

## **Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation and Discrimination**

Bullying is NOT tolerated in the Wilmington School District. Our board policies, administrative plans, and school handbooks strictly forbid bullying, as well as any other form of harassment, intimidation or discrimination.

The Wilmington School District Board of Education, administration, faculty & staff are committed to creating and maintaining a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe educational environment free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. The purpose of established policies, procedures and plans is to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that no one within our school community will be subject to any bullying, experiencing a secure, safe, orderly, respectful, and nurturing environment that promotes teaching and learning.

*Review related School Board Policies & Bullying Prevention Plan:*

- Policy 5:20
- Policy 7:20
- Policy 2:260
- Policy 2:265
- Wilmington School District Bullying Prevention Plan
- 

### **Bullying is generally defined as:**

1. Reflect a coercive imbalance of power; AND
2. Is severe, pervasive and often purposeful and repeated; AND
3. Places an individual in (a) reasonable fear of substantial detrimental effect to his or her person or property; or (b) to otherwise substantially interfere in a student's academic performance or ability to participate in any school related activity.

### **The Illinois legislature clarifies further in its definition of "Bullying" as:**

"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 student's 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." 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7(b)

The Illinois legislature also authorizes school boards to establish appropriate behavioral standards for their respective schools, which take into consideration but are not limited to conduct prohibited by State and federal laws. See, 105 ILCS 5/10-20.14(d).

**“Conduct” may include:**

- Physical acts, such as inappropriate, unwanted, uninvited, or injurious physical contact with another; stalking; sexual assault; and destruction or damage to property of another;
- Written and electronic communication of any type that incorporates language or depictions that would constitute bullying, using any medium (including, but not limited to, cell phones, computers, websites, electronic networks, instant messages, text messages and emails);
- Verbal threats made to another, blackmail, or demands for protection money;
- Non-verbal threats or intimidation such as aggressive or menacing gestures;
- Direct or indirect, relationally aggressive behavior such as social isolation, rumor spreading, or damaging someone’s reputation;
- Any of the above conduct which occurs off school grounds when such conduct creates, or reasonably can be expected to create, a substantial disruption in the school setting and/or at school sponsored activities and events.

**In addition to the types of conduct described above, some potential examples which could be:**

- Blocking access to school property or facilities;
- Stealing or hiding or otherwise defacing books, backpacks or other personal possessions;
- Repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking putdowns, or demeaning humor relating to a student’s race, color, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics, whether or not the student actually possesses them, that could reasonably be expected to result in the disruption of school activities or that results in a hostile educational environment for the student.

**“Cyber-bullying”** means bullying that takes place through the use of electronic devices, including but not limited to telephones, cellular phones, computers, pagers, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, websites, and/or other social media.

**“Teen Dating Violence”** occurs whenever a student who is 13 to 19 years of age uses or threatens to use physical, mental, or emotional abuse to control an individual in the dating relationship; or uses or threatens to use sexual violence in the dating relationship.

### **Wilmington School District Prohibits Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation and Discrimination:**

Bullying is NOT acceptable and is strictly prohibited. Bullying conduct that is covered by our Policy is conduct that occurs on school property or at school sponsored activities or events; while students are being transported or walking to or from school or school sponsored activities or events; while students are waiting at school bus stops, or when the conduct otherwise would substantially impede the educational environment, regardless of where the conduct occurs. The bullying, harassment, intimidation and/or discrimination of any student or staff member of the Wilmington School District will not be tolerated.

### **Wilmington 209u Response to Bullying**

Any complaints or concerns should be reported as soon as possible to the appropriate building principal or any other trusted school district employee. See Board Policy for more details.

Anyone who witnesses any conduct that could constitute bullying shall report it to a school staff member as soon as possible. Such a report shall then be forwarded to the Principal or his/her designee as soon as possible, who then shall conduct or cause to be conducted a thorough investigation of the alleged incident. A district Bullying Prevention Coordinator is also available to assist students, families and school staff in working through situations.

Any student who engages in bullying will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion and referral to local law enforcement. A student's bullying conduct also may be addressed through any other behavioral interventions. Any student who is a bystander to any bullying conduct and who fails to take any action to discourage the bullying conduct also may be subject to appropriate discipline. No student shall be retaliated against for reporting bullying conduct. Any student who is determined to intentionally have falsely accused another of bullying shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

The Superintendent or designee may 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.

It is the responsibility of the school staff to use violations of the school rules as opportunities to help students improve their social and emotional skills, accept personal responsibility for their learning environment and understand consequences for poor choices and behaviors. In determining the appropriate response to or discipline of students who engage in bullying behavior, the school's administration should consider the following:

- The ages and maturity of the students involved;
  
- The type, frequency, severity and patterns of behaviors;
  
- The context in which the incidents occurred; and

- Any other relevant circumstances.

Bullying Complaint Coordinator:

Matt Swick, Assistant Superintendent

209U Wildcat Court; mswick@209u.net; 815-926-1751

### Resources and Support

- U.S. Health and Human Services Website: Bullying Prevention & Response for students, educators and parents. Includes resources, games and activities for children, parents and educators... [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov).
- U.S. Health and Human Services Website: Girls Health - Providing information for girls, educators and parents about bullying, safety, relationships, body image and issues, feelings, nutrition, substance abuse issues, etc. Includes games, quizzes and activities... [www.girlshealth.gov](http://www.girlshealth.gov).
- Bully Free: It starts with me - National Education Association Initiative... [www.nea.org/neabullyfree](http://www.nea.org/neabullyfree).
- Connect for Respect Initiative - National Parent Teachers Association providing information for parents... <http://www.pta.org/bullying.asp>.
- PACER's Center for Children with Disabilities - Bully Prevention Center... <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/>.
- A Brain Works Project: Coping Skills for Kids - Promoting the development of coping skills in pre-teens by providing information and activities and provides resources and information for educators and parents... <http://www.copingskills4kids.net/>.

---

The Wilmington School District forbids all forms of bullying, harassment, intimidation and/or discrimination, including any mistreatment related to race, sex, nationality, religion, or any other trait or affiliation of any kind.

Title IX provides that no person in the United States shall, based on sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Any complaints or concerns should be reported as soon as possible to Non-Discrimination / Title IX Coordinators, Complaint Managers, or any other trusted school district employee. See Board Policy for more details.

Non-Discrimination Coordinator – Kevin Feeney (815.926.1751)

Title IX Coordinator – Matt Swick (815.926.1751)

Bullying Complaint Manager – Matt Swick (815.926.1751)