



Wicomico County Board of Education

Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation, or Hazing Policy

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide an orderly, safe and stimulating learning environment for all students of the Wicomico County Board of Education (WCBOE), as WCBOE believes each student has the right to learn in an educational setting that is free from bullying, harassment, intimidation or hazing.

II. Policy Statement

It is the policy of WCBOE to prohibit bullying, harassment, intimidation or hazing of any person on school property, on student transportation provided by Wicomico County Public Schools, at school-sponsored functions or any event related to school business; or by the use of electronic technology. It is also the policy of WCBOE to prohibit reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying, harassment, intimidation or hazing; or who are victims, witnesses, bystanders or others with reliable information about an act of bullying, harassment, intimidation or hazing.

III. Rationale

This policy is designed to ensure compliance with the provisions found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Articles §7-424 and §7-424.1, and the provisions found in the Maryland State Department of Education policy on bullying, harassment, intimidation or hazing.

IV. Definitions

- A. **“Bullying”** – any intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, written, or electronic communication (electronic communication such as cyber-bullying, means a communication that is transmitted by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to email, text, or social media sites using telephones, cellular phones, computers, videos, digital cameras, or any other electronic device) that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being and:
1. is motivated by any actual or perceived personal characteristic(s), which may include but not be limited to race, color, religion, marital status, ancestry, national origin, socioeconomic status, familial status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes; or a mental or physical ability or any other disability; or
 2. is threatening or seriously intimidating; or

Approval Status

Title: WCPS Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation and Hazing Policy
First Adopted: 06/09/09
Legal Review: 01/23/17 06/20/16
Approved Revisions: 02/14/17 07/12/16 06/09/09
Effective: 02/15/17 07/13/16 06/10/09

Index Code

SFS-SAF-PL-029



Wicomico County Board of Education

3. has the effect of humiliating, insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils in such a way as to cause substantial disruption or substantial interference with the student's ability to access and benefit from their regular education program or the orderly operation of the school; or
 4. will have the effect of harming a student or damaging the student's property or placing a student in reasonable fear for his/her person or to his/her property; or
 5. includes a student exercising power and control over another student, either in isolated incidents such as intimidation, harassment or hazing or patterns of harassing or intimidating behavior over time such as bullying; and
 6. substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school; or
 7. occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus.
- B. "Harassment" – a sufficiently severe action or persistent, pervasive pattern of actions or statements, directed at an identifiable individual or group, that is intended to be, or which a reasonable person would perceive as, ridiculing or demeaning.
- C. "Hazing" – participation in any intentional or reckless act directed against another for the purpose of initiation into affiliation with, or maintenance of membership in an organization. Hazing is considered to be a form of bullying; hazing includes, but is not limited to, any action taken or situation created that directly or indirectly embarrasses, humiliates, harasses, ridicules, intimidates or causes harm or mental or physical discomfort to another
- D. "Intimidation" – subjection to intentional action that seriously threatens and induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority which adversely affects one's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational setting.
- E. "Retaliation" – the act or process of threatening or otherwise penalizing a person for reporting an alleged violation of policy or for participating in an investigation of an alleged violation.

Related Documents:

- SFS-GEN-PL-028, WCPS Student Code of Conduct
- SFS-SAF-PR-029, Bullying Harassment, Intimidation or Hazing Procedure
- COMAR 13A.08.01.15
- ED §7-424, Annotated Code of Maryland
- Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005
- Maryland State Department of Education Model Policy on Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools, www.marylandpublicschools.org

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