

Florida Atlantic University Schools

Alexander D. Henderson University School
Florida Atlantic University High School

Policy Against Bullying and Harassment



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Florida Atlantic University Schools Policy Against Bullying and Harassment

a. Statement prohibiting bullying and harassment:

It is the policy of the School District of Florida Atlantic University Lab Schools that all of its students and school employees have an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The district will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

b. Definition of bullying and a definition of harassment:

Bullying means systematically (carried out with a system, method or plan) and chronically (continuing for a long period of time) inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to:

1. Teasing
2. Social Exclusion
3. Threat
4. Intimidation
5. Stalking
6. Cyber-stalking
7. Cyber-bullying
8. Physical violence
9. Theft
10. Sexual, religious, gender, ethnic or racial harassment
11. Harassment of any kind involving sexual orientation, socio-economic status or family background
12. Public humiliation
13. Destruction of property
14. Rumor or spreading of falsehoods

Harassment means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

1. Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school

Bullying and harassment also encompasses:

1. Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
2. Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
 - a. Incitement or coercion
 - b. Accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system
 - c. Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment

Cyber-stalking as defined in s. 784.048(1)(d), F.S., means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

Cyber-bullying is defined as the willful and repeated harassment and intimidation of another person or persons through the use of digital technologies, including but not limited to email, blogs, social websites (Facebook, MySpace, etc.), chat rooms, instant messaging, text messaging, digital pictures or images, cellular telephone communications and defamatory websites, regardless of whether such acts are committed on or off school property and with or without school resources. For off-campus conduct, the school will be responsive in cases where the off-campus conduct causes, or threatens to cause, a substantial disruption at school or interference with the rights of students to be safe and secure.

c. Description of the type of behavior expected from each student and school employee of a public K-12 educational institution:

The School District of Florida Atlantic University Lab Schools expects students to conduct themselves as appropriate for their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities, with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

The school district upholds that bullying or harassment of any student or school employee is prohibited:

1. During any education program or activity conducted by a public K-12 educational institution;
2. During any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity;
3. On a school bus of a public K-12 educational institution; or
4. Through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of a public K-12 education institution.

The school district believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents/legal guardians, staff, and community members producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for district and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate bullying or harassment.

All administrators, faculty and staff, in collaboration with parents, students and community members, will incorporate systemic methods for student and staff recognition through positive reinforcement for good conduct, conforming to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior, respecting the person, property and rights of others, obeying constituted authority, responding to those who hold that authority, self-discipline, good citizenship and academic success, as seen in the required school plan to address positive school culture and behavior.

Students are encouraged to support other students who walk away from acts of bullying and harassment when they see them, constructively attempt to stop them, and report such acts to the School Principal/director or his/her designee.

Students are required to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior: respect the person, property and rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to the educational, support and administrative staff.

d. Consequences for a student or employee of a public K-12 educational institution who commits an act of bullying or harassment:

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action.

1. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.
2. School employees found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with district policies, procedures and agreements. Additionally, egregious acts of harassment by certified educators may result in a sanction against an educator's state-issued certificate. (See State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.006, FAC., *The Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida*.)
3. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

- e. **Consequences** for a student or employee of a public K-12 educational institution who is found to have **wrongfully and intentionally accused** another of an act of bullying or harassment:
1. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.
 2. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with district policies, procedures and agreements.
 3. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.
- f. **A procedure for reporting an act** of bullying or harassment, including provisions that permit a person to anonymously report such an act.

At each school the principal/director or the principal/director's designee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal/director or the principal/director's designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy, anonymously or in-person, to the principal/director or principal/director's designee.

