

# **East Providence School District**

**V.A.19**

## **Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy**

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### **I. Purpose**

The East Providence School Department in compliance with the Statewide Bullying policy promulgated pursuant to 16-21-33 and 16-21-34 of the RIGL recognizes that the bullying of a student creates a climate of fear and disrespect that can seriously impair the student's health and negatively affect learning. Bullying undermines the safe learning environment that students need to achieve their full potential. The purpose of this Policy and the supporting Administrative Procedure ensures a consistent and unified statewide approach to the prohibition of bullying at school.

The East Providence School Department is committed to enforcing a zero tolerance attitude towards bullying while creating and sustaining a safe, caring, and respectful learning environment for all students and staff. Everyone will be treated equally with civility and respect in an inclusive environment, unhampered by artificial barriers or prejudices or preferences, such as race, religion, ethnicity, sex, or involuntary personal attributes such as disability, sexual orientation, or socio/economic status. The School Committee and Administration expects that in collaboration with teachers, families and community members, each school will implement the anti-bullying policy and procedures as approved and adopted by the School Committee.

### **II. Bullying Policy Administrative Procedures**

The bullying of a student creates a climate of fear and disrespect that can seriously impair the student's health and negatively affect potential. The policy and this administrative procedure will ensure a consistent approach to the prohibition of bullying at school, and other designated areas outlined in this procedure. School Administrators {Directors, Principals, Vice Principals, Deans} shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the policy and administrative procedure set forth within.

### **III. Definitions**

1. **Bullying** is defined as the engagement of behavior by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, intentional or not, directed at a student that:
  - a. Infringes on the rights of the student to participate in school activities.
  - b. Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of school.
  - c. Exert power or control over another person resulting in physical harm or emotional distress of the victim, social embarrassment, discrimination or humiliation, and/or the damage of their property.
  - d. Placement of the victim in reasonable fear of such harm, distress, embarrassment, discrimination, humiliation or damage.

The expression, physical act or gesture may include, but is not limited to, an incident or incidents that may be reasonably perceived as being motivated by characteristics such as: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and

expression or mental, physical or sensory disability, intellectual ability or by any other distinguishing characteristic.

**Bullying most often occurs as repeated behavior and often is not a single incident between the bullying/cyber-bullying offender(s) and the bullying victim(s).**

2. **Cyber-bullying** is, but not limited to, the use of modern communication technologies and online forums (instant messaging, text messaging, blogs, email, chat rooms and social networks, creation of a web page, transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data) to embarrass, discriminate, humiliate, knowing impersonation of another person as the author or posted content, threaten or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them. Cyber-bullying may also include intelligence of any nature transmitted by wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, but not limited to electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. The distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of materials on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the creation, impersonation, or distribution results in any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (a) to (e) of the definition of bullying.
3. **Retaliation:** Any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student or staff member who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation, or witnesses bullying.

#### **IV. Prohibited Conduct**

1. **At School** - in the context of this Administrative Procedure the phrase "at school" includes the following places and situations:
  - Anywhere on school premises
  - Immediately adjacent to school property
  - On any school transportation vehicle
  - At any official school bus stop
  - While students are walking to and from school
  - At any school-sponsored activity or event, whether or not held on school premises
  - On any city owned property
  - Using property or equipment provided by the school
  - Acts which create a material and substantial disruption of the education process or the orderly operation of the school
2. **Electronic Media:** Anyone using electronic media (cell phones, internet, etc...) in the school setting to bully, harass or tease another student will be subject to the sanctions outlined in this administrative procedure. This may also include using electronic media outside of school hours or outside of the school setting **in the event that the bullying disrupts the school learning environment.**

#### **V. School Climate**

Bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation against any person associated with a report of bullying or the investigation thereof is prohibited in all schools that are approved for the purpose of the compulsory attendance statute (RIGL 16-19-1 and 16-19-2). School staff shall take all reasonable measures to prevent bullying at school. Abusive or humiliating language or

demeanor will not be accepted. Additionally, students and their families are expected to exhibit courteous behavior to all members of the learning community in school and at any school sponsored events.

