

Bully and Harassment Prevention and Reporting Policy

The West Central School Corporation is committed to providing an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying for all of its students and school employees. The WCSC will not tolerate unlawful bullying and harassment of any type.

WCSC in consultation with school district students, parents, teachers, administrators, school staff, school volunteers, community representatives, and local law enforcement agencies have developed a district policy as part of a comprehensive plan intended to prevent bullying and harassment.

A reporting system has been created to appropriately identify, report, investigate, and respond to situations of bullying and harassment.

Bullying

Bullying is a very serious offense and will not be tolerated. Each incident will be handled based on the degree of the act as determined by the school administration. Acts of bullying may result in suspension or expulsion. In compliance with Senate Enrolled Act 285, IC 20-33-8-0.2, bullying is defined as “overt, unwanted repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), physical act committed, aggression, or any other behaviors that are committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:

- (1) Places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student's person or property;
- (2) Has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
- (3) Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance;
- or (4) Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school.

Bullying fosters a climate of fear and disrespect that can seriously impair the physical and psychological health of its victims and create conditions that negatively affect learning. Bullying includes unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. The imbalance of power involves the use of physical strength, or popularity to access embarrassing information to control or harm others. Bullying can occur anywhere (in-school or outside of school) and at any time – both during and after school hours. Bullying can include physical bullying, verbal bullying, social/relational bullying, and electronic/written communication.

- Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. It includes hitting/kicking/punching, spitting, tripping or pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, and making mean or rude hand gestures.
- Verbal bullying involves saying mean things. It can include teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, or threatening to cause harm.

- Social/relational bullying involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying involves telling other children not to be friends with someone, leaving someone out on purpose, spreading rumors about someone, or embarrassing someone in public.
- Electronic/written communication involves cyber-bullying, collective or group note writing, any bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices (computer, cell phones, etc).

Considerations in determining if the behavior meets the definition of bullying:

- The history between the individuals. Have there been past conflicts? Have these individuals had a dating relationship? (This may not be considered bullying).
- Power differential. Is there an imbalance of power? (Power imbalance is not limited to physical strength.)
- Repetition. Has this or a similar incident happened before? Is the individual worried that it may happen again?
- Are any of the individuals involved with a gang? (This may result in interventions different from bullying.)

Consequences for Bullying

The consequences of bullying will apply when a student is on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, immediately after school hours, or at any other time when a school group is using the school. It also applies when our students are off school grounds at another school activity, function or event; traveling to or from school; attending a school-related activity, function, or event; or using property or equipment that has been provided by the school.

Level 1: Conference/Parent Contact

- School personnel and parent
- Conference with student

Level 2: Intervention Options

- Student is provided materials/counseling intended to increase empathy, communication skills, social skills, and understand the impact of bullying.
- Referral: Administration, school counselor, social worker, or support staff.
- Time-out: The removal of a student from classes for one-half day or less.
- School Behavior Agreement with student/parent: A written statement listing steps to be taken to improve behavior or attendance. The statement also describes the support to be provided by school staff and/or parent as well as the date when the contract will be reviewed.
- Intervention Assistance Team: A meeting of school personnel, parents, and other individuals to consider the behavior and/or progress of the student and make recommendations.
- Restricted activity: The denial of participation in school activities.
- Other options as discussed among parent, teachers, and administrators.

Level 3: In-School Alternatives

- Placement of student in an in-school suspension program for one-half day or more with a parent contacted.
- Placement of a student in-school suspension program for one or more days with a parent contacted.
- Placement of a student in a specially designed in-school class or program.

- Placement as outlined above and in combination with levels 1 and 2 consequences. Additional empathy and social skill training
- Suspension from class by the teacher – A teacher may exclude a student from participation in any educational function under that teacher's charge and supervision for a period not to exceed one school day when a student interferes with the educational function of which the teacher is then in charge.

Level 4: Out-of-School Suspension (1-5 days)

- Suspension with parent conference or the parent may attend school with the student for one school day.
- Suspension with parent conference and contractual agreement.
- May be in combination with Levels 1, 2, and 3 consequences.

Level 5: Alternative Consequences/Programs

- Modified schedule.
- Alternative to Expulsion (ATE) with referral to social worker. ATE is a probationary period of time (to be determined on an individual basis by the administrator) in which the student must exhibit behavior free from trouble. Failure to do so will result in more severe consequences.
- School probation with referral to a community agency such as juvenile court
- School probation may be in combination with Levels 2, 3, and 4 consequences.
- Conditional school (able to attend school based upon set conditions).