

# BULLYING

## in Anne Arundel County



Report to the County Council  
(Resolution 10-18)



October  
2018



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## Executive Summary

Bullying, a public health problem, likely affects 20 to 40 percent of middle and high school students in Anne Arundel County. Research has shown that children who are bullied experience worse physical health outcomes, including a higher likelihood of becoming overweight and experiencing psychosomatic pain, such as headaches or stomach aches. Children who are bullied also experience greater mental and emotional problems, such as disrupted memory, decision-making and risk taking processes, and a higher incidence of internalizing (e.g., depression, anxiety) and externalizing behaviors (e.g., violence, substance use).

For these reasons, bullying prevention and intervention are high priorities for the county. Anne Arundel County has already taken some steps to address bullying. The Department of Health is producing a 30-second anti-bullying public service announcement featuring middle school students. Teachers have been trained in QPR (Question. Persuade. Respond.), an educational program that teaches individuals how to recognize a mental health emergency, which can provide early intervention for victims and bullies.

Each county is required to develop a policy prohibiting bullying, harassment, and intimidation for schools, based on a model policy developed by Maryland State Department of Education. Counties are also required to report all incidents of bullying to MSDE on an annual basis; this data is made public for use by policy makers, school officials and stakeholders. For students who are affected by bullying, Anne Arundel County offers counseling services. Since bullying is not limited to children or to the school setting, Anne Arundel County has a workplace violence prevention and response policy to provide a safe workplace for employees and the public.

In order to further reduce bullying and intervene when it occurs, the Department of Health offers a multi-faceted Action Plan to address bullying and improve the physical and mental health of county youth. Using the strategies listed below, the Department will engage a group of community stakeholders to implement the plan.

1. Promote help-seeking behaviors at home, in school and among peers.
2. Foster resiliency in county youth.
3. Reduce shame and stigma.
4. Expose and respond appropriately to bullying behaviors.
5. Embrace diversity and promote tolerance.
6. Address the unique challenges of cyberbullying and social media.
7. Create a conversation around mental health and firearm safety.

For more information, call Acting Health Officer Billie Penley, 410-222-7375.



# Section I: Introduction

## Definition

Bullying is a public health problem that likely affects 20 to 40 percent of middle and high school students in Anne Arundel County. Definitions of bullying vary depending on the context in which they are used, but generally enumerate the types of conduct (e.g., verbal, physical) that constitute bullying, and the types of personal characteristics (e.g., race, gender) that may motivate the behavior. Bullying manifests in many ways, including physical harm, property damage, interference with an individual's education or learning environment, or placing an individual in reasonable fear of personal or property harm.<sup>1</sup> Bullying is often motivated by a personal characteristic, such as national origin or sexual orientation.

Maryland law defines bullying as any conduct that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's education or wellbeing, and either occurs at a school activity or otherwise disrupts the orderly operation of a school.<sup>2</sup> The law includes a list of protected personal characteristics:

Race	Ancestry
National Origin	Physical Attribute
Marital Status	Socioeconomic Status
Sex	Familial Status
Sexual Orientation	Physical Ability
Gender Identity	Mental Ability
Religion	Disability

Bullying has historically occurred in school or other settings where children play and congregate. However, technology now allows for new forms of electronic bullying or cyberbullying, which take place through email, instant messaging, social media and other forms of digital communication.

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<sup>1</sup> Education Article § 7-424.3 (2018).

<sup>2</sup> The full definition of "bullying, harassment, or intimidation" is "intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication, that:

- (i) Creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being and is motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attribute, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or threatening or seriously intimidating; and
- (ii) Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school." Education Article § 7-424.1 (2018).

## Scope of Report

This report proceeds in six sections. Section II presents prevalence and trend data on bullying in Anne Arundel County, looking at the results of the most recent Youth Risk Behavior Study and the Report on Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools. Section III presents research on the causes and consequences of bullying behavior. Section IV lists current initiatives in Anne Arundel County to prevent bullying or to intervene when an incident has occurred. Section V outlines the Department of Health's Action Plan, and Section VI is the report's conclusion.

In order to complete this report, the Department of Health undertook a full review of the literature on bullying prevention and intervention. Additionally, DOH consulted with the following agencies within the county:

- Anne Arundel County Human Relations Compliance Office
- Anne Arundel County Police, School Safety Section
- Anne Arundel County Public Schools

The Action Plan was developed in coordination with a team of community stakeholders, who will also help to implement the recommendations.

## Section II: Prevalence and Trend Data

### Youth Risk Behavior Survey

An important source of risk behavior data is the Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), a biennial survey administered in Anne Arundel County public middle and high schools. The YRBS monitors trends in six core areas: physical activity, dietary behaviors, tobacco use, alcohol and illicit drug use, risky sexual behaviors, and behaviors contributing to unintentional injuries and violence, including bullying. The latest YRBS was administered in 2016 to more than 1,100 county middle and 3,000 county high school students, sample sizes adequate for risk behavior prevalence estimation in the population.

