

Bullying Defined

Bullying is 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 target that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the targets property; (ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying Includes

- *Cyberbullying* is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and internet postings.
- *Hostile environment* includes situations 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 the students education.
- *Target* is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is directed.
- *Retaliation* is 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.

Pittsfield Public Schools



District Bullying Prevention Plan

- Bullying defined
- How to recognize a Target & an Aggressor
- Cyberbullying
- Reporting & Responding to Bullying
- Resources



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How to Recognize a Possible Target

When a student ...

- shows an abrupt lack of interest in school or refusal to go to school
- takes an unusual route to school
- suffers a drop in grades
- has few or no friends
- withdraws from family and/or school activities
- is sad, sullen or angry after receiving a phone call or email
- uses derogatory or demeaning language when talking about peers
- stops talking about peers in everyday activities
- has disheveled, torn or missing clothing
- has physical injuries
- has stomach aches, headaches, panic attacks
- is unable to sleep, sleeps too much or is exhausted

Warning Signs of an Aggressor

When a student...

- lacks empathy
- views violence more favorably than most students
- often aggressive toward adults, parents and/or teachers
- often hot tempered, impulsive and/or intolerant of obstacles or delays
- finds it difficult to follow rules
- needs to dominate and/or suppress other students, assert himself/herself by means of force and/or threats, and get his/her

Additional Resources

Emergencies 911

Berkshire District Attorney

Pittsfield 413-443-5951

North Adams 413-663-7306

US Dept. of Health & Human Services

www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov

Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center

www.bridgew.edu/MARC/

US Dept. of Health & Human Services, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration

www.samhsa.gov

Teaching Tolerance, Southern Poverty Law Center

www.tolerance.org

Additional Online Resources

www.olweus.org/public/bullies_child.page

www.netismartz.org

www.wiredsafety.org

www.stopbullyingnow.com

www.cyberbullying.us

www.safekids.com

Parental Control Software

www.monitoringsoftwarereviews.org

www.child-internet-safety.com

www.contentwatch.com

www.safebrowse.com

*Visit www.pittsfield.net for additional resources.

Cyberbullying & Internet Safety

Forms of Cyberbullying

- *Flaming* - online fights using electronic messages with angry and/or vulgar language
- *Harassment* - repeatedly sending insulting messages
- *Denigration* - Sending or posting gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships.
- *Outing* - sharing someones secrets or embarrassing information online
- *Trickery* - talking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, then sharing it online
- *Exclusion* - intentionally and/or cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- *Impersonation/Posing* - pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material to get that person in trouble or danger or to damage reputations or friendships
- *Internet polling* - using websites to rate peers in ways which are demeaning, embarrassing or hurtful
- *Cyberstalking* - repeated, intense harassment, and denigration that includes threats or creates a significant fear
- *Stealing passwords* - using the password to pretend to be someone else
- *Cyberthreats* - either direct threats or general statements that make it sound like the writer is emotionally upset and maybe considering harming someone else, harming him or herself, or committing suicide

Methods of Cyberbullying

- Cell Phones
- E-mail
- Text messaging
- Blogs
- Social networking sites
- Websites
- Instant messaging
- Chat rooms
- Online gaming

Reporting & Responding to Bullying

- **Reporting** - Reports of bullying may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others and may be made orally or in writing and may be anonymous.
 - A student who knowingly makes a false allegation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- **Safety** - Before fully investigating an allegation of bullying, appropriate staff will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect him or her from possible further incidence.
 - If needed, additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation will be taken, including, but not limited to protecting student(s) from acts of retaliation.
- **Obligations to Notify Others** - After investigation notice may be made to (i) Parents or Guardians. (ii) Another School or District. (iii) Law Enforcement
- **Investigation** - Appropriate staff will promptly investigate all reports of bullying and will maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation.
- **Determinations** - Appropriate staff will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances.
 - Principal or designee will: (i) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and (ii) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.
 - Principal or designee will promptly notify parents or guardians of the target and aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if it is determined that bullying has occurred, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying.
 - Because of legal requirements regarding confidentiality of students records, specific information to the targets parent or guardian about disciplinary action taken cannot be reported unless it involves a “stay away order” or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.