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Policy 904: Bullying Policy & Prevention - Revised 7/4/2026

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important goals.

Students, parents, guardians and all staff participate in the revisions and implementation of policy that promotes positive school culture that takes a clear stand against bullying in all its forms. This policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians. Focus groups were conducted with parents by a Board committee and Education Committee, which includes administration, Board members, teachers, parents, and community members.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of Spectrum School. This policy does not infringe upon and is consistent with free exercise of religion.

This policy is consistent with the policies of the Spectrum School Board.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the School if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school.

This paragraph (item #4) applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require staff members to monitor any non-school related activity, function, or program.

Definitions from Section 27-23.7 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7)
Bullying includes cyber-bullying and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student

or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Cyber-bullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation 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 system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the 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 effects enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying Prevention

In today's world, helping children grow socially in developmentally appropriate ways is challenging for both parents and teachers. Traditional family support systems have declined and environmental stresses have increased. Spectrum Progressive School teachers and administrators are committed to working with parents to facilitate their children's social and academic growth. Frequent communication between teachers and parents is essential to a team approach in this most important aspect of a child's overall development. The following statements outline Spectrum's philosophy and methods for fostering social skills. We expect parents to join us in this vital effort.

- Helping students to learn to be responsible for their own actions is a major goal of Spectrum Progressive School's educational philosophy. We believe that this is accomplished when children:
- Have the opportunity, in a non-threatening community, to experience the natural consequences of their own actions.
- Begin to understand the viewpoint of others.
- Are close to adults who share mutual respect.
- Construct for themselves appropriate rules of social behavior.

To accomplish these goals, students and teachers discuss the idea that at Spectrum Progressive School each person shows respect for oneself and for another person's rights, feelings, needs and property. Since physically aggressive acts and rude or abusive language do not show respect, these actions cannot be tolerated. A few simple rules are made for each classroom based upon these concepts. The rules are then enforced by pointing out to individuals and groups of students the occurrences of proper behavior, as outlined in their list of rules.

When inappropriate behavior occurs, children are reminded of the rules. Techniques for solving conflicts such as talking together, looking for alternatives, and compromising are discussed with children in individual and group situations. When necessary, an appropriate sanction is applied. These sanctions may include:

- Exclusion from the group for a limited time until the child expresses readiness to comply with the rules.
- Pointing out the consequences of the child's act.
- Helping the child see how the act affected the situation and the group.
- Devising with the child alternative actions which would be more acceptable next time.
- Depriving the child of the time that was misused.
- Helping the child make restitution for the act.

Teachers also share with parents any significant difficulties and successes children have in their growth in self-discipline and the understanding of others' viewpoints. Parents may be asked to be involved in a conference with the child and the teacher. Through such conferences, the children know that we are all concerned and can gain new information they can use to further construct a system of values that respects both themselves and others.

When appropriate behavior is not achieved in a reasonable length of time, the parents will be asked to come to a meeting with the teachers and the Director to create a plan to help the child. A plan in the form of a contract may include such strategies as daily parent and teacher communication, a check-list monitoring system, and/or professional counseling. Any services outside of Spectrum will be the financial responsibility of the parents.

If, after implementation of the special plan and an agreed upon amount of time, it does not appear that the child is going to achieve appropriate behavior at Spectrum Progressive School, the parents will be asked to withdraw the child from the school and seek another placement which may be more appropriate for the child's particular needs.

Procedures for Bullying Complaint

1. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the School Administrator, Safety Officer or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the school named officials or any staff member. The school named officials, Marci Hallgren (m.hallgren@spectrumschool.org) and Jacque Lind (j.lind@spectrumschool.org), can be contacted by email or by phone at 815-877-1600. The school named officials and all staff members are available for help with a student engaging in bullying behavior or to make a report about bullying. Anonymous reports are also accepted; however, this shall not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

2. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the School Administrator, Safety Officer, or designee shall promptly inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of every student involved in an alleged incident of bullying within 24 hours of notification and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

3. The School Administrator, Safety Officer, or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying, by, among other things:
    - Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of a bullying incident was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported bullying incident.
    - Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
    - Notifying the School Administrator, Safety Office, or designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
    - Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The School Administrator, Safety Officer, or designee shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction and shall require that the school provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the school and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

4. The School Administrator, Safety Officer, or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, that may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

5. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. Any person's act of reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge with regard to employees, or suspension or expulsion with regard to students.

6. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, a person who is found to have falsely accused another of bullying, as a means of retaliation, as a means of bullying, or provided false information will be treated as either: (a) *bullying*, (b) student discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion, or (c) both (a) and (b) for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

7.This policy is posted on the school's website and in the student handbook, and, where applicable, posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy must be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel (including new employees when hired), and must also be provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty.

8. The Board monitors this policy every two years by conducting a review and re-evaluation of this policy to make any necessary and appropriate revisions. The School Administrator or designee shall assist the Board with its re-evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes

and effectiveness. Updates to this policy will reflect any necessary and appropriate revisions. This process shall include, without limitation:

- The frequency of victimization;
- Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
- Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
- The types of bullying utilized; and
- Bystander intervention or participation.

The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that the school already collects for other purposes. Acceptable documentation to satisfy the re-evaluated policy submission includes one of the following:

- An updated version of the policy with the amendment/modification date included in the reference portion of the policy;
- If no revisions are deemed necessary, a copy of board minutes indicating that the policy was re-evaluated and no changes were deemed to be necessary, or a signed statement from the board; or
- A signed statement from the Board President indicating that the Board re-evaluated the policy and no changes to it were necessary.

The information developed as a result of the policy re- evaluation will be posted on the school's website and must be provided to school administrators, Board members, school personnel, parents/guardians, and students. Reviews and re-evaluations in years they are due must be submitted to ISBE by September 30.

9. All individual instances of bullying, as well as all threats, suggestions, or instances of self-harm determined to be the result of bullying, will be reported to the parents or legal guardians of those involved within a 24 hour period. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the School Administrator or designee shall promptly inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of every student involved in an alleged incident of bullying within 24 hours of notification and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

The school will maintain a log of all behavior incidents, including bullying allegations, and conduct check ins with parents and students at least twice a year regarding school culture and behavior concerns.

Starting with the 2024-25 school year, the Public Act- Racism-Free School Law (Public Act 103-0472) requires that, all Illinois school districts; charter schools; and nonpublic, nonsectarian elementary or secondary schools collect, maintain, and submit to ISBE non-identifiable data pertaining to incidents of bullying, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

Restorative Practices

The school will promptly inform parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of restorative practices facilitated by teachers and administration.

“Restorative practices" means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that

- (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community,
- (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety,
- (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate,
- (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society,
- (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and
- (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.
- (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

  Restorative practices will be utilized to determine further action, including the development of a safety plan if deemed necessary, check in-check out with a lead teacher, and community circles if the behavior is impacting classroom culture.

  Jacque Lind or Marci Hallgren 815-877-1600