



BULLYING:

Definition & Roles

"Bullying" or "harassment" is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts - i.e., cyberbullying, through the use of internet, cell phone, computer, or wireless handheld device, currently in use or used by students) that is reasonably perceived as being dehumanizing, intimidating, hostile, humiliating, threatening, or otherwise likely to evoke fear of physical harm or emotional distress and may be motivated either by bias or prejudice based upon any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic, or is based upon association with another person who has or is perceived to have any distinguishing characteristic. Bullying and harassment also include forms of retaliation against individuals who report or cooperate in an investigation under this policy. Such behaviors are considered to be bullying or harassment whether they take place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function, or in a school vehicle or at any time or place where a child's imminent safety or over-all well-being may be at issue.

Conduct is considered bullying if it:

- Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written, physical, verbal, or technological conduct; and
- Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.
- Is severe, persistent, and pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

Other areas of bullying:

Malone ISD is committed to working together with parents to promote the health and wellbeing of our students. Bullying often occurs outside of school, and some forms of bullying may be exclusively off-campus.

Cyberbullying is defined as willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. Although most cyberbullying is created on computers, cell phones and other devices that are not owned by the district or not located on school property, cyberbullying can nevertheless affect the school environment and the welfare of students.

What bullying is not:

Bullying does not include normal childhood behavior such as sibling rivalry or one-on-one fighting of siblings or peers with competing claims. Nor does it include acts of impulsive aggression-in other words, aggression that is a spontaneous, indiscriminate striking out, with no intended target. Bullying does not include criminal activities that may have begun as a conflict and escalated.

Warning Signs:

Possible warning signs that a child is being bullied:

- ✓ Comes home with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books, or other belongings;
- ✓ Has unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches;
- ✓ Has few, if any friends, with whom he or she spends time with;
- ✓ Seems afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, riding the school bus, or taking part in organized activities with peers;
- ✓ Takes a long, "illogical" route when walking home from school;
- ✓ Has lost interest in school work or suddenly begins to do poorly in school;
- ✓ Appears sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he or she comes home;
- ✓ Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical ailments;
- ✓ Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams;

- ✓ Experiences a loss of appetite; or
- ✓ Appears anxious and suffers from low self-esteem.

Roles:

Administrator:

- Meet with staff and students to obtain and distribute information regarding all level of student safety.
- Provide training on all forms of harassment, including bullying.
- Conduct formal investigations regarding claims of harassment (including sexual harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying, etc.)
- Coordinate efforts with district level team members regarding campus specific needs.

Teachers:

- Through classroom instruction, distribute information regarding student safety on all levels.
- Advise campus administration of any acts of harassment (including sexual harassment, bullying, cyber bullying, etc.)
- Conduct classroom investigations and interventions to prevent behavior that leads to serious claims of harassment.
- Provide information to parent regarding student safety issues through phone communication, newsletters, and e-mails.

Parents:

- Cooperated with campus personnel to address student safety issues.
- Provide regular communication with their children to determine student's well-being, as well as addressing their responsibility.
- Participate in proactive discussions and activities working on anti-bullying and character development with their children.

Witnesses: Bystander

The Bystander

Bystanders are the third group of players in this tragedy. They are the supporting cast who aid and abet the bully, through acts of omission and commission. They stand idly back or look away, or they can actively encourage the bully or join in and become one of the bunch of bullies. Injustice over-looked or ignored becomes a contagion that infects those who thought they could turn away.

Standing Up and Speaking Out

Bullying is challenged when the majority stands up against the cruel acts of the minority. Establishing new norms, enforcing playground rules, and increasing supervision are policy decisions that can help reduce the incidents of bullying. Since much of the bullying goes on "under the radar of adults" a potent force of kids themselves showing bullies that they will not be looked up to, nor will their cruel behavior be condoned or tolerated. Kids should not be bystanders. They can become active witnesses, standing up for their peers, speaking out against injustices, and taking responsibility for what happened among themselves.

BULLYING:

What To Do

Malone ISD Response to Bullying

When a teacher or district staff member receives a written or oral report of bullying, they must immediately notify the campus Principal or Superintendent. The campus administrator receives the bullying claim and determines if bullying has occurred. Concurrently, the administrator puts measures in place to prevent bullying during the investigation. The allegation must meet the definition of bullying then the campus administrator must conduct a thorough investigation based on the allegations reported.

If the allegation is determined to be bullying:

- Parent of alleged bully and alleged target will be notified early in the investigation process. All parties will be informed of the anti-bullying policies. (See Student Handbook)
- Measures will be put in place to prevent bullying during the investigation.
- Complete investigation within ten school days from the date of the report. If needed, additional time may be taken to complete the investigation.
- Campus administrator will assign consequences in accordance with the student code of conduct; parents of target and bully will be contacted.
- Target will be made aware of available counseling options, victims' rights, prohibition against retaliation, and policy FFI (local); bully will be made aware of prohibition of retaliation and FFI (local).
- Campus administrator completes the "Investigation of Bullying Report."

If the allegation is determined not bullying:

- If the allegation does not meet the definition of bullying, the campus administrator will address the situation appropriately.
- The parent of alleged bully and alleged target will be notified early in the investigation process. All parties will be informed of the anti-bullying policies.
- Measures will be put in place to prevent bullying during the investigation.

- Alleged target will be made aware of prohibition against retaliation, and policy FFI (local); alleged bully made aware of prohibition of retaliation and FFI (local).
- Campus administrator completes the "Investigation of Bullying Report."

Procedures for Reporting Allegations of Bullying

The district prohibits bullying on school property, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, or in any vehicle operated by the district. Bullying may be verbal or written expression or expression through electronic means, or physical conduct. Bullying is not tolerated by the district and any student or parent of a student who believes that the student or another student has experienced bullying or that student has engaged in bullying is encouraged to immediately report the incident. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of district policy and is prohibited. FFI (local)

Students or parents may report an alleged incident of bullying, orally or in writing, to a counselor, principal, or other district employee. Students or parents may contact the district to obtain an incident report form that may be used to submit the complaint.

Please note that after submission of the complaint to the district employee, the district may assign the complaint to a campus administrator to follow up on the submitted complaint and any other important matters pertaining to the complaint. We encourage you to communicate with your designated campus administrator during this time.

More information about the district's bullying policy can be found at Malone ISD's Policy Online or at the campus administration office.