

Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

Yakima School District strives to provide students with optimal conditions for learning by maintaining a school environment where everyone is treated with respect, and no one is physically or emotionally harmed.

In order to ensure respect and prevent harm, it is a violation of district operational procedure for a student to be harassed, intimidated or bullied by others in the school community, at school sponsored events, or when such actions create a substantial disruption to the educational process. The school community includes all students, school employees, school board members, contractors, unpaid volunteers, families, patrons, and other visitors. Student(s) will not be harassed, intimidated or bullied because of their race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, including gender expression or identity, mental or physical disability, or other distinguishing characteristics.

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act that:

- physically harms a student or damages the student’s property;
- has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education;
- is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; and/or
- has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Nothing in this section requires the affected student to actually possess a characteristic that is a basis for the harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Any school staff who observes, overhears, or otherwise witnesses harassment, intimidation or bullying or to whom such actions have been reported must take prompt and appropriate action to stop the harassment and to prevent its reoccurrence.

1. Behaviors/Expressions

Harassment, intimidation or bullying can take many forms including, but not limited to, slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendoes, demeaning comments, drawings, cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats or other written, oral, physical or electronically transmitted messages or images.

This operational procedure is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the educational environment. Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment, intimidation or bullying may still be prohibited by other district operational procedures or building, classroom or program rules.

2. Definitions

Other distinguishing characteristics may include, but are not limited to, physical appearance, clothing or other apparel, socioeconomic status and weight.

Intentional acts refers to the individual’s choice to engage in the act, rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s).

Aggressor is a student, staff member, or other member of the school community who engages in the

harassment, intimidation or bullying of a student.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying is an intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act that:

- harms a student physically or damages the student's property;
- substantially interferes with a student's education;
- creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment by being severe, persistent or pervasive;
- substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school;
- substantially interferes with a student's education as determined by considering a targeted student's grades, attendance, demeanor, interaction with peers, participation in activities and other indicators; or
- may rise to the level of harassment, intimidation and bullying and may take many forms, including, but not limited to, slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendoes, demeaning comments, drawings, cartoons, pranks, ostracism, physical attacks or threats, gestures, or acts relating to an individual or group whether electronic, written, oral, or physically transmitted messages or images. There is no requirement that the targeted student actually possess the characteristic that is the basis for the harassment, intimidation or bullying;

Incident Reporting Forms may be used by students, families, or staff to report incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying. District form 3215.1X may be used for informal or formal complaint.

Retaliation is when an aggressor harasses, intimidates or bullies a student who has reported incidents of bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, classified staff, substitute and temporary teachers, volunteers or paraprofessionals (both employees and contractors).

Targeted Student is a student against whom harassment, intimidation or bullying has allegedly been perpetrated.

3. Training

This operational procedure is a component of the district's responsibility to create and maintain a safe, civil, respectful and inclusive learning community and shall be implemented in conjunction with comprehensive training of staff and volunteers.

4. Prevention

The district will provide students with strategies aimed at preventing harassment, intimidation and bullying. In its efforts to train students, the district will seek partnerships with families, law enforcement and other community agencies.

4.1 Dissemination

In each school and on the district's website, the district will prominently post information on reporting harassment, intimidation and bullying; the name and contact information for making a report to a school administrator; and the name and contact information for the district compliance officer. The district's operational procedure will be available in each school in a

language that families can understand.

Annually, the superintendent will ensure that a statement summarizing the operational procedure is provided in student, staff, volunteer, and parent handbooks, is available in school and district offices and/or hallways, or is posted on the district's website.

Additional distribution of the operational procedure is subject to the requirements of Washington Administrative Code [WAC 392-400-226](#).

4.2 Education

Annually students will receive age-appropriate information on the recognition and prevention of harassment, intimidation or bullying at student orientation sessions and on other appropriate occasions. The information will include a copy of the Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB) Incident Reporting Form, 3215.1X or a link to a web-based form.

4.3 Training

Staff will receive annual training on the school district's operational procedure, including staff roles and responsibilities, how to monitor common areas, and the use of the district's Incident Reporting Form.

4.4 Prevention Strategies

The district will implement a range of prevention strategies including individual, classroom, school and district-level approaches. Whenever possible, the district will implement evidence-based prevention programs that are designed to increase social competency, improve school climate, and eliminate harassment, intimidation and bullying in schools.

