

## BULLYING

The Deerfield School District is committed to creating a safe, caring and respectful learning environment free of bullying for all. This policy seeks to: (1) help individuals of all ages and abilities stay safe, act wisely, and believe in themselves; and (2) help adults respond effectively to students' reports and their own observations. The Deerfield School District is committed to training staff regarding bullying, and educating students about what bullying is and issues surrounding bullying. (3) It is the responsibility of everyone who sees an instance of bullying, or potential bullying, to act to stop it. This responsibility applies to all students, staff and other members of the community.

Bullying occurring in the schools is prohibited by law and will not be tolerated by the Deerfield School District. For purposes of this policy, "school" includes schools, school grounds, school buses, school sponsored social events, trips, sports events, or similar school-sponsored events and functions and travel to and from school and/or school sponsored events.

Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation or harm. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as, but not limited to: age; national origin; race; ethnicity; religion; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability or disability; and social, economic or family status.

Bullying behavior can be:

1. Physical (e.g. assault, hitting or punching, kicking, theft, threatening behavior)
2. Verbal (e.g. threatening or intimidating language, teasing or name-calling, racist remarks)
3. Indirect (e.g. spreading cruel rumors, intimidation through gestures, social exclusion and sending insulting messages or pictures by mobile phone or using the internet – also known as cyber bullying).

The Deerfield School District takes allegations of bullying seriously and will respond promptly to complaints and allegations of bullying. **While** students are encouraged and expected to report an incident of bullying to any staff member at his or her school, preferably within 24 hours, for proper investigation, **students are always encouraged to report an incident at any time.**

While it is the intent of the school district to prevent bullying, take actions to stop bullying, and protect reporters of bullying, the school district cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under the direct supervision of school personnel.

The school district may take into account but not be limited to the following factors: the developmental and maturity levels of the students involved; the circumstances; the severity of the behavior; and past incidences or continuing patterns of behavior.

Where it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the Deerfield School District will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and will impose corrective action as necessary, which may range from requiring the offender to work with school personnel to correct the behavior, a recommendation for the provision of school counseling, and/or disciplinary action where appropriate, up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or court involvement.

Consequences for employees who permit, condone, tolerate or engage in bullying may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge. Consequences for other individuals engaging in acts of bullying may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school district property and events.

Third party witnesses are strongly encouraged to report observed incidents of bullying to Administration. Efforts will be made, when requested, to maintain the confidentiality of a witness's identity unless the witness is requested to testify in a hearing.

Retaliation against any individual who complains of bullying or anyone who participates in a bullying investigation is strictly forbidden by the District, and anyone who practices such retaliation will be subject to immediate discipline, up to and including discharge or expulsion.

Consent by the person being bullied does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

This policy applies not only to persons who directly engage in an act of bullying but also to persons who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another person's act of bullying. This policy also applies to any person whose conduct constitutes bullying that interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school district or the safety of welfare of students or employees.

The school district will give annual notice of this policy to students, parents or guardians and staff, and a summary of the policy shall appear in the student handbook and staff handbook.

Legal Ref: Wisconsin Statutes 118.01(2)(d)8 Personal Development  
118.13 Student Non-Discrimination  
947.0125 Email Harassment