

STUDENT-TO-STUDENT HARASSMENT/BULLYING

Harassment

Harassment of students by other students will not be tolerated in the Watertown Public Schools. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, School District property or property within the Jurisdiction of the School District, school buses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Harassment prohibited by the District includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or disability. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Harassment means conduct of a verbal, written, electronic, or physical nature that is designed to distress, agitate, threaten or endanger, students when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education or of a student's participation in school programs or activities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for decisions affecting the student, or;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning environment.

Harassment as described above may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical, written or electronic harassment or abuse;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other school matter.

Bullying

Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Watertown Public Schools will work to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying.

Bullying, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or damage to his or her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying shall include cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, 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, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include: (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying shall also include 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 of posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

The district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying and harassment. The Principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints alleging harassment.

Retaliation against a student, because a student has filed a harassment or bullying complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment or bullying investigation or proceeding is also prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

This policy will be compliant with M.G.L. c.71 § 370 and any subsequent changes or additions to said law.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary
Education, Proposed Regulations on Notification of Bullying or
Retaliation, 603 CMR 49.00

LEGAL REFS:

MGL. 151B:3A
Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
Federal Regulations 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00
The Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center,
webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/index.html

CROSS REFS:

AC, Nondiscrimination
ACAB, Sexual Harassment
JICFA-E, Hazing

Adopted: September 10, 2007

Revised: September 13, 2010