1. The principal/director of each school in the district shall establish and prominently publicize to students, staff, volunteers and parents/legal guardians how a report of bullying or harassment may be filed, either in-person or anonymously, and how this report will be acted upon.
2. The victim of bullying or harassment, anyone who witnessed the bullying or harassment, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying or harassment has taken place, may file a report of bullying or harassment.
3. A school employee, school volunteer, student, parent/legal guardian or other persons who promptly report in good faith an act of bullying or harassment to the appropriate school official, and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set forth in the district policy, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to remedy the reported incident. Submission of a good-faith complaint or report of bullying or harassment will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments.
4. Any written or oral reporting of an act of bullying or harassment shall be considered an official means of reporting such act(s). Reports may be made anonymously but

formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

g. A procedure for the prompt investigation of a report of bullying or harassment and the persons responsible for the investigation. The investigation of a reported act of bullying or harassment is deemed to be a school-related activity and begins with a report of such an act:

At each school in the district, the Procedures for Investigating Bullying and/or Harassment include:

1. The principal/director or designee selects a designee(s), employed by the school, trained in investigative procedures to initiate the investigation. The designee(s) may not be the accused perpetrator (harasser or bully) or victim.
2. Documented interviews of the victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are conducted privately, separately and are confidential. Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses) will be interviewed separately and at no time will the alleged perpetrator and victim be interviewed together.
3. The investigator shall collect and evaluate the facts including, but not limited to:
 - a. Description of incident(s) including nature of the behavior, context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred, etc.
 - b. How often the conduct occurred.
 - c. Whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior.
 - d. The relationship between the parties involved.
 - e. The characteristics of parties involved (i.e., grade, age, etc.).
 - f. The identity and number of individuals who participated in bullying or harassing behavior.
 - g. Where the alleged incident(s) occurred.
 - h. Whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or educational environment.
 - i. Whether the alleged victim felt or perceived an imbalance of power as a result of the reported incident.
 - j. The date, time and method in which the parents/legal guardians of all parties involved were contacted.
4. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances and includes:
 - a. Recommended remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying and/or harassing behavior; and
 - b. A written final report to the principal/director.
5. The maximum of ten (10) school days shall be the limit for the initial filing of incidents and completion of the investigative procedural steps. The highest level of confidentiality possible will be upheld regarding the submission of a complaint or a report of bullying and/or harassment, and the investigative procedures that follow.

h. A process to investigate whether a reported act of bullying or harassment is within the scope of the district school system and, if not, a process for referral of such an act to the appropriate jurisdiction:

A principal/director or designee will assign a designee(s) that is trained in investigative procedures to initiate an investigation of whether an act of bullying or harassment is within the scope of the school district.

The trained designee(s) will provide a report on results of investigation with recommendations for the principal/director to make a determination if an act of bullying or harassment falls within the scope of the district.

1. If it is within scope of district, move to Procedures for Investigating Bullying and/or Harassment.
2. If it is outside scope of district and determined a criminal act, refer to appropriate law enforcement.
3. If it is outside scope of district and determined not a criminal act, inform parents/legal guardians of all students involved.

- i. A procedure for providing **immediate notification to the parents/legal guardians** of a victim of bullying or harassment and the parents/legal guardians of the perpetrator of an act of bullying or harassment as well as, notification to all local agencies where criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator:

The principal/director, or designee, shall promptly **report via telephone, personal conference and/or in writing, the occurrence of any incident of bullying or harassment, as defined by this policy, to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved** on the same day an investigation of the incident(s) has been initiated. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

If the bullying incident results in the perpetrator being charged with a crime, the principal/director, or designee, shall, by telephone or in writing by first class mail, inform parents/legal guardian of the victim(s) involved in the bullying incident about the Unsafe School Choice Option (No Child Left Behind, Title IX, Part E, Subpart 2, Section 9532) that states "...a student who becomes a victim of a violent criminal offense, as determined by State law, while in or on the grounds of a public elementary school or secondary school that the student attends, be allowed to attend a safe public elementary school or secondary school within the local educational agency, including a public charter school."

Once the investigation has been completed and it has been determined that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, all appropriate local law enforcement agencies will be notified by telephone and/or in writing.

