

Personnel-Certified/Non-Certified

Rights, Responsibilities and Duties

Workplace Bullying (Congenial and Healthy Workplace)

The rights and responsibilities described in this policy apply to all employees, parents, and all who utilize or visit district facilities. The Board of Education (Board) requires all of its employees to treat all other employees, students, parents and visitors with dignity and respect. Unprofessional behavior must be dealt with, and will not be tolerated from district employees.

Consequences of Bullying in the Workplace

Board does not condone bullying in the workplace. Workplace bullying is contrary to maintaining a congenial and healthy workplace. The Board desires to provide a workplace that is free from violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior.

Definition

“Workplace bullying” is defined as the deliberate, hurtful, repeated mistreatment of an employee, driven by a desire to abuse or control that individual. Some of the most common bullying behaviors include yelling, shouting, and screaming; intimidating gestures; “behind-the-back” put-downs, insults; and the deliberate sabotage and undermining of another individual's work performance.

Examples of Bullying in the Workplace

Inappropriate behavior includes actions that intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a worker.

In order to develop and maintain a congenial, healthy and supportive workplace that contributes in a positive manner to the educational services provided to the students of the District, the Board considers the following examples of bullying as a detriment in the educational workplace.

The illustrative examples of bullying include, but are not limited to repetitive or combination of:

- Provocative or dehumanizing name calling;
- Unwarranted or invalid criticism;
- Blame without factual justification;
- Swearing at;
- Exclusion or social or physical isolation;
- Rumors (or failing to stop them) and gossip about a person or school's reputation;
- Shouting at or humiliating;

Reporting of Workplace Bullying/Procedures

Employees who believe they have been subjected to workplace bullying should report to the Building Principal/Supervisor/Superintendent of Schools in writing. The report should include details of the date, time, place and the specific conduct which occurred. The Building Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee will

seek to maintain confidentiality while investigating the incident(s) but may discuss the situation with other supervisors/administrators or the Superintendent of Schools. The District will implement appropriate remedial measures. Disciplinary action will be taken if the severity of the workplace bullying makes that intervention appropriate. While investigating and responding to the prohibited misconduct, the Principal/Superintendent, or his/her designee, will give priority to avoiding possible retaliation or reprisals, while restoring and maintaining a congenial and healthy workplace.

At times, incidents of workplace bullying can be handled effectively in an informal manner. If an incident occurs that is offensive, it may be sufficient to explain clearly to the offender that the behavior is unacceptable. If the circumstances are too difficult or embarrassing for a complainant, support may be sought from another colleague, a contact person, staff representative or an administrator. A complainant may decide, for whatever reason, to bypass the informal procedure and proceed to the filing of a written complaint.

It is the intent of this policy that such issues are identified early by the targeted individual, a co-worker or colleague, and the issue is resolved at the earliest possible stage.

Related Considerations

Bullying must not be confused with the non-abusive exercise of management rights to assign tasks, coach, and reprimand or take disciplinary actions against employees.

Any administrator, supervisor or individual in a position of leadership to whom a complaint is reported (verbally or in writing) must take appropriate action according to internal procedures. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

Freedom from retaliation is protected under this policy. Retaliation is a separate offense from the original claim of bullying. Protected individuals include complainants, or anyone who testifies, assists, or participates in any manner in an investigation or proceeding, internal or external, pertaining to the allegation of bullying.

Misuse of the policy is a violation of the policy itself.

This policy supplements but does not replace the District's policies pertaining to discrimination and harassment.

(cf. [0521](#) – Nondiscrimination)

(cf. [1316](#) – Conduct on School Property)

(cf. [4118.11/4218.11](#) – Nondiscrimination)

(cf. [4118.112/4218.112](#) – Sexual Harassment)

(cf. [4118.13/4218.13](#) – Conflict of Interest)

(cf. 4118.211 – Retaliation and Whistle-Blowing)

(cf. 4118.24/[4218.24](#) – Staff/Student Relations)

(cf. [5131.911](#) – Bullying)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-221](#) Boards of education to prescribe rule(s), policies, and procedures.

[10-238](#) Petition for hearing by board of education.

Policy adopted: May 8, 2019

LEDYARD BOARD OF EDUCATION
Ledyard, Connecticut