

*Students*

5002

POLICY**Bullying**

- A. **POLICY STATEMENT:** The Waterbury Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by Board of Education. The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying 1) causes physical or emotional harm to a student or such student's property; 2) places a student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property; 3) creates a hostile environment at school for such student; 4) infringes on the rights of such student at school; or 5) substantially disrupts the educational process.

Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of any act of bullying is likewise prohibited.

Any student who engages in bullying behavior shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which action may include suspension and expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement officials in accordance with the Board's policies and state and federal law.

B. **DEFINITIONS:**

- **Bullying** is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that:
 - a) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
 - b) places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
 - c) creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
 - d) infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
 - e) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but is not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender

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identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

- **Cyberbullying** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

C. DISTRICT PROGRAM AND SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE PLAN

The Safe School Climate Plan (“Plan”) is a multi-faceted approach to improving overall school climate and to prohibit and address any incidences of bullying in the Waterbury Public Schools. The Waterbury Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of the Waterbury Public Schools or his/her designee, along with the District Safe School Climate Coordinator, Safe School Climate Specialists and Safe School Climate Committees to develop, approve and adopt a Safe School Climate Plan in accordance with state law in furtherance of this policy. The Plan is to be periodically reviewed and revised as appropriate. Such Plan shall include, but not be limited to provisions which:

1. Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees and require students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified annually of the process by which students may make such reports;
2. Enable parents/guardians to file written reports of suspected bullying;
3. Require school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the safe school climate specialist or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such an oral report;
4. Require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report;
5. Require the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
6. Require each school to have a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, for school employees to deal with bullying;
7. Provide for the inclusion of language about bullying in student codes of conduct and in all students handbooks;

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8. Require each school to notify parents or guardians of students who commit any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of any student against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation;
9. Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying;
10. Establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
11. Direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
12. Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;
13. Require the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying;
14. Require the principal of a school or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal or the principal's designee believes that any act of bullying constitutes criminal conduct;
15. Prohibit bullying (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the students against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) subsequently disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
16. Require, at the beginning of each school year, for each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and

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17. Require all school employees to annually complete the training required by C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended on bullying prevention and related topics.

Pursuant to state law, the notification required under subdivision (8) (above) and the invitation required pursuant to subdivision (9) (above) shall include a description of the response of school employees to acts of bullying and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) and any Board policy regarding student confidentiality and access to records.

Not later than January 1, 2012, the Board of Education shall approve the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to this policy and state statute and submit such plan to the Department of Education. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approved by the Board, the Board shall make such Safe School Climate Plan available on the Board’s and each individual school in the District’s Internet website and ensure that such plan is also included in the District’s publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

Public Act 11-232, *An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws*
Conn. Gen. Statutes § 10-222d Policy on bullying behavior (as amended by
Public Act 11-232)

Conn. Gen. Statutes § 10-222g Prevention and intervention strategy on bullying (as
amended by Public Act 11-232)

Conn. Gen. Statutes §10-222h Analysis of bullying policy