

## **SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CAMERON Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policy**

### **Introduction**

The School District of Cameron believes that a safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, is conduct that interferes with students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to educate students in a safe environment. The purpose of this policy is to assist the school district in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, and other similar disruptive behavior.

### **Definition**

Bullying is the act of intentionally causing harm to others through verbal harassment, physical assault, or other more subtle methods or coercion. Bullying can be direct or indirect. Bullying may be a repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying behavior can be:

1. **Physical:** Physical bullying involves harmful actions against a person's body. Examples include, but are not limited, to hitting, pinching, poking, pulling hair, choking, kicking, tripping, spitting, hazing, biting, and inappropriate touching. It also involves interfering with another person's property and stealing.
2. **Verbal:** Verbal bullying involving speaking to a person or about a person in a way that is derogatory, unkind, or hurtful. Examples include, but are not limited to, teasing, name calling, insulting or inappropriate remarks, threatening, spreading rumors, and making discriminatory remarks or false accusations.
3. **Non-verbal/Emotional:** Non-verbal bullying refers to behaviors that upset, exclude, or embarrass others. Examples include, but are not limited to, intentionally leaving a person out of a game or activity, extortion, manipulating friends, ostracizing, pressuring peers, making rude gestures such as poking out tongue or staring, writing hate notes about a person that will be upsetting to that person, using computer or telecommunications to send embarrassing, slanderous, threatening, or intimidating message to or about a person(s).

### **Prohibition**

Bullying behavior by students and staff is prohibited whether it is of the nature of student(s) to student(s), staff member to staff member, staff member to student(s), or student to staff member. Bullying behavior is prohibited in all schools, buildings, property and educational environments, including any property or vehicle owned, leased or used by the school district. Educational environments include, but are not limited to, every activity under school supervision.

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, as determined by district administration.

### **Procedures for Reporting**

It is the responsibility of all school staff members, students, and concerned individuals who observe or become aware of acts of bullying to report these acts confidentially to a school staff member or administrator. The complaint procedure will be made available to any students or parents/guardians wishing to file a complaint. A clear account of the incident will be recorded in writing using an Incident Report. All reports of bullying are to be taken seriously and will be acted upon by the appropriate school staff.

**Retaliation**

There shall be no retaliation against individuals filing an Incident Report. Individuals engaging in retaliatory behavior will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Procedure for Investigating Reports of Bullying**

An investigation to determine the facts will take place in a timely manner to verify the validity and the seriousness of the report. Affected parents and/or guardians will be notified that a report has been made. The district shall keep the complaint confidential to the extent required by law for the accused and the accuser.

**Sanctions and Supports**

If it is determined that students participated in bullying behavior in violation of this policy, the school may take disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement officials for possible legal action as appropriate.

Students found in violation of the bullying policy may be referred to pupil services staff for counseling or other educational programming designed to prevent repetitive bullying behavior. Employees found to have participated in bullying behavior, or having become aware that bullying was taking place and failed to report the behavior, are considered to be in violation of the prohibition expressed by this policy. They may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the collective bargaining agreement or disciplinary action established by policy or practice.

**Disclosure and Public Reporting**

This policy will be published annually in the student handbook and available on the School District of Cameron website. The school district will also provide a copy of the policy to any person who requests it.

Records will be maintained on the number and types of reports made, and sanctions imposed for incidents found to be in violation of the bullying policy.