Results for YRBS, administered by the Maryland Department of Health, are at <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/ccdpc/Reports/Pages/yrbs.aspx>.



**Table 1: Percentage of Anne Arundel County Students Who Reported Bullying, 2014-2016**

	High School		Middle School	
	2016	2014	2016	2014
Bullied on School Property	19.6	17.5	30	43.3
Female	20.9	15.8	32.6	46.2
Male	17.6	19.1	27.7	40.3
Black	12	12.7	23.5	38.4
Hispanic/Latino	21.3	20.9	29.4	46.7
White	21.3	18	30.7	42.7
Other	16.9	16	-	-
Multiple Races	19.5	19.6	-	-
N	2,958	3,579	1,122	1,485
Electronically Bullied (e.g., texting, Facebook, Instagram)	16.8	15.6	15.6	21.2
Female	19.2	18.4	18.5	27.7
Male	14.3	12.3	12.8	15
Black	8.4	10.5	11.9	9.6
Hispanic/Latino	16.1	18.6	16.1	21.9
White	19.9	16.3	15.1	24.8
Other	14.1	12.1	-	-
Multiple Races	15.2	16	-	-
N	2,961	3,625	1,131	1,497

Thirty percent of middle school students reported being bullied on school property in the past year, a significant decrease from 43 percent in 2014, but slightly higher than 28 percent reported statewide. Conversely, more high school students reported being bullied on school property in 2016 than in 2014, 19.6 percent vs. 17.5 percent respectively. A similar trend was observed for electronic bullying, defined as bullying through texting and social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Fewer middle school (15.6 percent vs. 21.2 percent) and more high school students (16.8 percent vs. 15.6 percent) reported being bullied electronically in 2016 compared to 2014. Reports of electronic bullying among high school students were significantly higher in Anne Arundel County compared to the 14 percent observed statewide.

**Table 2: Percentage of Students Who Reported Bullying in 2016,  
Anne Arundel County and Statewide**

	High School		Middle School	
	AA County	Statewide	AA County	Statewide
Bullied on School Property	19.6	18.2	30	28.2
Female	20.9	19.9	32.6	31.7
Male	17.6	16.1	27.7	24.7
Black	12	14.2	23.5	24.1
Hispanic/Latino	21.3	18.1	29.4	25.9
White	21.3	21.3	30.7	31.9
Other	16.9	14	-	26.5
Multiple Races	19.5	21.1	-	29.1
N	2,958	50,233	1,122	23,160
Electronically Bullied (e.g., texting, Facebook, Instagram)	16.8	14.1	15.6	15.4
Female	19.2	17	18.5	19.6
Male	14.3	11.1	12.8	11.2
Black	8.4	10.4	11.9	12.5
Hispanic/Latino	16.1	14.1	16.1	14.9
White	19.9	17	15.1	18.1
Other	14.1	12.4	-	15.1
Multiple Races	15.2	16.8	-	17.5
N	2,961	50,138	1,131	23,377

Reports of bullying were disparate in Anne Arundel County high schools, specifically by sex, as well as by race and ethnicity. Although no difference was observed regarding bullying on school property based on sex, female high school students were more likely than males to report being electronically bullied in the county in 2016 (19.2 percent vs. 14.3 percent). White and Hispanic students were more likely than black students to report bullying of any kind (on school property or electronic) in Anne Arundel County schools in 2016.

Bullying may result in a wide array of secondary consequences, such as physical violence and poor mental health outcomes. At least one in 10 county high school students was in a physical fight on school property in 2016, with 7.8 percent being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, no remarkable change from 2014.

One-third of high schoolers reported episodes of sadness or hopelessness greater than two weeks in a row so that it impeded normal activities – a statistic almost twice as high among females (42 percent) than males (22 percent) and significantly higher than the estimate in 2014 (27 percent). Similarly, the number of middle school students reporting sad or hopeless feelings increased in 2016, up to 24 percent from 20 percent in 2014.

## **Report on Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools**

The annual [Report on Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools](#) also provides a source of data on bullying. This report summarizes incidences of bullying that are reported in each jurisdiction using the Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form. The form is standardized across all Maryland counties and cannot be modified, which ensures that all school systems are reporting the same information.

Table 3 summarizes the incidence of bullying reported since the 2005-2006 school year, the first year for which this data was collected. In the most recent school year (2016-2017), 6,091 bullying incidents were reported in Maryland, of which 546 (9 percent) occurred in Anne Arundel County. The 2016-2017 school year had the highest incidence of bullying since this data was collected; the 6,091 bullying incidents represents a 29 percent increase over the number of incidents reported in the preceding school year. These trends hold true for Anne Arundel County as well. Five hundred and forty-six bullying incidents were reported during the 2016-2017 school year, which is a 66 percent increase over the preceding school year.

