

## **Bullying**

In order to effectively participate in the democratic process as adults, students must learn to respect the rights of others and to interact with them in a civil manner. Therefore, students are required to speak and behave in a civil manner toward students, staff and visitors to the schools.

### **BULLYING DEFINED**

Per KRS 158.148, “bullying” is defined as any unwanted verbal, physical, or social behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to be repeated:

1. That occurs on school premises, on school-sponsored transportation, or at a school-sponsored event: or
2. That disrupts the education process.

This definition shall not be interpreted to prohibit civil exchange of opinions or debate or cultural practices protected under the state or federal Constitution where the opinion expressed does not otherwise materially or substantially disrupt the education process.

These may include, but are not limited to, name calling, teasing, threatening, social exclusion, and cyberbullying. Bullying may be physical, verbal, emotional or sexual in nature.

### **HAZING DEFINED**

Per KRS 508.180, “hazing” is defined as a direct action which substantially endangers the physical health of a minor or student for the purpose of recruitment, initiation into, affiliation with, or enhancing or maintaining membership or status within any organization, including but not limited to actions which coerce or force a minor or a student to:

- a) Violate federal or state criminal law;
- b) Consume any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug, tobacco product, or other controlled substance which subjects the minor or student to a risk of serious mental harm or physical injury;
- c) Endure brutality of a physical nature, including whipping, beating or paddling, branding, or exposure to the elements;
- d) Endure brutality of a mental nature, including personal servitude, sleep deprivation, or circumstances which would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial mental distress;
- e) Endure brutality of a sexual nature; or
- f) Endure any other activity that creates a reasonable likelihood of serious physical injury or mental harm to the minor or student.

Per KRS 508.180, “organization” is defined as a number of persons who are associated with a school or postsecondary education institution and each other, including a student organization, fraternity, sorority, association, corporation, order, society, corps, club, or similar group and includes any student organization registered pursuant to policies of the school or postsecondary education institution at any time during the previous five (5) years.

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### **ACTIONS NOT TOLERATED**

The use of lewd, profane or vulgar language is prohibited. In addition to bullying, students shall not engage in behaviors such as hazing, menacing, taunting, intimidating, verbal or physical abuse of others, or other behavior that disrupts a student's access to an education or is harmful to his/her well-being.<sup>1</sup> This policy extends to any/all student language or behavior, on school premises, on school-sponsored transportation (per policies 06.34 and 09.2261), or at school-sponsored events including, but not limited to, the use of online or electronic methods. Such behavior is disruptive of the educational process and interferes with the ability of other students to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered.

These provisions shall not be interpreted to prohibit civil exchange of opinions or debate protected under the state or federal constitutions where the opinion expressed does not otherwise materially or substantially disrupt the education process or intrude upon the rights of others. Students who violate this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Harassment/Discrimination allegations shall be governed by policy 09.42811.

### **REPORTS**

As provided in the District Code of Acceptable Behavior and Discipline, students that believe they are victims of bullying/hazing shall be provided with a process to enable them to report such incidents to District personnel for appropriate action.

Employees are expected to take reasonable and prudent action in situations involving student welfare and safety, including following District policy requirements for intervening and reporting to the Principal or to their immediate supervisor those situations that threaten, harass, or endanger the safety of students, other staff members, or visitors to the school or District. Such instances shall include, but are not limited to, bullying or hazing of students and harassment/discrimination of staff, students or visitors by any party.

Students who believe they have been a victim of bullying or who have observed other students being bullied shall, as soon as reasonably practicable, report it.

The District Code shall specify to whom reports of alleged instances of bullying or hazing shall be made. In serious instances of peer-to-peer bullying/hazing/harassment, employees must report to the alleged victim's Principal, as directed by Board policy 09.42811. The Principal/designee shall investigate and address alleged incidents of such misbehavior.

In certain cases, employees must do the following:

1. Report bullying and hazing to appropriate law enforcement authorities as required by policy 09.2211; and
2. Investigate and complete documentation as required by policy 09.42811 covering federally protected areas.

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**REFERENCES:**

<sup>1</sup>KRS 158.150

KRS 158.148

KRS 158.156

KRS 160.290

KRS 508.180

KRS 525.080

Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser, 478 U.S. 675, 106 S.Ct. 3159, 92 L.Ed.2d 549 (1986)

Mahanoy Area School District v. B. L., 594 US \_ (2021)

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District,  
393 U.S. 503, 89 S.Ct. 733, 21 L.Ed.2d 731 (1969)

**RELATED POLICIES:**

03.162; 03.262; 06.34; 09.13; 09.2261; 09.421; 09.425; 09.426; 09.4281; 09.42811; 09.438