

Bullying Prevention Legislation

What everyone needs to know!

Goals For Today

- To understand:
 - You are the FRONTLINE – reporters and interventionists
 - The difference between bullying and peer conflict
 - Your Legal responsibilities
 - The process for reporting
 - The K-12 Bullying Curriculum – to date

Definitions

Bullying

- The repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression

OR

physical act or gesture

OR

any combination thereof directed at a target.

Other Characteristics of Bullying

- A form of aggression involving a power imbalance between the bully and the target.
- Typically involves a pattern rather than a single, isolated incident.
- Repeated use by one or more students of written, verbal or electronic expression or physical act or gesture.
- Substantially disrupts the educational process.

Cyberbullying

- 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 message or facsimile communications

Cyberbullying continued

- Also includes the creation of a web page or blog 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 impersonation created any of the above mentioned conditions of bullying
OR
- 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 impersonation created any of the above mentioned conditions of bullying

It's Bullying or Cyberbullying IF it:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to target's property.
- Places target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or property.
- Creates a hostile environment at school for target.
- Infringes on the rights of the target.
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Key Definitions

- **Target** – a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.
- **Bystander** - Someone who observes a bullying event. The built-in audience that a bully needs in order to show off his bullying prowess.
- **Peer conflict** - A disagreement between two or more persons of equal power.

Other Key Definitions

- **Aggressor** – a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.
- **Hostile environment** – a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Key Definitions continued

- **Retaliation** – any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.
- **Staff** – includes but is not limited to educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Bullying vs. Harassment

- Bullying IS harassment when it is directed at one of the following protected classes:
 - Race
 - Color
 - National origin
 - Ethnicity
 - religion
 - gender
 - sexual orientation
 - disability
 - Ancestry

CONFLICT	BULLYING
Equal Power—the individuals in the conflict are equals or equally matched	Imbalance of Power—(big/small, older/younger, popular/unpopular, many vs. one)
Can happen on one occasion	Happens repeatedly
Both parties are emotional	Strong emotional reaction from the victim
Problem resolves and parties may be friends again	Parties involved are NOT friends
Starts as an accident—not purposeful	Purposeful targeting of one person by another person or group
Parties aren't afraid of each other	Target/Victim feels in danger in some way

**Roles and
Responsibilities –
You, the Administrator,
and the District**

How do I report an incident?

- Depending on the building, forms will be located online, in the main office, and in guidance.
- A drop box will be located in the reception area for completed forms. Additionally, forms may be turned in to a guidance counselor, adjustment counselor, or building administrator.
- A Bullying “hotline” is available at each building –
 - AHS 978-388-4800 ext. 4231
 - AMS 978-388-0515 ext. 5555
 - CES 978-388-4407 ext.18
 - AES 978-388-3659 ext. 115

Reporting Bullying or Retaliation

- A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses.
- Reports may be made by:
 - Staff
 - Parents/guardians
 - Students
 - Others
- May be oral or in writing – an oral report must be followed by a transcribed written report.
- Reports made by students, parents or guardians or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously.
- Reports may be made anonymously, but NO disciplinary actions will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Everyone's Responsibility with regards to Bullying or Harassment:

- Intervene to stop the bullying/harassment from happening.
- Use appropriate form to record what you saw/know/heard about the incident.
- Promptly alert the appropriate administrator with your description of what transpired.
- Be alert to the continuation of the incident at a later time.
- Adhere to any changes in routines made by administration to reduce the chances of these types of incidents from occurring.

Inappropriate Peer Behaviors that can be Handled with a 10 second Intervention

- Using derogatory nicknames
- Low-level name calling, putdowns
- Facial expressions or body language conveying scorn or contempt
- Swearing at a peer
- Initiating or spreading negative rumors, destructive gossip
- Making threats of exclusion
- Engaging in horseplay –minor pushing and shoving
- Indirect verbal aggression: “that’s a gay shirt”
- Engaging in “keep away” with a peer’s personal belongings

Parameters of the Law

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying are prohibited:

On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a **school sponsored or school related activity**, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a **school bus stop**, on a **school bus** or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of **technology or an electric device** owned, leased, or used by a school district.

Parameters continued

AND

At a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Additional Staff Responsibilities

- The new law makes us responsible 24/7.
- It doesn't matter whether it started in or out of school.
- Includes retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.
- What this means is that we must “pay attention” all the time.
 - Words
 - Texts
 - Changes in attitude
 - Physical proximity and intimidating use of body
 - On-line exchanges
 - Looks
 - Drop in grades

Responses to Bullying

- Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that **BALANCE** the need for **ACCOUNTABILITY** with the need to **TEACH** appropriate behavior.

Upon receipt of a report, the administrator will.....

- Conduct an investigation
- Reach a conclusion as to whether or not the incident was bullying
- Respond to the incident with the appropriate balance of accountability and education
- Monitor the situation
- Communicate with parents (within the parameters of the law)
- Forward report to District Equity Coordinator

Sequence of Events

Student/parent/staff file report



Guidance counselor/adjustment counselor



Administration



Copy of report to Equity Coordinators



Police

Resolution can take place at any level.

Consider the Following ---

- What does bullying look like – on the bus, in the café, in the hallways etc....
- What are the non-verbal signs that we need to look for in both the aggressor and the target?
- Where are the hotspots with which you come into contact? What actions can you take to limit the opportunities for bullying or inappropriate peer conflict to occur in those areas?

Amesbury Public Schools

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Curriculum

K-12 General Bullying Curriculum

- As a district, we encourage positive peer interactions by building routines, procedures and establishing classroom and school norms to ensure that students have a safe environment for learning and taking risks.
- Annually, definitions of and distinctions between bullying, harassment, and peer conflict are taught and reinforced.

Grade Specific Bullying Intervention and Prevention Programs

- K-5 teachers utilize Second Steps Program which establishes a common language that builds positive peer interactions and expectations.
- Guidance counselors teach Steps to Respect at Grades 3 and 4 to provide students with the tools to deal appropriately and productively with peer conflict.
- Grades 5 through 8 Steps to Respect is used proactively and reactively as needed.

Grade Specific Bullying Intervention and Prevention Programs (Cont.)

- Grades 6 through 8 will adopt a research based program once the DESE releases their approved list of programs.
- Health, Physical Education, Technology and other courses, grades 9 to 12 will utilize components from research based practice which includes role play scenarios to teach, develop and reinforce skills to empower students as bystanders and/or targets thereby increasing students' opportunities to learn in a safe environment.

Amesbury Public Schools
WILL NOT tolerate bullying,
harassment or discrimination
of any form.