## **Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools**

**A Report to the Maryland General Assembly  
on Incidents Reported under the  
Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005**

**Table 3: Bullying in Anne Arundel County and Statewide, 2005-2017**

	Statewide	Anne Arundel County		
	Bullying Incidents	Bullying Incidents	% of Statewide Incidents	Rate per 1,000 Students
2016-2017	6,091	546	9%	6.7
2015-2016	4,713	327	7%	4.1
2014-2015	4,154	307	7%	3.9
2013-2014	4,587	329	7%	4.2
2012-2013	5,255	384	7%	4.9
2011-2012	5,213	443	8%	5.8
2010-2011	4,678	409	9%	5.4
2009-2010	3,818	236	6%	3.2
2008-2009	1,686	45	3%	0.6
2007-2008	2,165	155	7%	N/A
2006-2007	1,470	190	13%	N/A
2005-2006	2,165	219	10%	N/A

A more accurate picture of school bullying might be found in the rate of incidents per 1,000 students. Table 4 presents the rates of bullying in all Maryland jurisdictions for the last three school years. During this time period, Anne Arundel County had on average 4.9 incidents per 1,000 students. The County had the eighth-lowest rate of bullying (out of 24 jurisdictions), placing it in the top-third performing jurisdictions in Maryland. For reference, the best performing jurisdiction (Worcester County) had a rate of 3.1 incidents per 1,000 students, and the poorest performing jurisdiction (Talbot County) had a rate of 14.8 incidents per 1,000 students.

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**Table 4: Bullying Incidents per 1,000 Students by County**

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	2016- 2017	2015- 2016	2014- 2015	Average
Allegany	7.1	5.2	4.7	5.7
<b>Anne Arundel</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>
Baltimore City	5.9	4.4	3.7	4.7
Baltimore County	8.0	9.0	6.8	7.9
Calvert	6.0	8.2	6.4	6.9
Caroline	7.9	9.6	9.8	9.1
Carroll	7.3	5.4	6.5	6.4
Cecil	10.4	7.8	7.3	8.5
Charles	8.2	7.7	6.9	7.6
Dorchester	10.0	15.0	19.2	14.7
Frederick	5.3	4.9	6.2	5.5
Garrett	5.7	3.9	5.2	4.9
Harford	6.0	5.5	2.8	4.8
Howard	9.7	6.7	5.2	7.2
Kent	9.5	16.3	18.0	14.6
Montgomery	5.5	3.2	2.8	3.8
Prince George's	5.6	3.4	1.9	3.6
Queen Anne's	4.4	3.0	4.0	3.8
St. Mary's	4.4	3.4	4.4	4.1
Somerset	9.5	13.4	8.2	10.4
Talbot	17.2	13.4	13.8	14.8
Washington	10.6	8.5	10.3	9.8
Wicomico	14.9	14.4	14.2	14.5
Worcester	2.8	4.8	1.8	3.1

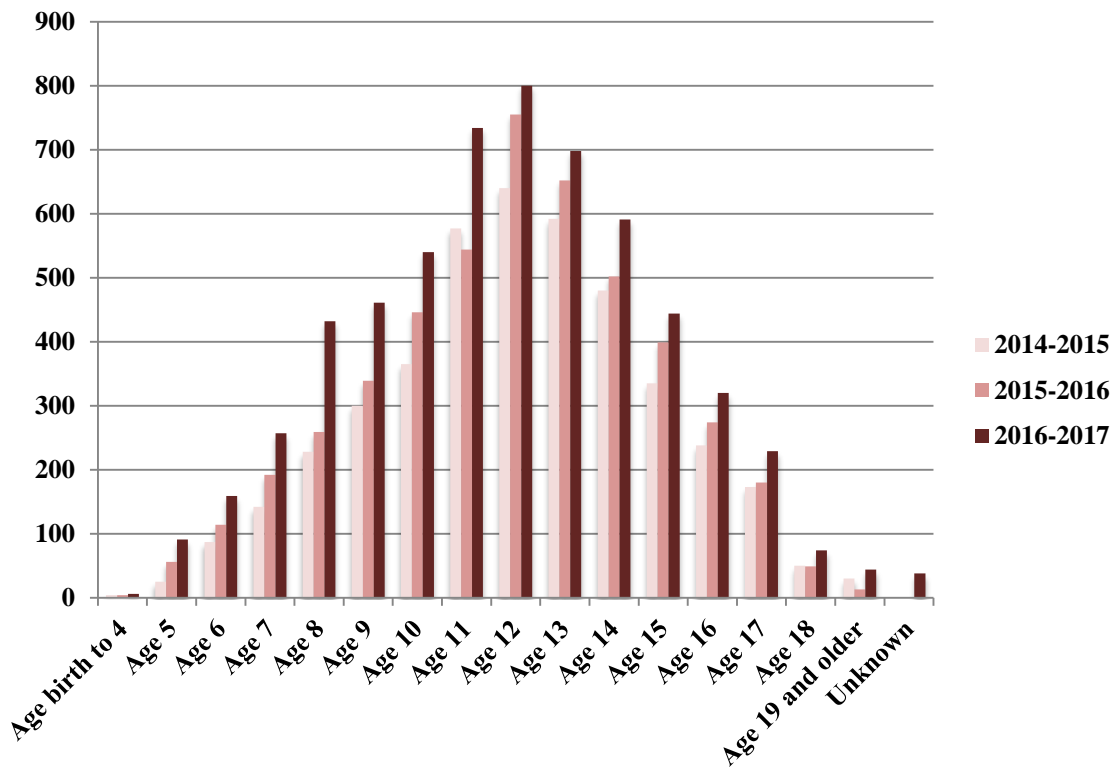
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It's unclear what triggered the increase in bullying incidents in the 2016-2017 school year in Anne Arundel County and statewide. Before this year, the number of bullying incidents and the rate of incidents (incidents per 1,000 students) had been falling for the previous five school years.

