

**DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

SERIES 400: STAFF PERSONNEL

POLICY 430

ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICY (POLICY LAST REVIEWED: FEBRUARY 27, 2025)

Policy Adopted: June 5, 2002

Policy Promulgated: October 17, 2019

Policy Revised: May 17, 2010; December 2015; September 24, 2019

Policy Reviewed: February 27, 2025

Harassment and bullying of students and employees are against federal, state and local policy, and are not tolerated by the Diocesan Board of Education. The Board is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the Board has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment, as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment of students by other students, by school employees, and by volunteers who have direct contact with students will not be tolerated in the school.

This policy is in effect while students or employees are on property within the jurisdiction of each local board of education; while in school -owned or school -operated vehicles; while attending or engaged in school -sponsored activities; and while away from school grounds, if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school.

The Board prohibits harassment, bullying, hazing, or any other victimization of students, based on any of the following actual or perceived traits or characteristics: age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status. Harassment against employees based upon the employee's race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age or disability is also prohibited.

When looking at the totality of the circumstances, harassment and bullying means any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

"Electronic" means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. "Electronic" includes, but is not limited to, communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, electronic text messaging, or similar technologies.

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Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances:

- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, etc.;
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student; and/or
- Unreasonable interference with a student's performance.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or another student means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of the student's education or benefits;
- Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that student;
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

In situations between students and school officials, faculty, staff, or volunteers, bullying and harassment may also include the following behaviors:

- Requiring that a student submit to bullying or harassment by another student, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of the targeted student's education or participation in school programs or activities; and/or
- Requiring submission to, or rejection of, such conduct as a basis for decisions affecting the student.

In the case of a student who threatens physical harm to another student for any reason, the perpetrator will be removed from the situation immediately. Reentry may be contingent upon a report from a competent mental health professional that the perpetrator is not perceived to be a threat to self or others. It may also be contingent upon a program of continued counseling.

Any person who promptly, reasonably, and in good faith reports an incident of bullying or harassment under this policy to a school official, shall be immune from civil or criminal liability relating to such report and to the person's participation in any administrative, judicial, or other proceedings relating to the report. Individuals who knowingly file a false complaint may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Retaliation against any person because the person has filed a bullying or harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding is also prohibited. Individuals who knowingly file false harassment complaints and any person who gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall any person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. Any student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. Any school employee found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment. Any school volunteer found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, exclusion from school grounds.

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The school will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying or harassment. The investigator or designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by students or employees alleging bullying or harassment.

If, after an investigation, a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student shall be disciplined by appropriate measures which may include suspension or expulsion. If, after an investigation, a school employee is found to be in violation of this policy, the employee shall be disciplined by appropriate measures which may include termination. The policies of the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners will be followed in all instances involving teachers and administrators. If, after an investigation, a school volunteer is found to be in violation of this policy, the volunteer shall be subjected to appropriate measures, which may include exclusion from school grounds.

It also is the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the investigators and principals, to develop procedures regarding this policy. The superintendent or designee also is responsible for organizing training programs for students, school officials, faculty, staff, and volunteers who have direct contact with students. The training will include how to recognize harassment and what to do in case a student is harassed. It will also include proven effective harassment prevention strategies.

Each local board will annually publish this policy. The policy may be publicized by the following means:

- Inclusion in the student handbook,
- Inclusion in the employee handbook and volunteer handbook
- Inclusion in the registration materials
- Inclusion on the school website, and the Diocesan website

And a copy shall be made available to any person at the administrative office of each school or the Diocese.

It is the responsibility of all adults who supervise students directly (teachers, recess supervisors teacher assistants, coaching staff, counselors, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, bus associates, etc.) to protect students and their well-being. They must demonstrate that it is safe and worthwhile to report bullying behaviors by responding effectively when students report bullying, report what they hear and see to the principal, and follow-up to see if the situation has been addressed.

These staff members are empowered to intervene, take measures to ensure the student's safety temporarily, and record incidents.

***The Diocese of Davenport [Policies Relating to Sexuality and Personal Behavior](#) must also be followed if there is a complaint of Sexual Harassment by an employee or volunteer.**