5. Interventions

Interventions are designed to remediate the impact on the targeted student(s) and other students impacted by the violation, to change the behavior of the perpetrator, and to restore a positive school climate. All staff members shall intervene when witnessing or receiving reports of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Minor incidents that staff are able to resolve immediately, or incidents that do not meet the definition of harassment, intimidation or bullying, may require no further action under this procedure.

The district will consider the frequency of incidents, developmental age of the student, and severity of the conduct in determining intervention strategies. Interventions will range from counseling, correcting behavior and discipline, to law enforcement referrals.

6. Retaliation/False Allegations

Retaliation is prohibited and will result in appropriate discipline. It is a violation of this operational procedure to threaten or harm someone for reporting harassment, intimidation or bullying. No school employee, student or volunteer may engage in reprisal or retaliation against a targeted student, witness or other person who brings forward information about an alleged act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Retaliation is prohibited and will result in appropriate discipline or other appropriate legal action.

It is also a violation of district operational procedure to knowingly report false allegations of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Students or employees will not be disciplined for making a report in good faith.

However, persons found to knowingly report or corroborate false allegations will be subject to appropriate discipline.

7. Filing an Incident Reporting Form

Any student who believes he or she has been the target of unresolved, severe, or persistent harassment, intimidation or bullying, or any other person in the school community who observes or receives notice that a student has or may have been the target of unresolved, severe, or persistent harassment, intimidation or bullying may report incidents verbally or in writing to any staff member.

8. Addressing Reports of Bullying

Step 1: Filing an Incident Reporting Form

In order to protect a targeted student from retaliation, a student need not reveal his identity on a Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB) Incident Reporting Form, 3215.1X. The form may be filed anonymously, confidentially, or the student may choose to disclose his or her identity (non-confidential).

Status of Reporter

a. Anonymous

Individuals may file a report without revealing their identity. No disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor based solely on an anonymous report. Schools may identify complaint boxes or develop other methods for receiving anonymous, unsigned reports. Possible responses to an anonymous report include enhanced monitoring of specific locations at certain times of day or increased monitoring of specific students or staff. (Example: An unsigned Incident Reporting Form dropped on a teacher's desk led to the increased monitoring of the boys' locker room in 5th period.)

b. Confidential

Individuals may ask that their identities be kept secret from the accused and other students. Like anonymous reports, no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor based solely on a confidential report. (Example: A student tells a playground supervisor about a classmate being bullied but asks that nobody know who reported the incident. The supervisor says, "I won't be able to punish the bullies unless you or someone else who saw it is willing to let me use their names, but I can start hanging out near the basketball court if that would help.")

c. Non-confidential

Individuals may agree to file a report non-confidentially. Complainants agreeing to make their complaint non-confidential will be informed that due process requirements may require that the district release all of the information that it has regarding the complaint to any individuals involved in the incident, but that, even then, information will still be restricted to those with a need to know, both during and after the investigation. The district will, however, fully implement the anti-retaliation provision of this operational procedure to protect complainants and witnesses.

Step 2: Receiving an Incident Reporting Form

All staff are responsible for receiving oral and written reports. Whenever possible, staff who initially receive an oral or written report of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall attempt to resolve the incident immediately. If the incident is resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved, or if the incident does not meet the definition of harassment, intimidation or bullying, no further action may be necessary under this procedure.

All reports of unresolved, severe, or persistent harassment, intimidation or bullying will be recorded on a Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB) Incident Reporting Form, 3215.1X and submitted to the principal or designee, unless the principal or designee is the subject of the complaint.

Step 3: Investigations of Unresolved, Severe, or Persistent Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

All reports of unresolved, severe, or persistent harassment, intimidation or bullying will be investigated with reasonable promptness. Any student may have a trusted adult with them throughout the report and investigation process.

