

WEST ISD FREEDOM FROM BULLYING POLICY

Overview

It is the policy of the West Independent School District to provide a learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying (similar policies exist and define sexual harassment and hazing). It is a violation of this policy for any student to engage in bullying or cyber-bullying, or for any employee of West ISD to condone or fail to report acts of bullying or cyber-bullying that they witness or become aware of (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds; (ii) at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs, whether on or off school grounds; (iii) at school bus stops; (iv) on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or (v) through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district.

It is also a violation of this policy for any student to engage in bullying or cyber-bullying at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of the school, as determined by school administrators.

Retaliation

West ISD will not tolerate retaliation against a person who reports bullying or cyber-bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or cyber-bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying or cyber-bullying.

Reporting

It is the responsibility of every student, parent and employee of West ISD to recognize acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. Any student who believes that he or she has been the victim of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation should report it immediately to his or her teacher or campus administrator. Safety Alert forms are available in every classroom or office across West ISD. Students, parents and West ISD staff members (including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, coaches, advisors, advisors to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessionals), who witness or become aware of bullying cyber-bullying or retaliation should immediately report it to the campus principal.

Reports of bullying or cyber-bullying will be promptly investigated. If the campus administrator determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the campus administrator will (i) notify the police if the campus administrator believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator; (ii) take appropriate disciplinary action; (iii) notify the parents or guardians of the perpetrator; and (iv) notify the parents or guardians of the victim, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation.

Staff Training and Classroom Instruction

West ISD will provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention and provide

professional development to build the skills of staff members, as required by law. The Superintendent will develop a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan which shall set forth the administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy. Such Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall include, but not be limited to: procedures for reporting, responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation; the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation or against someone for making a false accusation of bullying; procedures for remedying incidents of bullying and restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that victim's needs for protection; strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a person who reports bullying or provides information during an investigation; any notification requirements consistent with state and federal law; a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators, victims and family members; and provisions for educating and informing parents about bullying and the District's bullying prevention curriculum.

Notice

Students and parents or guardians will receive notice of the relevant student-related section of the prevention plan annually via the Student Code of Conduct, and all West ISD staff members shall be trained annually on the plan applicable to their specific campus. Each campus administrator shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan at his or her campus. The campus administration team shall assist students, parents, and employees of the district who seek guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation. Each year, the plan will be included in the Employee Handbook and Student Handbooks. Also, the information will be posted on the WISD website at www.westisd.net.

False Reports

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to reprimand, detention, loss of privileges, and/or suspension. An educational component will be part of the actions taken. If the false accusations have civil and/or criminal elements then further actions may be taken by appropriate law enforcement agencies. Any staff member, parent, and/or community member who knowingly engage in false accusations will be subject to appropriate consequences administered by the school system and/or law enforcement agencies. Complaints of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; however, no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student, staff member, parent, or community member solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

West ISD Board Policies FFH(LOCAL) and FFI(LOCAL)

For additional information, please contact David Truitt, Superintendent, at (254) 981-2000.