One interesting feature of the data on bullying is its sharp correspondence to age. As illustrated by Figure 1 on the next page, the incidence of bullying rises sharply as children approach age 12, and then steadily decreases through the teenage years. These findings appear to be consistent over time and suggest that bullying is worst for students in middle school.

**Figure 1: Incidence of Bullying in Maryland by Age, 2014-2017**



## Section III: Research on the Causes and Consequences of Bullying Behavior

### Causes of Bullying Behavior

Bullying can be greatly exacerbated or reduced by social and contextual factors. Peers play a substantial role in creating a culture that either encourages or rejects bullying as a social norm. Individuals who bully others are often motivated to gain social status (see Rodkin et al., 2015). Students who have friends and are liked by their peers are less likely to be targeted for bullying (Hodges et al., 1999; Pelegriani and Long, 2002). Along the same lines, bullying is less likely to occur in contexts where such behavior is not normative within the class. (Sentse et al., 2007).

Peers are not the only relationships that influence bullying behavior. A lot of research has focused on the role of the family in affecting the likelihood of bullying. Children who perceive their family as being dysfunctional (e.g., high levels of criticism, fewer rules, more child maltreatment or intimate partner violence) may be more likely to bully others. (Stevens et al., 2002; Holt et al., 2008).

School climate also affects the prevalence of bullying. Higher levels of bullying have been associated with poor student-teacher relationships (Richard et al., 2012), lack of engagement in school activities (Barboza et al., 2009), and perceptions of negative school climate (Unnever and Cornell, 2004). There are many benefits to small learning communities (e.g., Mertens and Flowers, 2003); however, students who are not well liked by their peers are often more likely to be bullied in such communities (Klein and Cornell, 2010). Schools that are perceived to have fair discipline practices have lower amounts of bullying (Cornell et al., 2013).

### **Consequences of Bullying Behavior**

Children who are bullied experience much worse physical outcomes than their peers. In one study, among children who were in the worst decile for physical health, 93.6 percent had experienced some form of bullying (Bogart et al., 2014). Furthermore, children who were bullied were more likely to be overweight when they became adults (Baldwin et al., 2015). A recent meta-analysis has shown the children who were bullied were at least twice as likely to experience psychosomatic pain, such as headaches, stomach aches, or dizziness (Gini and Pozzoli, 2013).

Bullying has also been shown to affect hormone levels and brain functioning, as measured using fMRI machines (see e.g., Judd et al., 2014; Barra et al., 2015). For example, the medial prefrontal cortex, which is a part of the brain involved in memory, decision-making and risk taking, tends to be disrupted in children who have experienced bullying (Vaillancourt, 2011). However, the exact effects are hard to tease out, as research on both humans and animals has demonstrated that there can be some benefits from low-to-moderate levels of stress, whereas high levels of stress can have much worse outcomes (National Academies, 2016).

Children who are bullied also experience significant psychosocial consequences. Bullied children exhibit higher levels of depression and anxiety ("internalizing problems"). (Kidger et al., 2015). Externalizing problems, e.g., violent behavior, substance use, are also common especially in boys. (McDougall and Vaillancourt, 2015).

## Section IV: Current Initiatives to Prevent or Intervene

Given that bullying can cause serious health problems for affected children, prevention and intervention are high priorities for the county. Anne Arundel County has already taken a number of steps to prevent bullying. The county fully implements the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005, which established a reporting system to address bullying incidents and collect data on the prevalence of bullying.

### Initiatives to Prevent Bullying

**Anti-bullying programs in schools.** Anne Arundel County schools offer a number of educational programs to prevent bullying and teach values such as kindness and inclusion. These include:

- **School counseling curriculum.** School counselors in all grades create and teach lessons on topics such as conflict resolution, resiliency and healthy relationships. These lessons provide students with a way to learn skills and understand how to utilize counseling support when there is a bullying issue.
- **Social and emotional advisory lessons.** These lessons are taught in middle school by classroom teachers on a weekly basis during the advisory block. Some of the topics that are taught are handling bullying and cyberbullying, bias-motivated behaviors, empathy and positive social interactions.
- **Code of Conduct lessons.** Each year, all students engage in Code of Conduct lessons and this allows them to understand the rules of the school system and the consequences if the Code of Conduct is violated. These lessons involve role-playing and discussion on the impact of certain behaviors such as bullying.
- **Cyberbullying and cyber safety.** A presentation on cyberbullying and cyber safety is offered through the State's Attorney's Office and many schools offer this assembly to their students.
- **Kindness campaign.** Many schools have a yearlong "Kindness Campaign" that has daily or weekly themes, such as "Be the Change." These themes are communicated on the announcements, and students engage in kindness activities throughout the week.



