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Willow Springs, IL 60480
(708) 839-6828

Bullying, Intimidation, & Harassment - Prevention & Response

Statement of Intent

The Willow Springs School District 108 is committed to providing a safe, caring, and supportive learning environment for all students. This commitment includes a consistent and firm approach to any incidents of bullying, intimidation, and harassment among our students. Any and all forms of bullying are unacceptable within the Willow Springs 108 community.

Willow Springs School District 108 is committed to timely and appropriate communication with parents/guardians of all students involved in any alleged incident of bullying. District 108 commits to addressing the issue of bullying through the use of social/emotional supports, social work services, and restorative measures for all students and throughout our school community.

Restorative measures means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspension/expulsion that

- (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community,
- (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety,
- (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate,
- (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society,
- (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and
- (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.
- (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

What is Bullying?

Bullying behavior in schools can cause harm to students' social and emotional well-being and be a significant barrier to learning. Bullying can be defined as a "physical, verbal or psychological attack or intimidation that is intended to cause fear, distress, or harm the victim" (Farrington and Ttofi, 2010). There is a perceived psychological or physical imbalance of power and oftentimes, incidents between the same students occur repeatedly. Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places like on the playground or the bus. It can also happen traveling to or from school, in the youth's neighborhood, or on the internet. Bullying is contrary to state law in the state of Illinois.

Why is our response important?

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important school goals.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry,

age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic **is prohibited** in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school.

Bullying includes cyber-bullying and means 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:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Examples of prohibited conduct include name-calling, using derogatory slurs, stalking, sexual violence, causing psychological harm, threatening or causing physical harm, threatened or actual destruction of property, or wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice of one of the characteristics stated above.

Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the building principal, non discrimination coordinator, district complaint manager or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. All school staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the district complaint manager or any staff member. Anonymous reports are also accepted by phone call or in writing.

Reporting Procedure & Response

- Any incidents of bullying should be reported as quickly as possible to any staff member. Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- All reported incidents will be documented and investigation of reported incidents will involve appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- If an incident is considered to be serious, the parents/guardians of all involved students will be notified in a timely manner, and offered an opportunity to meet with school administration.
- Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.
- District 108 will make all reasonable efforts to complete investigations within ten (10) school days after the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
- Details of all incidents will be evaluated and if necessary, the administration will contact local police to report and for consultation.
- At the conclusion of an investigation that establishes an incident of bullying, student(s) will receive appropriate consequences for their involvement.

Non Discrimination Coordinator: Meghan Litko - mlitko@willowsschool.org
District Complaint Managers: Alexandra Oreluk - aoreluk@willowsschool.org
 Steve Bahn - sbahn@willowsschool.org

A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student’s act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school’s investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

Review and Evaluation Process:

The Willow Springs School District evaluates this policy every two (2) years to assess the outcomes of effectiveness of the policy. The evaluation process includes:


- Frequency of victimization
- Observations of safety at school - from the perspective of parents/guardians, students, and school personnel
- Identification of locations throughout the school where bullying occurs
- Types of bullying reported and observed
- Opportunities for bystander intervention and participation

The annual data finding of these items are available for public review on the District webpage.

The Willow Springs School District 108 Bullying Policy has been approved by the Board of Education and is consistent with the board policy of the district. It is posted to the district's webpage and included within the student handbook. The policy is reviewed and re-evaluated every two (2) years and updated to reflect any

necessary and appropriate revisions. It is distributed to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel (including new hires) annually.


This policy was reviewed and evaluated by the Willow Springs District 108 Board of Education on this **26th day of April, 2022.**



Mary Ellen Weeg
Board President

4/23/22

Date



Micki Bohac
Board Secretary

4/23/22

Date