

## STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

**SECTION:** 200 - Pupils  
**TITLE:** Bullying/Cyberbullying  
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Current SCASD [policy 249](#)

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### **Policy**

The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. Policy 100.1, *School Climate/Inclusive Excellence Policy*, provides the basis for supporting teaching and learning environments in which all students can succeed, both academically and socially. A positive school climate is an essential element of achieving these goals.

Bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, has a negative effect on the educational environment, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Students who are bullied, intimidated, or fearful of other students may not be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the school district.

Recognizing the negative impact that bullying has on student health, welfare, and safety, the Board prohibits bullying by district students.

The District recognizes that education plays a vital role in teaching students appropriate behaviors and, therefore, takes an active role in providing research-based bully prevention programs for its students as a pro-active means of preventing bullying actions.

## **Prohibited Conduct**

**Bullying** and **harassment** are often used interchangeably when talking about hurtful or harmful behavior. Bullying and harassment are similar as they are both about:

- power and control
- actions that hurt or harm another person physically or emotionally
- an imbalance of power between the target and the individual demonstrating the negative behavior
- the target having difficulty stopping the action directed at them

The distinction between bullying and harassment is that when the bullying behavior is directed at the target based on the target's race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, or handicap/disability, then that behavior is defined as harassment.

For more information on harassment see policy 103, *Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual and/or Gender-Based Harassment, and Related Inappropriate Conduct - School and Classroom Practices*. [link]

For **bullying**, it's important to note that while definitions vary from source to source, most agree that an act is defined as bullying when the behavior intentionally hurts, harms, or humiliates another person physically or emotionally. Those targeted by bullying behavior struggle to defend themselves and stop the action directed at them. There also is an "imbalance of power". This means the person demonstrating the bullying behavior has more power; this can be physically, socially, or emotionally.

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal, nonverbal, psychological/physical act, or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantially interfering with a student's education.
2. Creating a threatening environment.
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

Bullying can take many forms and can include a variety of behaviors. As defined in this policy, bullying refers to direct or indirect action, which may include but is not limited to:

1. Physical – hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, getting another person to hurt someone.

2. Verbal – slurs, name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossiping, spreading rumors.
3. Nonverbal – threatening, obscene gestures, isolation, exclusion, stalking, cyberbullying (bullying that occurs by the use of electronic or communication devices through means of e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, photo and video sharing, chat rooms, bash boards, or web sites).

**School setting** means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school.

**Student** shall mean an individual enrolled in a district school.

### **Reporting Complaints**

The Board encourages individuals who believe they or others have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to Principals, Counselors, Security Officers, Teachers, Coaches, the Director of Student Services, or the Director of Equity and Inclusivity. In addition, anonymous reports can be made by victims and/or third parties using the REACT online reporting [form](#).

The District expects all employees, including support personnel, who observe or become aware of an act of bullying or extortion to take immediate, and appropriate steps to intervene and then to report the bullying or extortion to the principal for further investigation. If proper reporting is not engaged in by an employee in a position to observe the conduct, the District reserves the right to impose disciplinary action on the employee, including contractor employees, as deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

If the bullying behavior continues or if the school does not take action, students or parents/guardians should report the incident to the District's Superintendent's Office.

The Board directs that complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly and thoroughly, and corrective or preventative action shall be taken when allegations are substantiated. All parties will be treated with dignity and due process.

The Board directs that any complaint of bullying brought pursuant to this policy shall also be reviewed for conduct which may not be proven to be bullying under this policy but merits review and possible action under other Board policies.

### **Confidentiality**

During the complaint process, while the confidentiality of the information received, the privacy of the individuals involved, and the wishes of the complainant regarding action by the office cannot be guaranteed in every instance, they will be protected to as great a degree as is legally possible. The expressed wishes of the complainant

for confidentiality will be considered in the context of the District's legal obligation to act upon the charge and the right of the charged party to obtain information.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation relating to reports of bullying or participation in an investigation of allegations of bullying is prohibited and shall be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Delegation**

Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students.

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.

### **Cross References**

103

103R

103.1

104

104R

218

247

249R

Student Handbooks