- **Awareness of the Bullying and Harassment Forms.** Schools educate students and communicate to parents on how to file a bullying or harassment complaint. They are also informed on the process that takes place when a complaint has been made.

**Clubs and contests.** Many schools offer clubs and contests that teach kind behavior, such as:

- **Restorative justice circles.** Many schools in the county have been trained on restorative practices and how to use them to be preventive and address issues that are occurring in the building. Some of the issues being addressed may involve how to deal with bullying.
- **Peer mediation programs.** Many of the school counselors run peer mediation programs where students help other students resolve issues that they may be having in the classroom.
- **Girl talk club.** Many middle and high schools run a club that focuses on promoting kind and positive interactions among girls.
- **After-school unified sports programs.** Many schools have unified sports extracurricular clubs in which all students participate in the name of sportsmanship.
- **Peer mentors/student ambassadors.** Many schools train student leaders to act as “ambassadors” for new students and visiting guests. They show these individuals around the building and make them feel comfortable as they become more familiar with the school.
- **Student contests.** The Olivia Constants Foundation has an art poster contest that promotes bullying prevention. Winners receive a cash prize. The Maryland Judiciary Mediation Office also has a bullying prevention contest each year.

**Anti-bullying video.** The Department of Health contracted with Pinnacle Communications to produce a 30-second anti-bullying public service video to be shown to middle school students in the county and on social media. During summer 2018, the Department’s Adolescent and Family Services clinic conducted a focus group comprised of sixth through ninth graders, to get their feedback on a series of short clips on the subject of bullying. The video will have a theme of inclusion, tolerance, kindness and support for students who feel marginalized.

**QPR training.** One intervention that appears to be showing some positive results in the schools is the introduction of QPR Training (Question. Persuade. Respond.) for school staff. This is a simple educational program that teaches individuals how to recognize a mental health emergency, which can provide early intervention for both victims and bullies. Data suggests students are less inhibited about speaking up and asking for help, as evidenced by the increased number of youth presenting in school health offices when having social/emotional problems. The number of health office visits for suicide threats has gone down.

**County workforce training.** Bullying is not limited to children or to the school setting. The County's compliance mandatory workforce training initiative on Diversity, Inclusion and Compliance with the Non-Discrimination/Non-Harassment Policy is near completion. The training is a preventive measure that reviews the importance of not engaging in stereotypes and workplace bullying. The training emphasizes the importance of mindfulness in communication, civility, respect, diversity/inclusion and compliance with the relevant county, state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination, harassment and retaliation. In 2019, additional training and brown bag lunch discussions will be provided throughout the year for county government employees on various topics, such as conflict resolution, workplace bullying prevention and continued dialogue on the importance of diversity and inclusion at the workplace. The office has trained nearly 3,700 employees on nondiscrimination, non-harassment and non-retaliation, as well as on Anne Arundel County's laws and policies.

**Public health surveillance.** The Department of Health continually monitors the YRBS and MSDE data on bullying, so it is apprised of current trends and ready to act as new data becomes available.

## **Initiatives to Intervene**

**Policy prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation.** Each county is required to develop a policy prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation, based on a model policy developed by MSDE. The policy (Appendix 1) includes a definition of bullying, consequences for persons committing acts of bullying, and procedures for investigating reports.

**Victim of bullying, harassment or intimidation report form (Appendix 2).** Section 7-424 of the Education Article requires schools to report incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation. The report may be filed by a student, the student's parents or a school staff member, and it is used to investigate complaints.

The school system is required to report data on the incidence of bullying, harassment or intimidation to MSDE annually; these data are subsequently made public for use by policymakers, stakeholders and others. The electronic version of the form, <https://secure.aacps.org/bully/bullyForm.asp>, can be submitted online.

**Counseling services.** School counselors, school psychologists, school social workers (where available) and the Department of Health's school nurses can offer counseling and support to students who have been the targets of bullying and harassment. They help to ensure that all students feel safe and supported. The student services staff members provide individual and small group counseling. They help monitor safety plans, as well as classroom lessons and the facilitation of school-wide activities. More information is available at <https://www.aacps.org/Page/2257>.

**Employee relations policy.** Anne Arundel County has an employee relations policy that includes provisions about non-retaliation against county employees. The policy is currently in effect and is in the process of being updated and revised.

**Workplace violence prevention policy.** Anne Arundel County has a workplace violence prevention and response policy to provide a safe workplace for employees and the public. The policy is designed to reduce the potential for violence in and around the workplace, and to mitigate the negative consequences for employees who experience or encounter violence, including bullying, at work. The policy is included as Appendix 3.

