

Students

Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment

Students attending programs in the administrative agent district schools are subject to the administrative agent's policies related to the Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment.

For SELA Students

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important Joint Agreement goals.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic **is prohibited** in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the Joint Agreement or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This paragraph (item #4) applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require staff members to monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

Definitions from 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7

Bullying includes *cyberbullying* and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or

photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. *Cyberbullying* includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*. *Cyberbullying* also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*.

Restorative measures means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.

School personnel means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school district, including without limitation school and school district administrators, teachers, school guidance counselors, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

The Director or designee shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the Joint Agreement and SELA's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan must be consistent with the requirements listed below; each numbered requirement, 1-12, corresponds with the same number in the list of required policy components in 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7(b) 1-12.

1. The Joint Agreement uses the definition of *bullying* as provided in this policy.
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this Joint Agreement. However, nothing in the Joint Agreement's bullying prevention and response plan is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.
3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Building Principal, Special Education Administrator, a Complaint Manager, or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the Joint Agreement named officials or any staff member. The Joint Agreement named officials and all staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anonymous reports are also accepted.

Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Travis Friedrich

Name

620 E. Garfield Ave; Decatur, IL 62526

Address

TFriedrich@dps61.org

Email

217-362-3054

Telephone

Complaint Managers:

Travis Friedrich

Name

620 E. Garfield Ave; Decatur, IL 62526

Address

TFriedrich@dps61.org

Email

217-362-3054

Telephone

Elizabeth Lang

Name

620 E Garfield; Decatur 62526

Address

EELang@dps61.org

Email

217-362-3055

Telephone

4. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the parents/guardians of all students involved in an alleged incident of bullying will be notified of such, along with threats, suggestions, or instances of self-harm determined to be the result of bullying, within 24 hours after the school's administration is made aware of the student's involvement in the incident. As appropriate, the school's administration shall also discuss the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. The school shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent or legal guardian, utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained within the 24-hour period.
5. The Director or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying, by, among other things:
 - a. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of a bullying incident was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported bullying incident.
 - b. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
 - c. Notifying the Building Principal or school administrator or designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
 - d. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Building Principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The Director or designee shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the Joint Agreement's jurisdiction and shall require that the Joint Agreement provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the Joint Agreement and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

6. The Director or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, that may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.
7. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying **is prohibited**. Any person's act of reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge with regard to employees, or suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion with regard to students.
8. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the Joint Agreement's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, a person who is found to have falsely accused another of bullying, as a means of retaliation, as a means of bullying, or provided false information will be treated as either: (a) *bullying*, (b) student discipline up to and

including suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion, and/or (c) both (a) and (b) for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

9. The Joint Agreement's bullying prevention and response plan must be based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.
10. The Director or designee shall post this policy on the Joint Agreement's website, if any, and include it in the student handbook, and, where applicable, post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy must be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel (including new employees when hired), and must also be provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty.
11. The Director or designee shall assist the Executive Board with its evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, without limitation:
 - a. The frequency of victimization;
 - b. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
 - c. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
 - d. The types of bullying utilized; and
 - e. Bystander intervention or participation.

The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that the District already collects for other purposes. Acceptable documentation to satisfy the re-evaluated policy submission include one of the following:

- An updated version of the policy with the amendment/modification date included in the reference portion of the policy;
- If no revisions are deemed necessary, a copy of Board minutes indicating that the policy was re-evaluated and no changes were deemed to be necessary; or
- A signed statement from the Board President indicating that the Board re-evaluated the policy and no changes to it were necessary.

The Director or designee must post the information developed as a result of the policy evaluation on the Joint Agreement's website, or if a website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, Board members, school personnel, parents/guardians, and students. Reviews and re-evaluations in years they are due must be submitted to ISBE by September 30.

12. The Director or designee shall fully implement the Board policies, including without limitation, the following:
 - a. 2:260, *Uniform Grievance Procedure*. A student may use this policy to complain about bullying.
 - b. 2:265, *Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure*. Any person may use this policy to complain about sexual harassment in violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
 - c. 2:270, *Discrimination and Harassment on the Basis of Race, Color, and National Origin Prohibited*. Any person may use this policy to complain about discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, or national origin in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and/or the Illinois Human Rights Act.
 - d. 6:60, *Curriculum Content*. Bullying prevention and character instruction is provided in all grades in accordance with State law.
 - e. 6:65, *Student Social and Emotional Development*. Student social and emotional development is incorporated into the Joint Agreement's educational program as required by State law.
 - f. 6:235, *Access to Electronic Networks*. This policy states that the use of the Joint Agreement's electronic networks is limited to: (1) support of education and/or research, or (2) a legitimate business use.

- g. 7:20, *Harassment of Students Prohibited*. This policy prohibits *any* person from harassing, intimidating, or bullying a student based on an identified actual or perceived characteristic (the list of characteristics in 7:20 is the same as the list in this policy).
- h. 7:185, *Teen Dating Violence Prohibited*. This policy prohibits teen dating violence on school property, at school sponsored activities, and in vehicles used for school-provided transportation.
- i. 7:190, *Student Behavior*. This policy prohibits, and provides consequences for, hazing, bullying, or other aggressive behaviors, or urging other students to engage in such conduct.
- j. 7:310, *Restrictions on Publications; Elementary Schools*, and 7:315, *Restrictions on Publications; High Schools*. These policies prohibit students from and provide consequences for: (1) accessing and/or distributing at school any written, printed, or electronic material, including material from the Internet, that will cause substantial disruption of the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the school or school activities, and (2) creating and/or distributing written, printed, or electronic material, including photographic material and blogs, that causes substantial disruption to school operations or interferes with the rights of other students or staff members.

LEGAL REF.: 405 ILCS 49/, Children’s Mental Health Act.
 105 ILCS 5/10-20.14, 5/10-22.6(b-20), 5/24-24, and 5/27-23.7.
 775 ILCS 5/1-103, Ill. Human Rights Act
 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.240 and §1.280, and 1.295

CROSS REF.: 6:60 (Curriculum Content), 6:65 (Student Social and Emotional Development), 6:235 (Access to Electronic Networks), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7:185 (Teen Dating Violence Prohibited), 7:190 (Student Behavior), 7:220 (Bus Conduct), 7:230 (Misconduct by Students with Disabilities), 7:285 (Anaphylaxis Prevention, Response, and Management Program)

ADOPTED: September 18, 2025