

## **Student Bullying**

**Definition of Bullying.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines bullying as “any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of yours who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated.” Nebraska statute defines bullying as “an ongoing pattern of physical, verbal or electronic abuse.” The Hitchcock County Schools District’s administrators are authorized to use both of these definitions to determine whether any specific situation constitutes bullying. Both of these definitions include both in-person and cyberbullying behaviors.

**Bullying Prohibited.** Hitchcock County School District students are prohibited from engaging in any form of bullying behavior.

**Reporting Bullying.** Students who experience or observe bullying behavior must immediately report what happened to a teacher or administrator. Students can use the district’s anonymous platform to make this report. Students may always confer with their parents or guardians about bullying they experience or witness, but the students must also ultimately report the situation to a teacher or administrator.

**Bullying Investigations.** School district staff will investigate allegations of bullying using the same practices and procedures that the district observes for student disciplinary matters. In no circumstance will school district staff be deliberately indifferent to allegations of bullying.

**Disciplinary Consequences.** The disciplinary consequences for bullying behavior will depend on the frequency, duration, severity and effect of the behavior.

A student who engages in bullying behavior on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose by a school employee or his or her designee, or at school-sponsored activities or school-sponsored athletic events may be subject to disciplinary consequences including but not limited to long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment.

Without limiting the foregoing, a student who engages in bullying behavior that materially and substantially interferes with or disrupts the educational environment, the district’s day-to-day operations, or the education process, regardless of where the student is at the time of engaging in the bullying behavior, may be subject to discipline to the extent permitted by law.

**Bully Based on Protected Class Status.** Bullying based on protected class status is unique and may require additional investigation. The appropriate district staff member or coordinator will promptly investigate bullying complains that violate the district's antidiscrimination policies.

**Support for Students Who Have Experienced Bullying.** Regardless of where the bullying occurred, the district will consider whether victims of bullying are suffering an adverse educational impact and, if appropriate, will refer those students to the district's student assistance team.

**Bullying Prevention and Education.** Students and parents are encouraged to inform teachers or administrators orally or in writing about bullying behavior or suspected bullying behavior. School employees are required to inform the administrator of all such reports. The appropriate administrator shall promptly investigate all such reports. Each building shall engage in activities which educate students about bullying and bullying prevention and digital citizenship.

**Policy Review.** The Hitchcock County School District shall review this policy annually.

Hitchcock County Schools #44-0070

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