

Section 8000 – Students

8260 Bullying (Cf. 8018)

8260

Bullying Prohibited

A public school is intended to be a physically and emotionally safe and secure environment for all students and other individuals in order to promote good citizenship and support academic achievement and social/cultural development. Bullying is not an acceptable behavior at school (as defined below) and is prohibited by Hudsonville Public Schools. In addition, Hudsonville Public Schools prohibits retaliation against any individual who witnesses, reports or is a target of bullying. This policy applies to all students, staff, parents, guests and volunteers of Hudsonville Public Schools.

Bullying is defined as any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication (including but not limited to use of a computer, internet, cell phone, PDA, or other wireless handheld device), regardless of the underlying motivation or subject matter of the conduct, that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one or more pupils either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

1. Substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more pupils.
2. Adversely affecting the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from Hudsonville Public School's educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress.
3. Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a pupil's physical or mental health.
4. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operations of the school.

Section 8000 – Students

8260 Bullying (Cf. 8018)

8260-2

The enforcement of this policy may reach beyond the classroom. That is, the Hudsonville Board of Education’s Anti-Bullying Policy will govern behavior “at school,” which is defined as conduct in a classroom, elsewhere on school premises, on a school bus or in any other school-related vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises. This policy also protects against conduct using a telecommunication device or telecommunication service provider that occurs off school premises if the telecommunication access device or the telecommunication service provider is owned by or under the control of Hudsonville Public Schools.

A student who engages in one or more of the following acts will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action:

- Bullying
- False accusation or retaliation against:
 - A target of bullying
 - A witness
 - Another person with reliable information about the act of bullying

Disciplinary actions will range from behavioral interventions including suspension and/or expulsion of a student; discipline up to and including termination of an employee; and expulsion from school premises for a parent, guest or volunteer.

Consequences for a student who commits any of the above acts shall vary in method and severity depending on the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student’s disciplinary history. The disciplinary action must be consistent with the Board of Education’s approved code of student conduct. Disciplinary measures shall be designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior, and protect the victim of the act.

Section 8000 – Students

8260 Bullying (Cf. 8018)

8260-3

The Board of Education remands to the Director of Human Resources the responsibility of full implementation of this policy, including but not limited to the public awareness, annual reporting to the Board of Education, and training of staff. A legitimate act of bullying should be immediately reported to a building principal or assistant principal, or the Superintendent. A student or parent may also report an act of bullying to a teacher or counselor, who must notify the building principal or assistant principal. Each building principal, or his/her designee, is responsible for the prompt and thorough investigation of each incident of reported bullying. The investigation shall include one or more of the following action steps:

1. Interviewing any witnesses, target of bullying, individual(s) in question of bullying behavior, or other relevant personnel. The interviews should include the following questions:
 - i. What specifically took place?
 - ii. Who was involved?
 - iii. When did the incident take place?
 - iv. Where did the incident take place?
 - v. Is this the first time reporting the incident?
 - vi. What steps, if any, were taken to deter the bullying behavior?
 - vii. To whom was this incident communicated?
2. Contact the parent or legal guardian of the victim of bullying and the parent or legal guardian of the perpetrator of the bullying.
3. Given the facts of the investigation, determine and implement prompt and appropriate disciplinary action for a verified act of bullying in violation of this Policy.
4. Document a summary of the incident and record disposition.
5. Report disposition to Board of Education, as appropriate.

Section 8000 – Students

8260 Bullying (Cf. 8018)

8260-4

Each year, the Board of Education's Anti-Bullying Policy shall be outlined in the Student Code of Conduct handbook. Moreover, it is recommended that each building principal design a procedure to ensure the communication of this policy to all staff, parents, and students. The Board of Education believes in a positive, proactive approach to address the issue of bullying, and thus, each building's focus should be on global citizenship, character education, and anti-bullying as an expectation. Programs and activities that students can identify with and recognize the importance of treating all individuals with respect and dignity are essential to building a positive school culture.

Approved: June 14, 2012