

Protocol for Responding to Bullying
in Smithton Community Consolidated School
District #130

SMITHTON SCHOOL



Developed May 2015

BULLYING PROTOCOL

BACKGROUND

This school is committed to providing a safe, caring and positive environment to maximize the learning experience and opportunities for all students. Every member of this school community must take personal responsibility for the emotional and physical safety of one another and the environment. It is a violation of school policy for any student to bully, harass or intimidate another student and it will not be tolerated.

This Bullying Protocol establishes practices and procedures for handling observed and reported incidents of bullying. Questions about any aspect of the Protocol should be addressed to the school administration.

BULLYING DEFINITION

Bullying can take many forms including physical, verbal, emotional, relational and cyber-bullying. It can be direct or indirect, blatant or subtle. Both boys and girls engage in bullying and its harmful, long-term negative consequences are well documented.

The Illinois legislature (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7b) defines “Bullying” as meaning:

“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:

- placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s or students’ person or property;
- causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s or students’ physical or mental health;
- Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ academic performance;
- or
- Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.”

Smithton School enforces this concise definition of bullying as any type of conduct that may:

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.

For purposes of this Protocol, “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 that conduct described above, *examples* of conduct that **MAY** constitute bullying include the following:

- 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 put-downs, 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.

Conduct that would *not ordinarily* be considered bullying include:

- Mere teasing
- "talking trash"
- Trading of insults
- The expression of ideas or beliefs (expressions protected by the First Amendment), so long as such expression is not lewd, profane, or intended to intimidate or harass another.

Note: In an effort to be concise throughout this Protocol, we frequently refer to the perpetrator of bullying behavior as the "bully" however, school personnel should be careful not to label a student as a "bully." It is best to refer to those students as "exhibiting bullying behavior" which focuses on the behavior rather than the person.

SCHOOL POLICY AND PREVENTION PRACTICES

Critical to the establishment of a Bullying Protocol is the development of a comprehensive bullying policy and school-wide strategies for effective bullying prevention and intervention. Best practices in bullying prevention include:

School establishes and enforces an effective Bullying Policy that:

- Clearly defines bullying behavior and provides examples.
- Clearly establishes school rules and expectations for all members of the school community.
- Communicates rules and expectations to all students, staff and parents.

- Requires staff to consistently enforce school rules and encourages students to take personal responsibility for creating a physically and emotionally safe learning environment.
- Provides additional instructional opportunities to address pro-social skills to prevent bullying.
- Makes age appropriate, non-punitive remediation a priority.
- Recognizes the importance of increased adult supervision in known “hotspots.”

School administration is responsible for:

- Knowing federal and state definitions, requirements and ramifications for bullying, harassment and intimidation.
- Tracking all reported bullying incidents.
- Ensuring bullying awareness training is available to all students, staff and parents.
- Securing data about the frequencies, types and locations of bullying in the school.

Social emotional learning skills are embedded throughout the curriculum.

School promotes a welcoming, caring, safe culture and climate.

- School actively seeks input regarding school climate.
- School regularly surveys stakeholders about climate.
- All staff and students take personal responsibility for establishing a caring environment.
- School encourages and positively reinforces students’ reporting of bullying incidents.

SCHOOL RESPONSE AND PRACTICES

School personnel must report and/or investigate all incidents of bullying immediately and take appropriate action whether they personally observe incidents or learn of them by some other means. Reporting, investigation and action must occur even if the victim does not file a formal complaint or does not express overt disapproval of the incident.

Adult non-intervention establishes a climate of fear, reinforces students’ beliefs that bullying is “normal” and must be tolerated, and enables the bullying behavior. Furthermore, non-intervention may expose the school district to potential liability.

The school identifies who, what, where, when, why and how bullying took place. All bullying incidents should be recorded, investigated and tracked.

Students are offered a variety of ways to report bullying including:

- Anonymous Hotline: 618-509-5812
- Email, text, online, telephone: 618-233-6863
- In person to any staff member, peer, and parent reports

STAFF RESPONSE PROTOCOL

INTERVENE - Staff members must intervene immediately or as quickly as reasonably possible to address bullying behavior.

- Identify bullying behaviors.
- Focus on the behavior not the person.
- Refer to the classroom or school rules.
- Stop the behavior.

CONFERENCE with the student(s) **SEPARATELY**.