**Crisis contact information.** Schools have included crisis text and hotline numbers on student ID cards.

## Section V: Action Plan to Reduce Bullying

As revealed in the YRBS and MSDE data, there is work to be done to promote health and wellbeing among the county's youth. DOH is strategically positioned to intervene because of its presence in the three spheres of School Health, Behavioral Health and Family Health.

The Anne Arundel County Council's resolution (10-18), addressing the school bullying problem, coincided with the recent release of the DOH report [\*Trends in Youth Suicide in Anne Arundel County\*](#). In response to the data in the report, the Acting Health Officer created a task force comprised of many stakeholders, including the Youth Suicide Awareness (YSA) Leadership Team, representatives from AACPS and the Mental Health Agency, the Child Fatality Review Coordinator, Bureau Director of Family Health Services and Program Manager of the Adolescent and Family Services clinic. From this team, priority areas for intervention were identified. The task force has been meeting since April 2018.

Since there is a high correlation between school bullying, depression and suicidal ideation, the recommendations from this report have broader implications than for youth suicide alone. Prevention and early intervention must be addressed holistically, across agencies and disciplines to empower the community, parents, students and school personnel alike. In that spirit, DOH makes the following recommendations:

### **1. Promote help-seeking behaviors at home, in school and with peers.**

**Balanced Life Skills.** Balanced Life Skills is an Annapolis-based company that offers a bullying prevention talk for parents — coaching them on how to talk with their children about problems that occur in school. This talk was given at the YSA meeting in February 2018, and it was very well received. Balanced Life Skills also received a positive response from some elementary schools in Annapolis that are piloting an early intervention curriculum. The curriculum will help to create a culture of kindness and resilience to proactively prevent bullying in schools.

**Awareness campaigns.** A public awareness campaign from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention titled "Seize the Awkward" is available for distribution to high schools to encourage peers to start a conversation if they are worried about a classmate. Schools are also planning to show "It's Real," a video about mental health and college to eleventh and twelfth graders.

## 2. Foster resiliency in county youth.

**Mind Resilience.** This program, developed at the University of Maryland, promotes positive children's mental health by balancing safety and trust with high (yet realistic) expectations that promote a sense of self-efficacy and self-worth. This is a model for the school system, but also an opportunity for parent education and empowerment. Resilient kids are better able to bounce back from adversity, problem-solve and self-regulate their emotions.

## 3. Reduce shame and stigma.

**Trauma-Informed Schools.** Schools can reduce shame and stigma by creating a safe, nurturing and non-judgmental space that provides the opportunity for meaningful connections and relationships. Trauma-Informed Schools, also called Safe and Supportive Schools, is a transformative educational model that plants the seeds of friendliness, tolerance and empathy within the learning environment. When started early, a culture evolves and these values, or virtues, become normative. Trauma-Informed Schools provide safety; trustworthiness through consistency and transparency; opportunities for collaboration and choice; and empowerment through mastery. Two elementary schools in the county have expressed interest in a pilot program of this model.

## 4. Expose and respond appropriately to bullying behaviors.

**Mental Health Referrals.** Without early intervention, the prognosis for bullies is poor. One study claimed 60 percent of childhood bullies would commit a crime by age 24. They have a greater risk for depression, progressive anti-social behaviors, domestic/dating violence, traffic violations, substance abuse and suicide. Mental health referrals and family outreach are important.

**Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD).** When students are empowered to control the anti-bullying message and create a public awareness campaign for their school, there is greater buy-in from peers. "Nothing about us without us" is the basis for successful youth engagement. The Department is planning a poster contest for middle and high school student members of school SADD chapters.

## 5. Embrace diversity and promote tolerance.

**Promoting Tolerance.** Racism and intolerance have many targets. One way to start a conversation within the student body is through experiential, educational performance assemblies, such as those offered by Young Audiences Maryland. YA offers fully vetted performers to go into schools for a show. They provide teacher materials that work with the Common Core Curriculum. IIIStyle & Peace Productions has a hip-hop performance, "STOP BULLYING, NO BULLYING."

**LGBTQ Support.** Students who identify as LGBTQ or gender non-conforming are bullied at a statistically higher rate than their straight peers. They can feel isolated and rejected, and they have a higher incidence of depression and suicidal ideation. Schools can be supportive by allowing clubs like the GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) or GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network). This is an opportunity for peers to hold peers accountable by creating an awareness campaign. For youth today, the media is the message. The YouTube music video by Logic, "1-800-273-8255" (the suicide hotline number), has been viewed 221 million times. It's about a black high school football player who is outed as gay, bullied, and rejected by family and friends.

## 6. Address the unique challenges of cyberbullying and social media.

**Iceland Model.** Although cyberbullying need not occur on school property, the shame, humiliation and ostracization that can result from it are often experienced most acutely in school. There is a correlation between excessive social media use and depression. Hashtags can be used to exclude, and Instagram has been shown to have a negative effect on overall mental health. The Iceland Model increases activities to get youth away from screens and has a parent education component. Parents need to talk with their children about their online world. It can feel more real to them than reality.