- j. A procedure to **refer** victims and perpetrators of bullying or harassment for **counseling**:

A district referral procedure will establish a protocol for intervening when bullying or harassment is suspected or when a bullying incident is reported. The procedure shall include:

1. A process by which the teacher or parent/legal guardian may request informal consultation with school staff (specialty staff, e.g., school counselor, school psychologist, etc.) to determine the severity of concern and appropriate steps to address the concern (the involved students' parents or legal guardian may be included).
 2. A referral process to provide professional assistance or services that includes:
 - a. A process by which school personnel or parent/legal guardian may refer a student to the school intervention team (or equivalent school-based team with a problem-solving focus) for consideration of appropriate services. (Parent or legal guardian involvement is required at this point.)
 - b. If a formal discipline report or formal complaint is made, the principal/director or designee must refer the student(s) to the school intervention team for determination of counseling support and interventions. (Parent or legal guardian involvement is required at this point.)
 3. A school-based component to address intervention and assistance as determined appropriate by the intervention team that includes:
 - a. Counseling and support to address the needs of the victims of bullying or harassment
 - b. Research-based counseling/interventions to address the behavior of the students who bully and harass others (e.g., empathy training, anger management).
 - c. Research-based counseling/interventions which includes assistance and support provided to parents/legal guardians, if deemed necessary or appropriate.
- k. A procedure for including incidents of bullying or harassment in the school's report of data concerning school safety and discipline data required under s. 1006.09(6), F.S. The report must include each incident of bullying or harassment and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals. The report must include, in a separate section, each reported incident of bullying or harassment that does not meet the criteria of a prohibited act under this section with recommendations regarding such incidents:**

The school district will utilize Florida's School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline Data, which includes **bullying/harassment** as an incident code, as well as **bullying-related** as a related element code. The SESIR definition of bullying/harassment is unwanted and repeated written, verbal or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment, cause discomfort or humiliation, or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation.

If a bullying and/or harassment incident occurs, then it will be reported in SESIR with the **bullying/harassment** code. If the bullying/harassment results in any of the following SESIR incidents, the incident will be coded appropriately using the relevant incident code AND the related element code entitled **bullying-related** code. Those incidents are:

- Arson
- Battery
- Breaking and Entering

- Disruption on Campus
- Major Fighting
- Homicide
- Kidnapping
- Larceny/Theft
- Robbery
- Sexual Battery
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Offenses
- Threat/Intimidation
- Vandalism
- Weapons Possession
- Other Major (Other major incidents that do not fit within the other definitions)

Discipline and referral data will be recorded in Student Discipline/Referral Action Report and Automated Student Information System.

The district will provide bullying incident, discipline and referral data to the Florida Department of Education in the format requested, through Survey 5 from Education Information and Accountability Services, and at designated dates provided by the Department.

- l. A procedure for providing instruction to students, parents/legal guardians, teachers, school administrators, counseling staff and school volunteers on identifying, preventing and responding to bullying or harassment:**

The district ensures that schools sustain healthy, positive and safe learning environments for all students. It is important to change the social climate of the school and the social norms with regards to bullying. This requires the efforts of everyone in the school environment – teachers, administrators, counselors, school nurses, other non-teaching staff (such as bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers and/or school librarians), parents/legal guardians and students.

Students, parents/legal guardians, teachers, school administrators, counseling staff and school volunteers shall be given instruction, at a minimum, on an annual basis on the district's Policy and Regulations against bullying and harassment. The instruction shall include evidence-based methods of preventing bullying and harassment, as well as how to effectively identify and respond to bullying in schools.

- m. A procedure for regularly reporting to a victim's parents/legal guardians the actions taken to protect the victim:**

The principal/director or designee shall, by telephone and/or in writing, report the occurrence of any incident of bullying as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident has been initiated. According to the level of infraction, parents/legal guardians will be notified by telephone

and/or writing of actions being taken to protect the child; the frequency of notification will depend on the seriousness of the bullying or harassment incident. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

n. A procedure for publicizing the policy which must include its publication in the code of student conduct required under s. 1006.07(2), F.S., and in all employee handbooks:

At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall, in writing, inform school staff, parents/legal guardians or other persons responsible for the welfare of a student of the district's student safety and violence prevention policy.

Each district school shall provide notice to students and staff of this policy through appropriate references in the code of student conduct and employee handbooks, and/or through other reasonable means. The Superintendent shall also make all contractors contracting with the district aware of this policy.

Each school principal/director shall develop an annual process for discussing the school district policy on bullying and harassment with students in a student assembly or other reasonable format. Reminders of the policy and bullying prevention messages such as posters and signs will be displayed around each school and on the district school buses.