INVESTIGATE – All reports of bullying incidents should be recorded and investigated in a timely fashion – within 24 hours (when possible) of receiving initial report.

All reports of bullying should be addressed by any District employee to whom bullying is reported or who observes actions that appear to constitute bullying. All staff should receive training to recognize what constitutes bullying under the statutory definition. If there is any doubt on the part of the employee about whether a reported or observed action constitutes “bullying” under the statutory definition, the incident should be reported. In that way, reports of bullying will receive the appropriate and proper attention.

The staff person responsible for investigating or who receives the report about bullying behavior should:

1. Use the *Bullying Incident Form* to record details about the incident.
2. Interview student(s) exhibiting bullying behavior and the target/victim(s) *separately* to avoid further victimization of the target.

For the victim:

- a. Engage the target/victim.
- b. Focus on his/her safety.
- c. Reassure the victim that the bullying behavior will not be tolerated and that all possible steps will be taken to prevent a reoccurrence.
- d. Ask what happened and how the victim feels about it. It is generally best to advise the student to walk away/ignore the behavior, use humor to dismiss it, tell the bully to stop and/or seek help from an adult. It is not advisable to suggest the victim stand up to the bully or fight back.
- e. Involve the victim in a peer support group or offer counseling if needed.
- f. Ask student to log any future bully/victim situations for the purpose of providing documentation.

For the perpetrator:

- a. Have the student identify the problem using an “I” statement. If they are unable to admit to a problem, say “I’ve been hearing that...” or “I have observed you...”

- b. Ask questions and gather information. Praise honesty.
 - c. Ask, “What was wrong with what you did?”
 - d. Ask, “What problem were you trying to solve?” (not, “Why did you do it?”)
 - e. Ask, “Next time you have that problem, how will you solve it?”
 - f. Remind the student of the school rules and policies, expectations for behavior and his/her personal responsibility for the learning environment.
 - g. Utilize remediation measures and consequences.
3. Submit Incident Form and interview notes to the Social Worker or administration.
 4. Take interim action to prevent bullying or retaliation during the course of the investigation.
 5. Work in collaboration with the Social Worker and/or administration to determine remediation and consequences in cases of severe or repeated incidents. It may also be necessary to alert other teachers to the bullying behavior to ensure the safety of, and support for, the students involved.

If a student reports bullying behavior to a staff member, do not dismiss it as tattling, particularly if the student reporting is trying to keep another student safe. Thank the student who made the report.

REPORT - All bullying incidents should be reported to the Social Worker and/or administration using the Bullying Incident Report Form.

- a. Repeated or severe incidents should be promptly referred to school administration.
 - b. All information concerning complaints or incidents of bullying should be treated confidentially at all times. When talking with parents, teachers and administrators **cannot name the other students involved and cannot indicate disciplinary measures utilized.**
 - c. Inform the parents of the bully and the victim of the behavior as quickly as possible. A call home the same day is preferable, followed by an appointment at school with the parents if necessary. Early intervention is most effective before patterns of behavior are established.
6. **REMEDICATION AND CONSEQUENCES** - It is the responsibility of the 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. A clear distinction exists between remediation and consequences.
 - a. Remediation, intended to counter or “remedy” a behavioral mistake, can be an effective prevention practice. Remediation measures are intended to correct the problem behavior, prevent a reoccurrence, protect and provide support for the

victim and take corrective action for documented systemic problems related to bullying and harassment. Remediation measures allow the student an opportunity to reflect on behaviors, learn pro-social skills and make amends to those affected.

- b. Consequences, tend to be punitive in nature and should be used only when appropriate and almost always in conjunction with remediation measures.

Consequences and remediation should be applied based on the *Smithton School Student Handbook*.

