly encouraged to report such concerns immediately to a responsible adult in the building, i.e. teacher, guidance counselor, administrator, or to their parent/guardian. Staff members who receive such reports or information are **required** to refer such reports or information immediately to an administrator/designee or guidance counselor.
- After receiving a report of a concern around bullying, the school has an obligation to respond in a timely, immediate, and appropriate manner.
- Guidance counselor and/or administrative personnel may interview the alleged victim(s) around his/her concerns and may request a written account of the details surrounding the concern.
- The school's investigation may include gathering information from witnesses to the alleged bullying.
- The school's response may include having an administrator or designee speak to the alleged offender, explaining that the behavior is inappropriate and outlining consequences for past actions and consequences if the behavior does not stop. If appropriate and agreeable to the complainant and his/her parents/guardians, the complainant may discuss the situation with the offender, telling him/her to stop the offensive behavior/actions. This may be done in the presence of a third party.
- School administrators may contact the Director of Safety and Security or the Director of Student Support Services, as warranted.
- Parents/Guardians of both the victim(s) and alleged offender(s) will be contacted to discuss the concerns, and to reassure parents that the situation is being addressed.
- When necessary, a disciplinary hearing will be scheduled with parents/guardians to review the incident and assign appropriate consequences and measures.
- The school's response will ordinarily include a focus on educating and changing behavior rather than simply punishing the offender. Accordingly, one or more of the following disciplinary consequences and/or remedial measures may be considered, according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental ages of the students involved, and the offender's history of problem behaviors.
- When a given situation is judged serious enough to require the attention of the Superintendent/designee, he/she will be informed immediately and an incident report will be written, reviewed by the Principal/designee and distributed to appropriate administrators within 24 hours of the incident. A hard copy, with the Principal's/designee's signature, will be sent to the Superintendent.

### **Possible Disciplinary Consequences**

1. Admonishment
2. Temporary removal from the classroom
3. Loss of privileges
4. Classroom or administrative detention
5. Referral to disciplinarian
6. In-school suspension during the school week
7. Out-of-school suspension
8. Report to Director of Security/Quincy Police Department

### **Possible Remedial/Supportive Measures**

1. Framing the bullying behavior as a failed attempt to solve a real problem or reach a goal; school personnel assist the misbehaving student to find a better way to solve the problem or meet the goal.
2. Restitution or restoration
3. Peer support group
4. Corrective instruction or other relevant service experience
5. Supportive interventions including peer mediation, etc.
6. Behavioral assessment or evaluation
7. Closely monitored behavioral management plan
8. Referral to guidance or outside counseling/therapy
9. Parent conference
10. Maintaining, as much as possible, the confidentiality of victims and offenders

### **Possible Environmental (Building) Measures**

1. Modification of schedules
2. Adjustments in hallway traffic
3. Modifications in student routes or patterns traveling to and from school
4. Use of monitors (hallway, cafeteria, bus, dismissal, etc.)
5. Involvement in community youth organizations
6. School climate and culture awareness activities and changes
7. Law enforcement involvement (i.e. school resource officer)