

POLICY MANUAL	Ipswich Public Schools FILE CODE: JICFB
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BULLYING

Bullying and harassment are major distractions from learning. The grades of victims can suffer. Fear can lead to chronic absenteeism, truancy, or even dropping out of school. Bystanders feel both guilty and helpless for not standing up to the bully.

As a rule bullying behavior starts in elementary school and peaks in the middle school years. However, it attracts more attention from adults when it appears in high school. There the students are older and physically larger and the behavior is recognized as being less tolerable and more inappropriate. Also, sexual harassment is, in fact, often a form of bullying.

Most bullying by students starts out as verbal teasing and put-downs and may become progressively worse and assume physical dimensions.

Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Ipswich Public Schools will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying.

Bullying is defined as the act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through verbal, physical, mental, or written interactions, including through electronic means via the internet or cell phone networks. Bullying can take many forms and occur in virtually any setting. It can create unnecessary and unwarranted anxiety that will affect attending school, walking in corridors, eating in cafeterias, playing in the school yard or recreation areas, participating in or attending special and extracurricular activities, or riding on the bus to and from school each day.

Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about harassment, including bullying or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment, including a bullying complaint, will not be tolerated. An individual who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion for students and termination of employees.

Examples of bullying include, but are not exclusive to:

1. Intimidation, either physical or psychological;
2. Threats of any kind, stated or implied;
3. Assaults on students, including those that are verbal, physical, psychological and emotional; and/or
4. Attacks on student property.

The School Committee expects administrators and supervisors to make clear to students and staff that bullying in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus or school-sanctioned transportation, or at school-sponsored functions will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion for students, and termination for employees.

The District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment, including bullying. The Principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment, including bullying. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent consistent with a fair and full investigation and to the extent practicable under the circumstance.

Legal Ref.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

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