

Bullying Prevention and Education

The Board supports a secure education climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment, and any type of bullying behavior. The purpose of this policy is to promote consistency of approach and to help create a climate in which all types of bullying are regarded as unacceptable.

Bullying is the use of coercion or intimidation to obtain control over another person or to cause physical, mental, or emotional harm to another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal, or electronically transmitted expression or by means of a physical act or gesture. Bullying is prohibited against any student for any reason, including but not limited to any such behavior that is directed toward a student on the basis of their academic performance or any basis protected by federal and state law, including disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, national origin, religion, ancestry, or the need for special education services, whether such characteristic(s) is actual or perceived, or against whom federal and state laws prohibit discrimination upon the bases described in C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1)(II)(I)".

Bullying is prohibited on BOCES property, at BOCES or school-sanctioned activities and events, when students are being transported in any vehicle dispatched by the BOCES or one of its schools, or off BOCES property when such conduct has a nexus to school or any BOCES curricular or non-curricular activity or event.

A student who engages in any act of bullying and/or a student who takes any retaliatory action against a student who reports in good faith an incident of bullying, is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the bullying behavior will be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made. Bullying behavior that constitutes unlawful discrimination or harassment will be subject to investigation and discipline under related Board policies and procedures. Students targeted by bullying when such bullying behavior may constitute unlawful discrimination or harassment also have additional rights and protections under Board policies and procedures regarding unlawful discrimination and harassment.

The executive director or designee will develop a comprehensive program to address bullying. The program will be aimed toward accomplishing the following goals:

1. To send a clear message to students, staff, parents, and community members that bullying and retaliation against a student who reports bullying will not be tolerated.

- 2. To train staff and students in taking proactive steps to prevent bullying from occurring.**
- 3. To implement procedures for intervention, investigation, and confrontation of students engaged in bullying behavior.**
- 4. To initiate efforts to change the behavior of students engaged in bullying behaviors through re-education on acceptable behavior, discussions, counseling, and appropriate negative consequences.**
- 5. To foster a productive partnership with parents and community members in order to help maintain a bullying-free environment.**
- 6. To support targets of bullying by means of individual and peer counseling.**
- 7. To help develop peer support networks, social skills and confidence for all students.**
- 8. To recognize and praise positive, supportive behaviors of students toward one another on a regular basis.**

The BOCES's comprehensive program to address bullying will incorporate provisions for adequate due processes and safeguards for students accused of bullying behaviors, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.

The BOCES will administer surveys of students' impressions of the severity of bullying in the BOCES's schools. Such surveys will be conducted in accordance with applicable law and Board policy. Students' survey responses will be confidential. Participation in the surveys will not be required and students may voluntarily "opt in" to participate in the survey.

The BOCES school(s) included in the BOCES's bullying prevention and education grant will appoint a team of persons to advise school administration concerning the severity and frequency of bullying incidents. The school team(s) may include, but need not be limited to, counselors, teachers, BOCES administrators, parents, students, law enforcement officials, social workers, prosecutors, health professionals, and mental health professionals.

(Adoption date: January 19, 2022)

LEGAL REF.: C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (2)(a)(I)(K) (policy required as part of safe schools plan)

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity

JB, Equal Educational Opportunities
JBB*, Sexual Harassment
JICDA, Code of Conduct
JICDD*, Violent and Aggressive Behavior
JICJ, Student Use of Cell Phones and Other Personal Technology Devices
JK, Student Discipline
JKD/JKE, Suspension/Expulsion of Students (and Other Disciplinary Interventions)
JLDAC, Screening/Testing of Students

NOTE: For purposes of this policy, these terms have the following meanings:

- **"Race" includes hair texture, hair type, or a protective hairstyle that is commonly or historically associated with race. C.R.S. 22-32-110 (1)(k).**
- **"Protective Hairstyle" includes such hairstyles as braids, locs, twists, tight coils or curls, cornrows, bantu knots, and head wraps. Id.**
- **"Sexual Orientation" means an individual's identity, or another individual's perception thereof, in relation to the gender or genders to which the individual is sexually or emotionally attracted and the behavior or social affiliation that may result from the attraction. C.R.S. 2-4-401 (13.5).**
- **"Gender Expression" means an individual's way of reflecting and expressing the individual's gender to the outside world, typically demonstrated through appearance, dress, and behavior. C.R.S. 2-4-401 (3.4).**
- **"Gender Identity" means an individual's innate sense of the individual's own gender, which may or may not correspond with the individual's sex assigned at birth. C.R.S. 2-4-401 (3.5).**

[Revised September 2021]
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