



RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

660 West Daley Street

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Spring Green, Wisconsin 53588

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Phone: 608-588-2551

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Bullying / Cyber Bullying

River Valley School District strives to provide a safe, positive learning environment for students. In order to maintain a school environment that encourages optimum human growth and development, it is the policy of the district to maintain and ensure a learning and working environment free of any form of harassment or intimidation.

1. All bullying behavior is prohibited whether it is of the nature of student(s) to student(s), staff member to staff member, staff member to student or student to staff member. NOTE: For purposes of this policy, the term “staff” includes all employees.
2. Bullying is prohibited at school, on school premises, during school-sponsored activities, on school buses and at bus stops, or through the use of electronic, computer, cell phones, or messaging devices (cyber bullying).
3. Students or staff who have been bullied or cyber bullied shall promptly report such incidents to any staff member or administrator.
4. Complaints of bullying or cyber bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when a complaint is verified.

Definitions:

1. Bullying includes aggressive or hostile behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power between the bully and the bullied. It is typically repeated over time.
2. Bullying takes many forms, including, but not limited to, physical or verbal assaults, nonverbal or emotional threats or intimidation, social exclusion and isolation, and extortion.
3. Bullying is a form of victimization and is not necessarily a result of or part of an ongoing conflict.
4. Bullying can be characterized by teasing, put-downs, name-calling, cruel rumors, false accusations, and hazing.

Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student or staff member by way of any technological tool (website, email, text, blog, etc.) such as:

1. Sending e-mail or instant messages that are mean or threatening
2. Posting slurs or rumors or other disparaging inappropriate remarks about a student or staff member on a website or blog
3. Using a camera phone to take and send embarrassing photographs
4. Posting misleading or fake photographs of students or staff members on websites

Bullying or Cyber Bullying has the effect of:

1. Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a student or staff member;
2. Placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of physical, emotional or mental harm;
3. Placing a student staff member in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or
4. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or staff member's working environment.

All forms of bullying are unacceptable, and any bullying that disrupts the school environment shall be subject to appropriate staff intervention, which may result in administrative discipline. Related conduct that occurs away from school that creates a threat to someone while attending school and/or conduct to cause a disturbance at school is subject to discipline, including possible law enforcement involvement. Also, such conduct may be subject to the activity/athletic code(s).

The term "bullying" and "cyber bullying" shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.

Delegation of Responsibility:

1. Each staff member shall be responsible to maintain an educational environment free of bullying and cyber bullying.
2. All staff members and bus drivers are required to report bullying incidents they have witnessed following appropriate guidelines. Failure to take action or to report the behavior is considered to be in violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary action.
3. Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of his/her fellow students and to ensure an atmosphere free from all forms of bullying and cyber bullying.
4. Students shall be encouraged to report bullying or cyber bullying complaints to any staff member.
5. All reports (either verbal or written) made by students or staff will be taken seriously. Reports will be kept confidential for both the accused and accuser, except as necessary to investigate the report, until such time as the misconduct is confirmed and discipline imposed.
6. Any staff member who receives a bullying or cyber bullying complaint shall gather information or seek administrative assistance to determine if bullying or cyber bullying has occurred. If the behavior is found to meet the definition of bullying or cyber bullying, the building principal or dean of students will take the necessary disciplinary actions. Taken into account will be the developmental and maturity levels of the students involved, the circumstances, the severity of the behavior and past incidences or continuing patterns of behavior.
7. Retaliation against a victim, reporter, or a witness is prohibited.
8. The building principal or his/her designee will inform the parents or guardians of the victim and also the parents or guardians of the accused.

CROSS REFERENCE:

Policy #443 - Code of Classroom Conduct
Policy #446.2 - Student Suspensions/Expulsions
Policy #724 - Harassment
Policy #743 - Acceptable Use of Networked Computers, Electronic Mail, and Internet Safety Policy

LEGAL REF.: Section 118.46 Wisconsin Statutes

APPROVED: September 9, 2010