**Anti-bullying Apps.** Several anti-bullying apps have been developed to help schools and businesses prevent bullying and intervene when bullying occurs. The apps below are a representative sample of offerings.

[STOPit](#) – anonymous incident management and reporting system

[ReThink](#) – filtering technology for offensive content

[Puresight](#) – filtering app to alert parents of verbal violence

## 7. Create a conversation around mental health and firearm safety.

**Gun shops and firing ranges outreach.** The percentage of students who carry a weapon (gun, knife or club) to school has gone up significantly. A bully, or a target of bullying, might feel compelled to bring a weapon for various reasons: intimidation, protection or revenge. Sometimes victims of bullying become homicidal. A recent Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health study found that more than half of Maryland gun owners do not store their firearms safely; obviously, there is an opportunity for intervention. This year's St. Mary's County school shooting, in which the shooter used his father's gun, dispels any delusion that such things cannot or will not happen near or in Anne Arundel County. In response, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has partnered with the Department of Health to provide presentations to gun shops and firing ranges. Free gun locks are provided to anyone who is interested.

## Section VI: Conclusion

Prevention and early intervention are critical to addressing bullying as a public health problem. In order to further reduce bullying and intervene when it occurs, the Department of Health believes that a multi-faceted approach is necessary to address bullying and improve the physical and mental health of Anne Arundel County youth. Using the strategies listed below, the Department will engage a group of community stakeholders to implement the plan.

1. Promote help-seeking behaviors at home, in school, and among peers.
2. Foster resiliency in county youth.
3. Reduce shame and stigma.
4. Expose and respond appropriately to bullying behaviors.
5. Embrace diversity and promote tolerance.
6. Address the unique challenges of cyberbullying and social media.
7. Create a conversation around mental health and firearm safety.

The Department of Health is strongly committed to working with Anne Arundel County leadership, partnering agencies and community stakeholders to prevent bullying and establish efficient processes to intervene when bullying does occur.



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# REGULATION

## ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: Policy JCC and Policy JCCA

Responsible Office: DIVISION OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

### BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING/HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION/HAZING/BIAS BEHAVIOR

#### A. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines to establish school-site standards regarding bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior that are applicable to all students.

#### B. BACKGROUND

The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County (Board) is committed to providing all students with an orderly school environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior. All complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior shall be investigated in accordance with the procedures set forth in this regulation. The school system shall discipline or take other action with regard to members of the school community who engage in unlawful bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior in accordance with this regulation and the Code of Student Conduct. In some cases acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior may be deemed criminal under state and/or federal law.

#### C. DEFINITIONS

1. ***Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment and Intimidation*** - intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, graphic or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being and is:
  - motivated by an actual or perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or
  - threatening or seriously intimidating; and occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or, substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

- a. ***Bullying*** - repeated conscious, willful and deliberate, direct/indirect action with the intent to physically or psychologically intimidate or distress someone else; physical, social, verbal actions, or intimidation toward another person with negative intent.
- b. ***Cyberbullying*** - the use of information and communication technologies intended to embarrass, humiliate, threaten, or physically or psychologically intimidate others. All procedures defined for bullying are also applied to cyberbullying.

If there is a posting in a public forum where others can see it then it is repeated behavior.

- c. ***Harassment and Intimidation*** (see Bias Behavior) - a behavior that occurs more than once and continues over a period of time that makes a person feel uncomfortable or unsafe, and may include putdowns.
  - d. ***Electronic Communication*** - a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or tablet.
  - e. ***Relational Bullying*** - a socially manipulative, non-physical behavior intended to hurt others and interfere with the educational environment. It includes ignoring, isolating, excluding, and shunning.
  - f. ***Bystanders*** - individuals who observe bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior and who, by their inaction, encourage, support, or promote its occurrence.
  - g. ***Evidence-based Strategies*** - a process in which well-researched, effective interventions guide and inform the delivery of programs and services producing improved and measurable student outcomes. For example, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and Steps to Respect Program.
- 2. ***Hazing*** - an act that subjects a student to potential harm and is affiliated with initiation into a student organization or team. Hazing may involve an act committed against a student or a situation in which a student is coerced into committing an act.
  - 3. ***Bias Behavior*** - a behavioral offense committed against a person or property which is motivated by the offender's bias, a negative opinion or attitude toward an individual or group of persons based upon their race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin.

