

# Frontier Regional and Union #38 School Districts

Conway • Deerfield • Sunderland • Whately



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## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### I. Introduction

It is the policy of the Frontier Regional and Union#38 School Districts to provide a learning and working environment for students, employees and visitors free from bullying.

### II. Definitions

- A. "Aggressor" is a student or adult or member of the school staff including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessionals who engages in bullying, cyber bullying or retaliation.
- B. "Bullying" is the repeated use by one or more students or employees of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process, orderly operation of a school or the working environment at a school.
- C. "Cyberbullying" is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.
- D. "Hostile Environment" is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.
- E. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is hereby prohibited.
- F. "Target" is a student against whom bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

### III. Policy

- A. Bullying is hereby prohibited by the Frontier Regional and Union #38 School Districts:
  - 1. on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to 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 the Frontier Regional and Union #38 School Districts, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Frontier Regional and Union #38 School Districts; and,
  - 2. at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned leased or used by the Frontier Regional and Union #38 School Districts, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process, the orderly operation of the school or the working environment.
- B. False accusations of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- C. This policy does not require the Frontier Regional and Union #38 School Districts to staff any non-school related activities, functions or programs.

### IV. Bullying Prevention Plan

This plan recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived characteristics including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

- A. Reporting
  - 1. Any staff including but not limited to an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional **shall immediately** report any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the Principal or his/her designee.
  - 2. Any student, parent, guardian or other interested person may report any bullying or suspected bullying to the Principal or his/her designee as soon as reasonably possible. If possible, reports should be in writing but there is no requirement that they be written.
  - 3. If an instance of bullying is reported to a staff member other than the Principal or his/her designee, the staff member **shall immediately** inform the Principal.
  - 4. The Principal or his/her designee in charge of receiving complaints should keep accurate documentation of all complaints received.
  - 5. The Principal or his/her designee should document the following:
    - a. the name of the complainant;
    - b. the status of the complainant (i.e. student, staff, third party);
    - c. the name of the alleged bully;
    - d. the date the complaint was received;
    - e. how the complaint was received (i.e., written, oral);
    - f. the nature of the complaint (i.e. facts of the complaint); and the names of witnesses

6. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

B. Investigation

1. The Principal or his/her designee should conduct an investigation within 24 to 48 hours of the complaint, if possible.
2. The Principal or his/her designee should ask all appropriate questions of the complainant in order to get the full story.
  - a. who, what, when, where, how;
  - b. is there any physical evidence (documents, texts, voicemail);
  - c. effect of bullying - what will restore the complainant's sense of safety; and
  - d. assess the complainant's need for protection and if needed determine what form the protection should take.
3. The Principal or his/her designee shall notify the parents or guardians of the alleged bully and the victim.
4. The Principal or his/her designee should caution all witnesses and the alleged bully that retaliation is also a violation of school policy.
5. The Principal or his/her designee should interview the alleged bully and fairly warn him/her that the conduct will, if appropriate, be reported to local law enforcement.
6. The Principal or his/her designee should interview witnesses.
7. The Principal or his/her designee should establish the following:
  - a. if the alleged bullying occurred;
  - b. when the alleged bullying occurred;
  - c. how frequently the alleged bullying occurred; and
  - d. specific facts about the type and severity of the alleged bullying;
  - e. if the bullying has affected the complainant;
  - f. what action will restore the complainant's sense of safety;
  - g. is the complainant in need of protection and if so what type;
  - h. what professional services are appropriate to recommend or require; and,
  - i. is notification to local law enforcement required.

C. Decision

1. Based upon a thorough investigation, the Principal or his/her designee shall make a decision that is appropriate for all parties concerning whether bullying occurred and if so what is the appropriate remedy including discipline of the perpetrator, appropriate educational and counseling remedies and protection of the complainant.
2. Depending on the circumstances of the case, if it is determined that bullying has occurred the Principal or his/her designee may discipline the offending party by ordering:
  - a. counseling;
  - b. schedule or class change;
  - c. stay away order;
  - d. an educational component;
  - e. a verbal warning;
  - f. a written warning;
  - g. suspension;
  - h. expulsion, or;
  - i. any other remedy deemed appropriate by the Principal or his/her designee.

3. The Principal or his/her designee shall notify local law enforcement if he/she believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the alleged perpetrator.
4. Any discipline should be viewed in the light of balancing accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
5. If the incident involves students from more than one school, the school first informed of the bullying or retaliation shall, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school or schools. If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21, the school shall inform local law enforcement when appropriate and consistent with this policy.
6. The Principal or his/her designee should confer with the complainant and his/her parents to explain the action being taken including what, if any, actions are being taken to create a sense of safety for the complainant, and implementation of any protection plans and to make counseling referrals if appropriate.
7. The Principal or his/her designee shall confer with the alleged perpetrator and his/her parents. The Principal or his/her designee shall explain the discipline if any, make any counseling referral, explain plans for creating a sense of safety for the complainant, explain any protection plans and reiterate any retaliation by alleged perpetrator or family/friends may subject the offender to further discipline up to and including expulsion.
8. The Principal or his/her designee should follow-up on this decision in order to ensure that his/her recommendation has been put into effect.

#### D. Bullying Prevention Plan – Educational and Professional Development Components

1. This bullying prevention plan shall be developed and updated biennially in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. There shall be notice of the consultation and a public comment period.
2. There will be ongoing professional development to build skills of all staff members, including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals to prevent, identify and respond to bullying.
3. Professional development shall include:
  - a. developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents;
  - b. developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
  - c. information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying;
  - d. research findings on bullying including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
  - e. information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
  - f. internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.
4. There shall be age appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade incorporated into the curriculum. This curriculum shall be evidence based.
  - a. Parents and guardians shall be informed about the bullying prevention curriculum of the school, specifically: how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home and support the school and school plan;
  - b. dynamics of bullying; and,
  - c. online safety and cyber-bullying.

5. Each school shall provide to students and parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms and in the languages, which are most prevalent among the students, parents, or guardians, annual written notice of the student related sections of the plan.
6. Each school shall provide annual written notice of the plan to all staff.
7. All staff shall be trained and provision for faculty and staff duties shall be included in the school employee handbook.
8. The Plan shall be posted on the website for each school.
9. The Principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan.