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DEERFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The School Board is committed to providing all pupils a safe and secure school environment. Conduct constituting bullying or cyberbullying will not be tolerated, and is prohibited by this policy in accordance with RSA 193-F. This policy applies to, and is intended to protect all pupils. Our model for addressing bullying shall include:

- Primary prevention which will focus on protection and prevention of bullying.
- Secondary prevention strategies which will focus on targeting intervention efforts to those students who have been identified as at-risk for being a bully or victim.
- Tertiary prevention which will target students with severe needs, including those who are perpetual bullies or victims, and those that have threatened violence to peers and/or teachers and staff.

This policy also applies to activities that take place off-campus if the activities cause emotional distress to an individual that substantially disrupts or interferes with the operation of a school or an individual student's ability to receive an education.

The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

Bullying Defined

“Bullying” is defined as a single significant incident or a pattern of incidents involving a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another pupil which:

- (1) Physically harms a pupil or damages the pupil's property;
- (2) Causes emotional distress to a pupil;
- (3) Interferes with a pupil's educational opportunities;
- (4) Creates a hostile educational environment; or
- (5) Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

“Bullying” shall include actions motivated by an imbalance of power based on a pupil's actual or perceived personal characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs, or motivated by the pupil's association with another person and based on the other person's characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs. “Cyberbullying” means any conduct defined as “bullying” in this policy that is undertaken through the use of electronic devices which include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones, computers, pagers, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, and websites.

The District reserves the right to address bullying and/or cyberbullying, and impose discipline for bullying and/or cyberbullying that:

- occurs on, or is delivered to, school property or a school-sponsored activity or event on

- or off school property; or
- occurs off of school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity or event, if the conduct interferes with a pupil's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operations of the school or school-sponsored activity or event.

Reporting Procedure

1. Any student who believes they have been a victim of bullying may report the alleged act to the building Principal. If a student is more comfortable reporting the alleged act to a person other than the building Principal, the student may contact any school district employee.
2. Students or parents who have witnessed or who have reliable information that a pupil has been subjected to bullying or cyberbullying should report the same to the Principal. If the student or parent is more comfortable reporting the alleged act to a person other than the Principal, the student or parent may tell any school district employee.
3. Any school employee, or employee of a company under contract with the school or school district who has significant contact with students, who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student has been subjected to bullying shall report the incident to the student's Principal or the Principal's designee. The report made by a school employee or employee of a company under contract with the district who witnesses, receives a report of, or has knowledge or belief that bullying or cyberbullying may have occurred shall inform the Principal as soon as possible, but no later than the end of that school day.
4. Although a report may be done anonymously, disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report. Verification of the anonymous report shall be necessary in order for any disciplinary action to be taken.
5. The Principal or the Principal's designee shall notify by phone the parent or legal guardian of all pupils involved within 48 hours that a bullying incident has been reported. All notifications shall be consistent with the student privacy rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).
6. The Superintendent may, within the 48 hour time period, grant the Principal a written waiver from the notification requirement if the Superintendent deems such waiver to be in the best interest of the child.

Investigation and Remedial Action

1. The Principal or the Principal's designee shall initiate an investigation within 5 school days of the reported incident. The Principal and/or his/her designee shall complete the investigation within 10 school days of receiving the initial report.
2. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee may grant in writing an extension of the time period for the completion of the investigation by up to an additional 7 school days. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee shall notify in writing all parties involved of the granting of an extension.
3. Within 2 school days of completing an investigation, the Principal will notify the students involved in person of the findings and the result of the investigation.

4. Within 2 days of the completion of the investigation, the Principal will notify the parents of the students involved via telephone of the results of the investigation. The Principal will also send a letter to the parents within 24 hours after the phone call, again notifying them of the result of the investigation. A meeting will be scheduled to further explain the findings and reasons for the actions at the parent's request.
5. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the district will not disclose educational records of students, including any record of discipline and/or remedial action.
6. The Principal and/or his/her designee is responsible for determining the scope of the investigation, which may include documented interviews with the alleged victim, alleged bully, and any witnesses. All interviews shall be conducted privately, separately and shall be confidential. Each individual will be interviewed separately and at no time will the alleged victim and bully be interviewed together during the investigation.
7. If the alleged bullying was in whole or in part cyberbullying, the Principal may ask students and/or parents to provide the district with printed copies of emails, text messages, website pages, or other relevant electronic communications.
8. The Principal will take such disciplinary action deemed necessary and appropriate as defined in the school's discipline code for an actual incident of bullying or cyberbullying, or a false accusation. This includes but is not limited to detention, in-house suspension, out-of-school suspension or referral to the Superintendent to consider long-term suspension or expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement in order to end bullying and prevent retaliation.
9. The procedures under RSA 193:13, Ed 317 and the school district discipline policies establish the due process and appeal rights for students disciplined for acts of bullying.
10. Besides initiating disciplinary action, the Principal may also take other remedial action deemed necessary and appropriate to end bullying and cyberbullying and prevent retaliation including but not limited to requiring participation in peer mentoring, life skills groups; and/or reassigning classes, lunch periods or transportation.
11. The Principal or Principal's designee shall send a written report of all substantiated incidents to the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee.

Reprisal or Retaliation

The district shall discipline and take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, or other employee, including employees of a company under contract with the district, who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying or cyberbullying, or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying or cyberbullying. All allegations shall be investigated and any substantiated cases will be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including suspension, expulsion, termination of employment, and/or exclusion from school grounds.

Distribution and Notice of The Policy

Copies of this policy shall be given to all employees, students and parents annually by publishing it in the student handbook, which can be accessed electronically on the school's website. Whenever new school district employees or students begin during the school year, they shall review the handbook before

commencing work or school attendance. Paper copies of the handbook are available from the school's main office.

The bullying policy will be included in the beginning of the year packet and will require parent/student signatures, returned to the school, and kept on file in the office. The bullying policy will be added to the "new student enrollment" packet.

Students will participate in an annual education program at the beginning of the school year which sets out expectations for student behavior and emphasizes an understanding of harassment, intimidation, and bullying and cyberbullying of students, and the district's prohibition of such conduct. Students shall also be informed during this annual education program of the consequences of engaging in bullying and cyberbullying. This annual education program will include comprehensive age-appropriate instruction of the "Reporting Procedure" identified in this policy.

Immunity

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A school administrative unit employee, school employee, regular school volunteer, pupil, parent, legal guardian, or employee of a company under contract to a school, school district, school administrative unit, shall be immune from civil liability for good faith conduct arising from or pertaining to the reporting, investigation, findings, recommended response, or implementation of a recommended response under this policy.

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