- a. Upon receipt of the completed Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB) Incident Reporting Form, 3215.1X that alleges unresolved, severe, or persistent harassment, intimidation or bullying, the school or district designee will begin the investigation. If there is potential for clear and immediate physical harm to the complainant, the district will immediately contact law enforcement and inform the parent/guardian.
- b. During the course of the investigation, the district will take reasonable measures to ensure that no further incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying occur between the complainant and the alleged aggressor. If necessary, the district will implement a safety plan for the student(s) involved. The plan may include changing seating arrangements for the complainant and/or the alleged aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a safe person for the complainant; altering the alleged aggressor's schedule and access to the complainant; and other measures.
- c. Within two (2) school days after receiving the Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB) Incident Reporting Form, 3215.1X, the school designee will notify the families of the students involved that a complaint was received and direct the families to the district's operational procedure on harassment, intimidation and bullying.
- d. In rare cases, where after consultation with the student and appropriate staff (such as a psychologist, counselor, or social worker) the district has evidence that it would threaten the health and safety of the complainant or the alleged aggressor to involve his or her parent/guardian, the district may initially refrain from contacting the parent/guardian in its investigation of harassment, intimidation and bullying. If professional school personnel suspect that a student is subject to abuse and neglect, they must follow district operational procedures for reporting suspected cases to Child Protective Services (CPS).
- e. The investigation shall include, at a minimum:
 - an interview with the complainant;
 - an interview with the alleged aggressor;
 - a review of any previous complaints involving either the complainant or the alleged aggressor; and

- interviews with other students or staff members who may have knowledge of the alleged incident.
- f. The principal or designee may determine that other steps must be taken before the investigation is complete.
 - g. The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable, but generally no later than five (5) school days from the initial complaint or report. If more time is needed to complete an investigation, the district will provide the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or the student with weekly updates.
 - h. No later than two (2) school days after the investigation has been completed and submitted to the compliance officer, the principal or designee shall respond in writing or in person to the parent/guardian of the complainant and the alleged aggressor stating:
 - the results of the investigation;
 - whether the allegations were found to be factual;
 - whether there was a violation of operational procedure; and
 - the process for the complainant to file an appeal if the complainant disagrees with results.

Because of the legal requirement regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee may not be able to report specific information to the targeted student's parent/guardian about any disciplinary action taken unless it involves a directive that the targeted student must be aware of in order to report violations.

If a district chooses to contact the parent/guardian by letter, the letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian of the complainant and alleged aggressor by United States Postal Service with return receipt requested unless it is determined, after consultation with the student and appropriate staff (psychologist, counselor, social worker) that it could endanger the complainant or the alleged aggressor to involve his or her family. If professional school personnel suspect that a student is subject to abuse or neglect, as mandatory reporters they must follow district operational procedures for reporting suspected cases to CPS.

If the incident cannot be resolved at the school level, the principal or designee shall request assistance from the district.

Step 4: Corrective Measures for the Aggressor

After completion of the investigation, the school or district designee will institute any corrective measures necessary. Corrective measures will be instituted as quickly as possible, but in no event more than five (5) school days after contact has been made to the families or guardians regarding the outcome of the investigation. Corrective measures that involve student discipline will be implemented according to district procedure. If the accused aggressor is appealing the imposition of discipline, the district may be prevented by due process considerations or a lawful order from imposing the discipline until the appeal process is concluded.

If in an investigation a principal or principal's designee found that a student knowingly made a false allegation of harassment, intimidation or bullying, that student may be subject to corrective measures, including discipline.

Step 5: Targeted Student's Right to Appeal

1. If the complainant or parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, they may appeal to the superintendent or his or her designee by filing a written notice of appeal within five (5) school days of receiving the written decision. The superintendent or designee will review the investigative report and issue a written decision on the merits of the appeal within five (5) school days of receiving the notice of appeal.
2. If the targeted student remains dissatisfied after the initial appeal to the superintendent, the student may appeal to the school board by filing a written notice of appeal with the secretary of the school board on or before the fifth (5) school day following the date upon which the complainant received the superintendent's written decision.
3. An appeal before the school board or disciplinary appeal council must be heard on or before the tenth (10th) school day following the filing of the written notice of appeal to the school board. The school board or disciplinary appeal council will review the record and render a written decision on the merits of the appeal on or before the fifth (5th) school day following the termination of the hearing and shall provide a copy to all parties involved. The board or council's decision will be the final district decision.

Step 6: Discipline/Corrective Action

The district will take prompt and equitable corrective measures within its authority on findings of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Depending on the severity of the conduct, corrective measures may include counseling, education, discipline and/or referral to law enforcement.

Corrective measures for a student who commits an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying will be varied and graded according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, or the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Corrective measures that involve student discipline will be implemented according to district operational procedure 3200.

