

**Abington Heights High School**  
**Bullying Protocol**  
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Rationale

The House Judiciary Committee amended and approved SB71. The bill requires each school to adopt a bullying policy by June 30, 2007. Each bullying policy must prescribe disciplinary consequence for bullying and may include programs for intervention, prevention, and education. School bullying policies must be published on school district Web sites and distributed with each school's student code of conduct. SB71 was amended to require districts to post a copy of the policy in all classrooms and to review the policy with students at least twice during the school year.

Philosophy

The Abington Heights School District is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for all students. Therefore, we prohibit bullying, intimidation, and harassment and will not tolerate it in any form.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student to bully, intimidate, or harass any other student. We will investigate all informal and formal verbal and written complaints of bullying and/or intimidation. Any student who is found to have bullied, intimidated, and/or harassed another student will be disciplined.

Definition

**A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students (Olweus 1986 and 1991).** It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another.

**Direct bullying** - A negative action when somebody hits, pushes, kicks, pinches, or restrains another by physical contact. Direct bullying can also be carried out by words (verbally), by threatening, taunting, teasing, and calling names.

**Indirect bullying** - Making faces or dirty gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group, spreading rumors, or refusing to comply with another person's wishes.

**Cyber-bullying** - Using electronic device mediums such as but not limited to computers, cell phones and pagers to bully (bullying defined above) others through methods such as posting comments or pictures on blogs or websites, text messaging, instant messaging and email. This cyber-bullying behavior is not to be confused with terroristic threats, which can be communicated through similar methods.

Bullying/Intimidating/Harassing behaviors can include but are not limited to:

- Taunting
- Name calling
- Rumor spreading
- Making up stories to get other students in trouble
- Telling other students not to be friends with a target student
- Kicking, tripping, or pushing another student
- Teaching other students and making remarks about their culture, religion, ethnicity, weight, physical appearance, disabilities, or medical conditions
- Intimidating others
- Taking other students' possessions or demanding money from them
- Damaging other students' property
- Hiding other students' books, bags, or other property
- Picking on other students, even when they're upset
- Making threats to other students
- Manipulating others, getting them to do things that they may not want to do
- Blogging or posting remarks on MySpace or other online bulletin board

### Response and reporting procedures

School personnel must report and/or investigate all incidents of bullying/intimidation/harassment and take appropriate action, whether they personally observe incidents or are made aware of them by some other means. Reporting, investigation, and action must occur even if the victim does not file a formal complaint, and even if the victim does not express any overt disapproval of the bullying/intimidating/harassing act.

Staff members will intervene immediately or in a timely fashion to address the behavior. The intervention will consist of identifying the inappropriate behavior, debriefing the student(s) about his/her role, and may include a referral to the administration. Repeated or severe incidents of bullying/intimidation/harassment require a mandatory administrative referral. Information concerning any complaints of bullying/ intimidation/harassment shall be treated confidentially.

### Suggested teacher interventions

- Stop the behavior
- Debrief the rules
- Conference with the student
- Initiate a counselor referral
- Initiate an administrative referral

### Procedures after an administrative referral

1. An immediate investigation will be completed, which may include verbal and written statements from witnesses. All facets of the investigation will be documented and all information will be kept confidential
2. All parties and their parents will be notified of the referral and that
  - a. Bullying, intimidation, and/or harassment are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in school
  - b. Consequences will occur for inappropriate behavior
  - c. Retaliation against victims or witnesses will not be tolerated.
3. A referral will be made to the Student Assistance Program (SAP) team for both parties
4. Mediation will occur
  - a. Each student will sign an agreement with the administration to cease all bullying/intimidating/harassing behaviors
  - b. The agreement will remain in the student's disciplinary file
5. Consequences will be assigned which may include the following:
  - a. In-School Suspension
  - b. Out of School Suspension
  - c. Parent/student/administrator conference
  - d. Referral to School Resource Officer
  - e. Loss of privilege to participate in extra-curricular activities for a specific period of time
  - f. Community service
  - g. Other consequences deemed appropriate by school or district
  - h. Notification of Superintendent of Schools.
6. Continued bullying/intimidation/harassment or violations of signed agreements will be turned over to the South Abington Police Department for investigation and possible legal charges.