STAFF BULLYING INCIDENT REPORT FORM

This SECTION to be completed by staff member reporting incident

Attach additional sheets if needed

Name: _____ **Position:** _____

Date of incident: _____ **Time of incident:** _____

Location of incident (check all that apply):

- To/from school _____
 School-sponsored event at another location _____
 Via tech device (cell phone, computer, Internet, social media, etc.)
 Other _____

At school (please indicate where at school the bullying incident occurred)

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bus | <input type="checkbox"/> Bus Stop | <input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria | <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Cougar Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gym | <input type="checkbox"/> Hallway | <input type="checkbox"/> Locker Room | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking Lot | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | |

Name of victim(s): _____ **Name of student(s) bullying:** _____ **Name(s) of witnesses:** _____

Type of bullying:

- Verbal** **Physical*** **Relational** **Cyber**

Was this incident reported to the police? Yes No Not Applicable

*If physical bullying, did the incident result in an injury? Yes No

*If the incident resulted in harm, was it reported to school nurse? Yes No

What types of bullying behaviors were observed?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creating and/or spreading lies | <input type="checkbox"/> Exclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Extortion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graffiti writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hitting | <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate touching | <input type="checkbox"/> Kicking | <input type="checkbox"/> Punching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pushing/shoving | <input type="checkbox"/> Rumor Spreading | <input type="checkbox"/> Staring/leering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stealing/taking others' possessions | <input type="checkbox"/> Taunting/ridiculing | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

How were you made aware of this incident?

- Personal observation
 Reported to me by a student _____
 Reported to me by another staff member _____
 Reported to me by a parent _____
 Reported to me anonymously
 Other _____

Repeat infraction? YES NO Unknown

Describe the incident:

Physical Evidence? Notes Email Graffiti Video/audio Website
 Other: _____

This SECTION to be completed by staff responding to incident
Attach additional sheets if needed

Actions taken (see *Protocol Guidelines*):

Person assigned to investigation:

Consequences:

Remediation:

Referral for additional support services:

Parent Contact: Date: _____ Time: _____

Person making contact: _____

Result:

OCR Reporting Data

Victim Age _____

Victim Gender _____

Victim Race _____

IEP yes no

Basis of Bullying

Gender

Religion

Sexual Orientation

Disability

Race

None of the above

**STUDENT/PARENT BULLYING/HARASSMENT INCIDENT REPORT FORM
OR WITNESS STATEMENT**

Name of student bullied/harassed: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Names of accused individuals who bullied/harassed:

Where did the Incident Happen? Check all that apply:

- To/from school _____
 School-sponsored event at another location _____
 Via tech device (cell phone, computer, Internet, social media, etc.)
 Other _____

At school (please indicate where at school the bullying incident occurred)

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bus | <input type="checkbox"/> Bus Stop | <input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria | <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Cougar Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gym | <input type="checkbox"/> Hallway | <input type="checkbox"/> Locker Room | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking Lot | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

Describe in detail exactly what happened (please use the back of this form for more writing space if needed):

Describe any physical evidence that exists related to the incident including physical marks, email, websites, video/audio tapes, photos or documentation.

Name/s of Witnesses: _____

Who did you tell at school? _____

I AGREE THAT ALL OF THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS ACCURATE AND TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE:

Signature of person reporting bullying/harassment

Date

Relationship to person who reported being bullied/harassed: Self Parent Witness

Signature of staff member accepting report

Date

Name of person completing this form

Date

BULLYING INTERVIEW FORM
(attach additional sheets, if necessary)

Student: _____ Date of Interview: _____

Name of Interviewer(s): _____

Instructions for Interviewer

1. Protect the identity of the student who reports. Begin a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation by interviewing witnesses separately in a private location with a school colleague present. Use the **Questions** section below to guide your notes while you interview the person listed above.
2. Make your notes on a separate document and attach them to this form.
3. Review and preserve any videos, photos, screenshots or other physical evidence and label it.
4. File this form, notes and any other evidence provided in a designated investigation and response folder.

- Who was involved: _____
- What happened? _____
- Where did this occur? _____
- Why do you think it happened? _____
- Has it happened before? _____
- Do you fear for your safety? _____ (at school, home or both)
- Do you fear that harm would come to any of your personal property?

- Has your health been affected? _____ If yes, how?

- Has your academic performance been affected? _____ If yes, how?

- Have you quit or modified attendance in any extracurricular activities?

- Have you changed any of your usual routines at school (using different hallway, skipping lunch, taking a different route to school, etc)?

- Why do you think this is happening? _____
- What will help make you feel safe? _____

BULLYING INCIDENT FOLLOW-UP REPORT

Follow-up Conference Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Conducted by: _____

People present:

- Administrator _____
- Teacher _____
- Social Worker _____
- Student _____
- Parent _____
- Witnesses _____
- Other _____

According to student, situation is: Better Worse No difference

Comments:

Parent Contact: Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Person making contact: _____

Additional Actions / Notes:
