

Wake County Public School System (WCPSS)

Bullying Prevention Efforts

What is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated and systematic harassment and attacks on someone perceived as being weaker, more submissive, and/or younger. These behaviors cross geographic, racial, and socioeconomic boundaries and may have long-term consequences on victims and bullies. (*Maine Project Against Bullying, 1998*)

What Does WCPSS Do To Prevent Bullying?

- *Stop Bullying! Interventions for Safe Schools* curriculum in all schools – each school has a notebook or it can be found at http://www2.wcpss.net/departments/cass/counseling/prof_resources/bully_prevention.htm
- *Get Real About Violence* curriculum in some elementary and middle schools
- *Second Step* curriculum in some elementary and middle schools
- Individual counseling available
- Group counseling on anger management and/or peer relationships available
- Peer mediation programs in some middle and high schools
- Character Education lessons and recognition
- Prevention information in *WCPSS Employee Handbook*
- Prevention information in *WCPSS Student/Parent Handbook*

What WCPSS Policy Addresses Bullying?

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HARRASSMENT

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It is the priority of the Wake County Board of Education to provide each and every student in the Wake County Public School System with a safe, orderly and caring learning environment. To this end, the Board specifically prohibits bullying and harassment under any circumstances. This policy is in addition to the Board's Sexual Harassment policy.

Harassment means any offensive verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive to interfere with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity. Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to, abusive jokes, insults, slurs, name-calling, threats, bullying or intimidation.

Harassment of students is prohibited at all levels: between students, between employees and students, or between nonemployees and students.

Any student who believes that he or she has been harassed or bullied in violation of this policy should report such behavior immediately to a teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school. A school employee who is notified of or otherwise becomes aware of conduct which may violate this policy shall report the matter to the principal.

All complaints of harassment shall be promptly and thoroughly investigated by the school principal and appropriate action shall be taken. The actions taken should be reasonably calculated to end any harassment or bullying, eliminate a hostile environment if one has been created, and prevent harassment from occurring again. *Violations shall be deemed to be serious disciplinary infractions* and may include long-term suspension or expulsion.

The Board specifically prohibits retaliation against any individual who makes a complaint or reports an incident of harassment or bullying or who participates in an investigation or grievance proceeding initiated under this policy. Such retaliation is against the law and is prohibited by this policy.

If at any time during the investigation the principal receives information alleging the harassment or bullying was based on sex or gender, the school principal shall notify the Title IX Coordinator and any other appropriate person as required by law and Board policy 3033/2333/6415.

Nothing in this policy precludes the school system from taking disciplinary action against a student where the evidence does not establish harassment but the conduct otherwise fails to satisfy the school system's high expectations for appropriate conduct.

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INAPPROPRIATE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

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Since an educated citizenry is essential to good government and can be attained only in an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning, the board requires the maintenance of good order in the schools.

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Intimidation/Disrespect - Verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct that interferes with an individual's learning environment is prohibited. Intimidation, bullying, repeated teasing or taunting, or the use of offensive or degrading language including, but not limited to, remarks that demeans a person's race, religion, sex, national origin, disability, intellectual ability or physical attributes are specifically prohibited.

What Can Schools Do?

- Implement bully prevention curriculum.
- Promote adult awareness and involvement with regard to bully/victim problems.
- Provide appropriate supervision during recess and lunch hour by adults.
- Apply consistent and immediate consequences for aggressive behavior.
- Use generous praise for pro-social and helpful behavior by students.
- Set specific class rules against bullying.
- Address bullying at class meetings.
- Conduct serious individual talks with bullies and with victims.
- Conduct serious talks with parents of bullies and victims.
- Make bullying a topic of a school parent-teacher (home and school) organization meeting.

What Can Parents Do?

- Contact a school administrator, counselor, social worker or psychologist for help.
- Provide positive feedback for children demonstrating appropriate behavior.
- Use alternatives to physical punishment to stop bullying behavior, such as the removal of privileges.
- Stop bullying behavior as it is happening and begin working on appropriate social skills early.