

Revised Policy 249—Bullying/Cyberbullying

I. Purpose

- A. The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students and employees. The Board recognizes that **BULLYING** creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, **that may** detract from the safe environment **and emotional well-being** that is necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by district students, district employees, or volunteers.

II. Definitions

- A. **Bullying** means an intentional and/or unwanted electronic, written, verbal or physical, social, or emotional act or series of acts directed at any student or employee, which occurs in a school setting that is severe, persistent or pervasive. **Bullying involves a real or perceived power imbalance. A power imbalance may be caused by one's physical size, one's ability to communicate, and/or one's ability to advocate for himself/herself.**

- B. Bullying includes:

1. Substantial interference with a student's education.
2. Creation of a threatening environment.
3. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school
4. **Physical or verbal attacks.**
5. **Excluding someone from a group on purpose.**

- C. **Bullying**, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

- D. **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.

III. Authority

- A¶ The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by anyone.
- B. The Board encourages any student or employee who has been bullied and any witness, or anyone who has become aware of bullying, to promptly report such incidents to any administrator or district employee.

- C. The Board directs that complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.

IV. Delegation of Responsibility

- A. Each student, employee, or volunteer shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying.
- B. The Superintendent or **his/her** designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.
- C. The Superintendent or **his/her** designee shall ensure that this policy and administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students, employees, and volunteers.
- D. The Superintendent or **his/her** designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every two (2) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.
- E. District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:
 - 1. Board's Bullying Policy.
 - 2. Report of bullying incidents.
 - 3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.

V. Guidelines

- A. The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students.
- B. This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the district website

VI. Education

- A. The district **shall** develop and implement bullying prevention and intervention **processes**. Such programs shall provide district staff, parents, and students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting

school district's ongoing efforts to prevent and address bullying and promote a healthy and safe environment.

VII. Discipline

- A. A substantiated charge against a district staff member shall subject such staff member to disciplinary action, including discharge.
- B. A substantiated charge against a district student shall subject such student to disciplinary action, consistent with the Student Code of Conduct, and may include educational activities and/or counseling services.
- C. If it is concluded that a student has made false accusations, such student shall be subject to disciplinary actions consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

VIII. Confidentiality

At The New Hope-Solebury School District recognizes that both the complaining student and the alleged bully/extorter have strong interest in maintaining confidentiality of the allegations and related information. The privacy of the complaining student, the individual(s) against whom the complain is filed, and the witnesses will be respected as much as possible, consistent with legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any discovery or disclosure obligations. As limited by FERPA, the principal or his/her designee may inform the complaining student/parents of the outcome of the investigation.