

BULLYING

The Board believes that promoting ethical and responsible behavior is an essential part of the school unit's educational purpose and such promotion is important if a student is to leave school as a "responsible and involved citizen" as described in the Guiding Principles of Maine's system of Learning Results. Bullying interferes with the accomplishment of this goal and, as it is defined in this policy, is not acceptable conduct in Raymond schools and is prohibited.

It is not the Board's intent to prohibit students from expressing their ideas, including ideas that may offend the sensibilities of others, or from engaging in civil debate. However, the Board does not condone conduct that interferes with students' opportunity to learn, the educational mission of the Raymond schools or the operation of the schools.

Bullying Defined

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is the repeated intimidation of others by the real or threatened infliction of physical, verbal, written, electronically transmitted, or emotional abuse, or through attacks on the property of another. It includes behavior that substantially disrupts the instructional program or the orderly operations of the school or is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, hostile educational environment.

Application of Policy

This policy applies to bullying that takes place at school or on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity or event, or while students are being transported to or from school or school-sponsored activities or events. It also applies to bullying that occurs at any other time or place that substantially disrupts the instructional program, operations of the school or welfare of students.

Examples of conduct that may constitute bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical contact or injury to another person or his/her property;
2. Threats of harm to a student, to his/her possessions or to other individuals, whether transmitted verbally, in writing or through cyberspace;
3. Blackmail, extortion, demands for protection money, or involuntary loans or donations;
4. Non-verbal threats and/or intimidations such as use of aggressive or menacing gestures;
5. Stalking;
6. Blocking access to school property or facilities;
7. Stealing or hiding books, backpacks or other possessions;
8. Repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking, putdowns or demeaning humor relating to a student's race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics, whether or not the student actually possesses them, that could reasonably be expected to result in disruption of the instructional program or operations of the schools, or that results in a hostile educational environment for the student.
9. Verbal or non-verbal interactions which are designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation, such as: lying and spreading rumors about someone, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate someone, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance

For the purpose of this policy, bullying does not mean teasing, put-downs, "talking trash," trading of insults or similar interactions among friends, nor does it include expression of ideas or beliefs so long as such expression is not lewd, profane or does not interfere with students' opportunity to learn, the instructional program or the operations of the schools. This does not preclude teachers or school

administrators from setting and enforcing rules for civility, courtesy, and/or responsible behavior in the classroom and the school environment, however.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent/designee will be responsible for developing and implementing procedures for:

1. Review of reports and investigation of bullying incidents;
2. Intervention with and/or discipline of students who engage in bullying;
3. Support for students who are victims of bullying;
4. Training staff and students in bullying prevention; and
5. Periodic evaluation of bullying prevention, intervention and training efforts in schools and reporting to the Board upon request.

Reporting

Students who have been bullied or who observe incidents of bullying are encouraged to report this behavior to a staff member or school administrator. Staff should report bullying to the building principal.

Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an incident of bullying are prohibited. Any student who is determined to have falsely accused another of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Responding to Bullying

In determining whether particular conduct constitutes bullying and/or the appropriate response to students who engage in bullying behavior, school administrators should consider the ages and maturity of the students involved, the type of behaviors, the frequency and/or pattern of behaviors, the context in which the incident occurred, and other relevant circumstances. Consequences may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or reports to law enforcement officials, as outlined in the student Code of Conduct.

Legal references: 20-A M.R.S.A. §1001(15)(H)
P.L. 2005, ch. 307 §4-5

Cross references: AC Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity
ACAA Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
ACAD Hazing
ADF School District Commitment to Learning Results
JI Student Rights and Responsibilities
JICC Student Conduct on Buses
JICIA Weapons, Violence and School Safety
JK Student Discipline
JKD Suspension of Students
JKE Expulsion of Students
Student Code of Conduct

Adopted: August 23, 2006