

**MONROE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICY**  
**Adopted October 2011**

Harassment of students is against federal, state and local policy, and, along with bullying, is not tolerated by the Monroe Public Schools Board of Education. The Board is committed to providing all students, school employees, and volunteers with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the Board has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment of students by students, school employees, and volunteers who have direct contact with students will not be tolerated in the school or school district.

This policy is in effect while students or employees are on property within the jurisdiction of the Board; while in school-owned or school-operated vehicles or school chartered vehicles; while attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities; while using school-owned technology devices; and instances when student behavior has a direct impact on the welfare of the school or school district.

If, after an investigation, a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student shall be disciplined by appropriate measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. If after an investigation, a school employee is found to be in violation of this policy, the employee shall be disciplined by appropriate measures up to, and including, termination. If after an investigation, a school volunteer is found to be in violation of this policy, the volunteer shall be subject to appropriate measures up to, and including, exclusion from school grounds. "Volunteer" means an individual who has regular, significant contact with students but is not employed by the district.

Harassment and bullying mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student, employee or volunteer which is based on any characteristic of the student, employee or volunteer and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- Has the potential to place the student, employee or volunteer in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person, friends, relatives or property;
- Has the potential to have a substantially detrimental effect on the student's, employee's or volunteer's physical or mental health;
- Has the potential to substantially interfere with the student's academic performance; or
- Has the potential to substantially interfere with the student's, employee's or volunteer's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

"Electronic" means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. "Electronic" includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications including social networking, pager service, cell phones, text messaging, or similar technologies.

Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances:

- Verbal, nonverbal, physical or written abuse, hazing, or other victimization that has the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim, or exclusion from a group.
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim, or exclusion from a group.
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim, or exclusion from a group.

- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student, employee or volunteer that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim; and/or exclusion from a group.
- Unreasonable interference with a student's performance or creation of an intimidating, offensive, or hostile learning environment that has the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim; and/or exclusion from a group.

Sexual harassment, either student/student, student/employee, student/volunteer, employee/employee or employee/volunteer means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature and when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of the student's education or benefits;
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct by a school employee is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that student; or
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education environment.

In situations between students and school officials, faculty, staff, or volunteers who have direct contact with students, bullying and harassment may also include the following behaviors:

- Requiring or condoning the condition that a student submit to bullying or harassment by another student, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of the targeted student's education or participation in school programs or activities; and/or
- Requiring or condoning submission to or rejection of such conduct as a basis for decisions affecting the student.

In situations between employees or volunteers, workplace harassment or bullying is prohibited by this policy and individuals determined to have engaged in any form of workplace harassment or bullying are subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the applicable employee contract and as may be determined by any legal statute that is found to apply.

Retaliation against a person because the person has filed a bullying or harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding, is prohibited. An individual who knowingly files a false harassment complaint and a person who gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall a person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. A student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. A school employee found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment. A school volunteer found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, exclusion from school grounds. Individuals who knowingly file a false complaint may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

The school or school district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying or harassment. The building principal, assistant principal or designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying or harassment.

It also is the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the investigators and principals, to develop procedures regarding this policy.

This policy is posted on the district website for public review.

## Monroe Public Schools Anti-Harassment/Bullying Investigation Guidelines

Every incidence of bullying or harassment needs to be addressed immediately and effectively. However, it is important to be able to recognize when behavior does or does not fall under the label of bullying or harassment. As most administrators and teachers know, there are a myriad of situations and circumstances of inappropriate student behavior that call for intervention, but not all are necessarily acts of bullying or harassment, and many of these situations can be addressed using common sense and typical means of behavior modification or management. It is when student behavior becomes physically or emotionally harmful to another student and is repeated to the point that it affects the victim's ability to feel safe and participate normally in school that formal steps to eliminate the offending behavior become necessary.

The following twelve steps provide some guidance for assisting administrators in addressing situations like those described above that threaten a student's ability to function in school. If comparing the use of these steps with other leveled or tiered types of practices, these steps would come into play at tier three level, with tier one being basic classroom types of interventions to deal with interpersonal relationship type behavior and tier two being basic disciplinary strategies a teacher or administrator might use to intervene to manage common forms of student misbehavior. The steps below should be utilized when it is clear that a bullying or harassment issue exists. The purpose of these steps is to provide a course of action to end the bullying or harassing behavior and to document steps taken to do so. It is up to the discretion of the building administrator to know when implementation of these tier three steps is appropriate and when to use them in regards to the grade level disciplinary mandates.

If a student reports an incidence of bullying or harassment to a staff member, and the incident is clearly at a high level of concern for the student's well-being, the following steps should be taken:

1. Have the student write down exactly what happened. A formal complaint form may be used for this purpose, but the following should be included:
  - a. What occurred and what was said
  - b. When it occurred
  - c. Who was involved
  - d. Who, if anyone, witnessed the incident
  - e. What, if anything was said by the student (victim) to the perpetrator
  - f. What response did the perpetrator make
  - g. How the student (victim) felt
  - h. Any other evidence including, but not limited to letters, tapes, or pictures.
2. The staff member receiving this report shall notify the appropriate building administrator by the end of the school day in which the incident occurred or no later than the morning of the next school day. All information submitted by the student complainant should be kept confidential.
3. Once the building administrator receives a report of bullying or harassment, an investigation should begin within two school days or, if there is an issue of safety, immediately. Any delay of the investigation must be approved by the superintendent or his designee.
4. Once the investigation is initiated, it should be completed within 15 days of the complaint.

5. The administrator (investigator) will interview the complainant, the alleged harasser and any witnesses. Parents of any victims or perpetrators will be notified.
6. The alleged harasser may file a written response to the complainant.
7. Upon completion of the investigation, the administrator (investigator) will make written findings as to each allegation of harassment or bullying and make a determination of any appropriate additional steps which may include discipline.
8. Remedial actions taken by the administrator, including discipline, shall be designed to prevent further harassment or bullying and entered into Powerschool and will be in accordance with related discipline mandates for the grade level(s) involved.
9. The administrator will monitor the effectiveness of remedial actions taken by contacting the complainant at least twice during the month following the investigation.
10. If further remedial actions are necessary, the case shall remain open with ongoing monitoring and documentation.
11. The administrator will maintain a log in Powerschool of all complaints, findings, and actions taken along with any documentation.
12. There will be an annual report of all documented harassment and bullying incidents by each building administration to the superintendent including disciplinary actions taken and the effectiveness of those actions. A cumulative report may be presented to the Board of Education by the superintendent or his designee.