If the conduct was of a public nature or involved groups of students or bystanders, the district should strongly consider schoolwide training or other activities to address the incident.

If staff have been found to be in violation of this operational procedure, the school district may impose employment disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If a certificated educator is found to have committed a violation of [WAC 181-87](#), commonly called the Code of Conduct for Professional Educators, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)'s Office of Professional Practices may propose disciplinary action on a certificate, up to and including revocation. Contractor violations of this operational procedure may include the loss of contracts.

Step 7: Support for the Targeted Student

Persons found to have been subjected to harassment, intimidation or bullying will have appropriate district support services made available to them, and the adverse impact of the harassment on the student shall be addressed and remedied as appropriate.

9. Compliance Officer

The district's compliance officer is the primary district contact to receive copies of all formal and informal complaints and ensure procedural implementation. Contact information is as follows:

Amanda Jewell, Executive Director of Student and Health Services
104 North 4th Avenue
Yakima WA 98902
(509) 573-7004
jewell.amanda@yakimaschools.org

The district compliance officer will:

- 9.1 serve as the district's primary contact for harassment, intimidation and bullying;
- 9.2 provide support and assistance to the principal or designee in resolving complaints;
- 9.3 receive copies of all Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB) Incident Reporting Forms, 3215.1X, discipline and referral forms, and letters to parents providing the outcomes of investigations;
- 9.4 be familiar with the use of the student information system. The compliance officer may use this information to identify patterns of behavior and areas of concern;
- 9.5 ensure implementation of the operational procedure by overseeing the investigative processes, including ensuring that investigations are prompt, impartial, and thorough;
- 9.6 assess the training needs of staff and students to ensure successful implementation throughout the district and to ensure staff receive annual fall training;
- 9.7 provide the OSPI School Safety Center with notification of operational or procedure updates or changes on an annual basis; and
- 9.8 in cases where, despite school efforts, a targeted student experiences harassment, intimidation or bullying that threatens the student's health and safety, the compliance officer will facilitate a meeting between district staff and the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) to develop a safety plan to protect the student. A sample student safety plan is available on the OSPI website: www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter/default.aspx.

10. Other Resources

- 10.1 Students and families should use the district's complaint and appeal procedures as a first response to allegations of harassment, intimidation and bullying. However, nothing in this procedure prevents a student, parent(s)/guardian(s), school, or district from taking action to remediate harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected class under local, state or federal law. An harassment, intimidation or bullying complaint may also be reported to the following state or federal agencies:

OSPI Equity and Civil Rights Office
360.725.6162
Email: equity@k12.wa.us
www.k12.wa.us/Equity/default.aspx

Washington State Human Rights Commission
800.233.3247
www.hum.wa.gov/index.html

Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Region IX
206.607.1600
Email: OCR.Seattle@ed.gov

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html

Department of Justice Community Relations Service
877.292.3804

www.justice.gov/crt/

Office of the Education Ombudsman 866.297-
2597

Email: OEInfo@gov.wa.gov

www.governor.wa.gov/oeo/default.asp

OSPI Safety Center

360.725-6044

www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter/BullyingHarassment/default.aspx

10.2 Relationship to Other Laws

This procedure applies only to [RCW 28A.300.285](#) – Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying prevention. There are other laws and procedures to address related issues, such as sexual harassment or discrimination.

The district will ensure its compliance with all state laws regarding harassment, intimidation or bullying. Nothing in this procedure prevents a student, parent(s)/guardian(s), school or district from taking action to remediate harassment based on a person's gender or membership in a legally protected class under local, state, or federal law.

10.3 Other District Policies and Procedures

Nothing in this operational procedure is intended to prohibit discipline or remedial action for inappropriate behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment, intimidation or bullying as defined herein, but which are, or may be, prohibited by other district or school rules.

Cross References:

(cf.: 3200 – Student Rules, Regulations and Conduct: Discipline)

(cf.: 3215.1X - Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB) Incident Reporting Form)

Legal References:

[RCW 28A.300.285](#) – Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

[WAC 181-87](#) - Professional Certification—Acts Of Unprofessional Conduct

[WAC 392-400-226](#) - School district rules defining harassment, intimidation and bullying prevention policies and procedures

Adoption Date:

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