

Bullying Prevention & Intervention

Frequently Asked Questions

What is bullying?

The Pennsylvania Public School Code defines “bullying “as an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts:

- (1) directed at another student or students;
- (2) which occurs in a school setting;
- (3) that is severe, persistent or pervasive; and
- (4) that has the effect of doing any of the following:
 - (i) substantially interfering with a student's education;
 - (ii) creating a threatening environment; or
 - (iii) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school;and “school setting” shall mean 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.

How does bullying differ from conflict?

- Bullying involves an imbalance of power whereas in a normal peer conflict, both parties have power, sometimes equally, which results in arguments, disagreements and differences of opinion. The bully has all or most of the power while the victim has little or none.
- Bullying situations always involve a victim who feels emotional pain whereas the bully might feel satisfied, excited or nothing at all.

What should my child do if he/she is being bullied?

The school district strongly encourages all students and parents/guardians who become aware of any act of bullying to immediately report that conduct. Students may report acts of bullying to their teachers, building principal or other school employees supervising school-sponsored activities. Parents/Guardians may contact the building principal to report acts of bullying, but the teacher should always be the first point of contact for classroom issues.

What is the obligation of the school after bullying is reported?

The school is obligated to investigate claims of bullying to determine if the incident meets the criteria of the definition. It is important to understand that arguing or making a nasty comment toward someone, although inappropriate, is not bullying. The principal is authorized to impose

discipline upon students for **confirmed** incidents of bullying after a thorough investigation of the facts surrounding the incident.

What disciplinary action may be taken against the bully?

Disciplinary action is at the discretion of the building principal and may include any of the following dependent upon the severity of the situation and the disciplinary record of the bully. Discipline is often progressive in nature for minor offenses but could immediately rise to the highest level if warranted:

- ✓ Counseling within the school
- ✓ Parental conference
- ✓ Loss of school privileges
- ✓ Transfer to another school building, classroom or school bus
- ✓ Exclusion from school-sponsored activities
- ✓ Detention
- ✓ Suspension (in or out of school)
- ✓ Recommended counseling/therapy outside of school
- ✓ Threat assessment
- ✓ Mental health or drug and alcohol assessment through the Student Assistance Program (SAP) team
- ✓ Referral to law enforcement officials
- ✓ Recommendation for expulsion from school

What if I feel that the principal has not addressed my concerns to my satisfaction?

Parents who have taken the proper steps to notify the teacher and principal and still do not feel that their concerns have been addressed to their satisfaction should contact the central office administration for further assistance:

- Elementary and Middle School – Dr. Chelton Hunter, Assistant to the Superintendent
Contact information: (717) 948-3300 x1008 or cheltonhunter@raiderweb.org
- High School – Dr. Lori Suski, Superintendent of Schools
Contact information: (717) 948-3300 x1002 or lsuski@raiderweb.org

Are there any resources available to assist parents dealing with bullying issues impacting their children?

The Pennsylvania Bullying Prevention Consultation line is a toll-free resource for parents, students and staff in dealing with incidents of bullying. See the attached flyer for details.