## **VI. Dissemination of Information**

School administration shall ensure that students, staff, volunteers and parents/guardians are provided information regarding the policy/administrative procedure and shall be

- distributed annually to students, staff, volunteers, outside agencies doing business with EPSD, such as but not limited to After school programs, transportation), and parent/legal guardians
- included in student code of conduct, disciplinary policy and/or student handbook
- prominently posted on the homepage of the East Providence School Department website

## **VII. Reporting**

1. **Students:** Any student who believes they have been the target of bullying or cyberbullying, or who witnesses such conduct, is encouraged to report it immediately to a teacher, counselor or school administrator.
2. **Parents/Guardians:** Parents or guardians who are aware of or suspect bullying or cyberbullying are encouraged to report the incident to the school principal.
3. **Staff:** School staff members are required to report any instances of bullying or cyberbullying to the appropriate school administrator immediately.
4. **Anonymous Reporting:** The district provides a mechanism for anonymous reporting of bullying through a dedicated online form and drop boxes located in each school.

## **VIII. Investigation Procedures**

1. All reports of bullying or cyberbullying will be promptly investigated by the school principal or a designated administrator.
2. The investigation will include interviews with the complainant, the accused, any witnesses, as well as, a review of relevant documentation or electronic evidence.
3. Parents or guardians of all parties involved will be notified of the investigation and its findings.
4. The investigation will be completed within five school days of the initial report.

## **IX. Consequences and Remedial Actions**

1. Students who engage in bullying or cyberbullying may face disciplinary actions, including but not limited to:
  - Verbal or written reprimands;

- Loss of privileges, including bus;
  - Detention or suspension;
  - Referral to a counseling agency;
  - Conflict resolution session;
  - Change of school placement, in severe cases;
2. The district will provide support services to victims of bullying, such as counseling and academic accommodations.
  3. Students found to have made false reports of bullying will be subject to disciplinary action.
  4. When bullying behavior involves conduct that violated the criminal law, the police department shall be notified immediately by the victim's family or school administration.

## **X. Prevention and Education**

1. The district will implement evidence-based programs to educate students and staff about bullying prevention, including the identification and reporting of bullying behaviors.
2. Anti-bullying education will be incorporated into the district's curriculum and staff professional development.
3. The district will promote a culture of respect through school-wide initiatives, including peer mentorship programs and conflict resolution training.

## **XI. Reports from School Administration to District Administration:**

The school administration will provide the Superintendent with a semi-annual report on incidents of bullying which have taken place in the school under their respective supervision by January, and June 1<sup>st</sup> respectively.

## **XII. Confidentiality**

The district will maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved in bullying reports and investigations to the extent possible, consistent with the district's obligation to investigate and address the matter.

## **XIII. Policy Dissemination**

1. This policy will be included in student handbooks, posted on the district's website, and made available to all students, parents, and staff members.
2. Annual training will be provided to staff to ensure they understand their responsibilities under this policy.

## **XIV. Legal References**

1. Rhode Island General Laws §16-21-33 and §16-21-34 (Safe School Act).

2. Federal laws, including Title IX and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
3. Rhode Island Department of Education Statewide Bullying Policy.

#### **XV. Review and Revision**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the East Providence School Committee and updated as needed to reflect changes in state or federal laws, RIDE guidelines or district priorities.

#### **XVI. Adoption**

This policy was adopted by the East Providence School Committee.

Revised Policy Adopted: 5/18/15

Revised Policy: 8/9/22

Revised Policy: 4/8/25

### BULLYING/CYBER BULLYING INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the following questions about the incident:

- List the name(s) of the alleged bully, and/or cyber-bully. If name is not known, provide any other identifiable information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Relationship between you and the alleged bully, and/or cyber bully:

\_\_\_\_\_

- Describe the incident:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- When and where did it happen?

\_\_\_\_\_

- Were there any witnesses? { } yes { } no If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_

- Other information, including previous incidents or threats:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student or parent declines to complete this form: Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that all statements made in the complaint are true and complete. Any intentional false statement of fact will subject me to appropriate discipline. I authorize school officials to disclose the Information I provide only as necessary in pursuing the investigation.

Signatures:

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School Official: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**This document shall remain confidential.**

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING  
INVESTIGATION AND DETERMINATION REPORT

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF SCHOOL OFFICIAL CONDUCTING FOLLOW UP: \_\_\_\_\_

LIST NAMES OF ALLEGED PERPETRATOR(S): \_\_\_\_\_

LIST NAMES OF WITNESSES: \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENT WITNESSES' ACCOUNT OF INCIDENT: Please use the back of this form or additional paper if necessary and write legibly).

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PROPERTY DAMAGE: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_\_\_

POLICE NOTIFICATION: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN:

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OUTSIDE AGENCY/REFERRAL NEEDED: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ LIST AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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School Official Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

East Providence School Department  
Bullying Investigation Flow Chart

