

411.1 HARASSMENT AND/OR BULLYING OF STUDENTS

Harassment and/or bullying of students will not be tolerated in the Williams Bay Public Schools, which includes any property or vehicles owned, leased or used by the schools. The School Board considers these actions to be detrimental to the health and safety of students, and disruptive to the educational environment. Policy ____ relates to Title IX sexual harassment, and any report or formal complaint related to Title IX sexual harassment will be processed under that policy.

The educational environment is defined as consisting of every activity under the supervision of each school. For purposes of this policy, harassment and/or bullying are defined as any conscious, willful, or deliberate act or attempted act, through the use of words or actions, which are intended to cause physical injury, emotional distress/suffering or property damage or which impact the learning environment.

Harassment and/or bullying could include acts motivated by, but not limited to, hostility toward the victim's real or perceived sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, social, socio-economic or family status, physical attributes, disability/handicap or any other basis protected by state or federal law. Examples of acts of harassment and/or bullying include physical intimidation, force or assault, humiliation, bigoted epithets, vandalism, extortion, oral or written threats, taunting, put downs, name calling, threatening looks or gestures, false accusations, social isolation, retaliating against another student for reporting harassment or bullying, or any other behavior that substantially interferes with a student's school performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment.

All forms of harassment in cyberspace commonly referred to as cyber bullying are unacceptable and viewed as a violation of this policy. Cyber bullying includes but is not limited to the following misuses of technology: harassment, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person or group of people by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including blogs or any other messages via cyberspace. For purposes of this policy, "cyberspace" is defined as a global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent network of information technology infrastructures, including the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers.

In situations in which cyber bullying originated off school property or from a non-school computer or telecommunication device, but is brought to the attention of school officials, any disciplinary action shall be based upon whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the educational process so that it markedly impedes the day to day operations of a school. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, harassment, bullying or making a threat off school grounds through cyberspace that is intended to endanger the health, safety or property of others at school, a District employee or a school board member.

Any student who believes he/she has been subject to harassment and/or bullying may file a complaint in accordance with established complaint procedures or may complain directly to the building principal or designee or the Title IX Coordinator / Compliance Officer. Filing a complaint or otherwise

reporting harassment and/or bullying in good faith will not reflect upon the individual's status nor will it affect his/her grades or benefits provided by the District. The District shall respect the confidentiality of both the complainant and the accused consistent with the District's legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective and/or disciplinary action when this conduct has occurred.

Any student or parent/guardian who becomes aware of or witnesses harassment and/or bullying has an obligation to report and will be supported by involved staff members in reporting the bullying/harassment to the proper authorities. Any District employee who becomes aware of or witnesses harassment and/or bullying has an obligation to intervene and report.

Students who engage in harassment and/or bullying in violation of this policy and/or retaliating against an individual for reporting harassment and/or bullying shall be subject to school disciplinary measures consistent with District policies and procedures up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

Procedure for Filing a Student Harassment Complaint:

The District principals are responsible for coordinating regulations concerning harassment in their work site. The Director of Special Education / School Psychologist is the designated Title IX Coordinator / Compliance Officer in the District.

It is important for these procedures to respect and advance the rights of all parties, including the protection of personal privacy interests and the protection of the reputation of all concerned and involved parties. In order to ensure fair procedures and to protect these interests, all parties are encouraged to keep these matters confidential. All investigating and reviewing officers are charged with the responsibility to hold these matters in the strictest possible confidence in order to guard against the unnecessary or inadvertent disclosure of information relating to any pending charges or investigations.

The District shall provide an opportunity for resolution of a complaint on an informal basis after the complaint has been filed. For the informal resolution of a complaint, the principal shall act as a facilitator if the complainant wishes to resolve the matter short of a full investigation.

Formal complaints will be taken seriously and will be subject to thorough review and immediate investigation by the receiving officer or designee.

1. Students who believe they are the victims of harassment, or their parents/guardians, shall immediately report the harassment to the Title IX Coordinator / Compliance Officer or other school employee. If an employee receives the complaint, the employee shall forward the complaint to the Title IX Coordinator / Compliance Officer for review and action as necessary. If the complainant charge involves someone in the complaint process or if the complainant is

uncomfortable discussing the matter with one of the designated persons, he/she may report to any other supervisor up to and including School Board members.

2. Any district employee who is aware of student harassment, has an obligation to report such harassment to the Title IX Coordinator / Compliance Officer.
3. While complaints can be filed orally or in writing, at a time when they become a formal complaint, they should be placed in writing and signed and should include the specific nature of the harassment and corresponding dates and also the name(s) of the harasser and any witnesses.
4. The District shall provide prompt, complete, independent and impartial investigation of the complaint. The investigation will be conducted by the Title IX Coordinator / Compliance Officer or his/her designee. The investigator shall, in accordance with District policies, investigate the complaint, notify the person who has been accused of harassment, obtain a response to the allegation and arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint with all concerned parties.
5. If the complainant is satisfied with the response in an informal resolution and an informal resolution is arrived at, the terms of such resolution shall be reduced to writing and made a part of the complaint file. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, the Title IX Coordinator / Compliance Officer shall then proceed with the formal complaint procedures.
6. The results of the investigation of each formal complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant and the District Administrator by the Title IX Coordinator / Compliance Officer or his or her designee. Upon receipt of the report, the District Administrator will take such action as appropriate, based upon the results of the investigation. The complainant will be advised of any action taken as a result of the complaint.
7. If the complainant is not satisfied with the answer, a written complaint may be filed with the School Board within fifteen (15) working days after receipt of the response from the District Administrator. The Board will hold a meeting at which the complainant will be given the opportunity to present the complaint. The Board will give a written answer to the complaint following completion of the meeting.

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse, which may include filing charges with appropriate agency or agencies, initiating civil action or seeking redress under state criminal statutes and/or federal law.

Notice of this policy will be circulated to all schools and departments in the District on an annual basis and incorporated in employee and student handbooks.

The District will provide written acknowledgement of a written complaint within 45 days of receipt of a written complaint.

The District will provide a written determination of the complaint within 90 days of the receipt of the written complaint, unless the parties agree to an extension of time.

Any written determination must notify a complainant of the right to appeal a negative determination to the state superintendent and of the procedures for making the appeal.

APPROVED: August 8, 1994

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