**Types of bias:**

- a. **Disability** - a negative opinion or attitude toward an individual or a group of persons based on their physical or mental impairments/challenges, temporary or permanent, congenital or hereditarily acquired, accident, injury, advanced age, or illness.
  - b. **Ethnicity** - a negative opinion or attitude toward an individual or group of persons of the same race or national origin who share common or similar traits, languages, customs, and traditions.
  - c. **Racial** - a negative opinion or attitude toward an individual or group of persons who possess common physical characteristics; i.e. color of skin, eyes, hair, facial features, genetically transmitted by descent and heredity which distinguish them as a distinct division of humankind.
  - d. **Religious** - a negative opinion or attitude toward an individual or group of persons who share the same religious beliefs regarding an origin and purpose of the universe and existence or nonexistence of a Supreme Being.
  - e. **Sexual-Orientation** - a negative opinion or attitude toward an individual or group of persons based on their sexual attraction toward and responsiveness to members of the opposite or same sex.
  - f. **Hate Crime** - bias behavior that is a criminal offense.
  - g. **Other** - national origin, marital status, gender identity, physical attributes, or socioeconomic status.
4. **Retaliation** - an act of reprisal or revenge toward a person for an act he/she has committed. These behaviors are threatening or seriously intimidating, occur on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus, are substantially disruptive to the orderly operation of a school.

**D. PROCEDURES**

**1. Reporting**

- a. Whenever possible, a student who believes that he/she has been subjected to bullying, cyberbullying, harassment or intimidation, hazing, or bias behavior should make it clear to the offender in a firm and direct manner that such behavior is offensive and unwelcome.
- b. When a student reports to a staff member that he/she is currently the victim of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment or intimidation, hazing, or bias behavior, the staff member will respond quickly and appropriately to

investigate and intervene, as safety permits. The staff member will make an effort to provide the student with a practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate way of reporting.

- c. The school administrator shall designate a private, secure location for students to submit a completed *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* if the student feels uncomfortable submitting the reporting form in person. Each school administrator will determine how and by whom the forms will be collected and reviewed for investigation.
  - i. The administration shall inform staff during the opening of school meetings and periodically throughout the year of the availability and use of the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Forms*.
  - ii. Students shall be informed about the availability and use of the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* during orientation to the Code of Student Conduct and a minimum of one more time during the year.
  - iii. *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Forms* may be obtained in the school's main (front) office, counselor's office, media center, and health room and may be submitted by administration.
  - iv. *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Forms* may also be obtained electronically from the school system's Web site or a school's Web site and may be submitted by a student, parent(s)/guardian(s), close relative, or staff member to school administration.
  - v. A *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* shall be included in the Student Handbook for students and their parent(s)/guardian(s). Information regarding this form and how to access it will be included at least twice a year in the school's newsletter, both electronic and paper versions.
- d. If the alleged victim complains that he/she has been the object of a biased motivated incident, he/she should report that incident immediately to an administrator who shall conduct an investigation, which includes the completion of the *Bullying Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form*, (see D-1). Complaints may also be reported to the school system's Student Safety Hotline. Complaints alleging discrimination of students under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the American with Disabilities Act shall be handled according to the procedures outlined in Administrative Regulation JCH-RA.

- e. If it has been determined that a bias motivated behavior has taken place, the administrator must make a call to the Office of Equity and Human Relations (OEHR) to report the incident. The call is to be followed up by completing and submitting a *Bias Motivated Incident Report Form* to the OEHR office.
- f. If the complaint involves sexual child abuse, the employee shall follow reporting procedures as outlined in Administrative Regulation JEF-RA, Child Abuse.
- g. The school employee shall submit a written report of the incident and any action taken to the school principal using the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form*. If the alleged harasser is the principal, the incident should be reported by the school employee to the appropriate Regional Assistant Superintendent.

## 2. Investigation

- a. If the complaint involves only students, the principal/designee shall conduct an investigation and take appropriate action. All pertinent information, including resolution, is automatically reported to the Director for Safe and Orderly Schools and the appropriate Regional Assistant Superintendent through the electronic Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form.
- b. If the complaint involves employee(s) and student(s), the principal or designee (or Regional Assistant Superintendent) shall notify the Office of Investigations for appropriate action.
- c. All reports must be written using the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form*. They must then be promptly and appropriately investigated by the school administrator/designee, consistent with due process rights, using the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Incident Investigation Form* within two (2) school days after receipt or as soon as administratively possible of a *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form*.
- d. The school administrator/designee shall determine whether bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, or bias behavior actually occurred by taking steps to verify who committed the reported behavior and whether others played a role in perpetrating this act. Other related complaints, if any, shall be reviewed in making this determination.
- e. While all discussions, written communications, records and proceedings shall be considered confidential, neither victim nor witnesses should be promised confidentiality at the onset of an investigation. It cannot be predicted what will be discovered or if a hearing may result from the



ultimate outcome of the investigation. Efforts should be made to increase the confidence and trust of the victim and any witnesses by informing them that any information discussed and recorded will be confined to “need-to-know” status.

- f. Parent(s)/guardian(s) of the alleged victim must be notified. The confidentiality provisions of the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) shall be applied to the release of student information, including the identity of the alleged offender(s).
- g. The administrator/designee shall create a written record of the bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, or bias behavior incident and any disciplinary actions taken, as well as the statements of the victim, witnesses, and offender. Discussions with all parties should be documented as soon as possible after the event. Any material records or evidence shall not be discarded while a criminal investigation or prosecution resulting from the incident is ongoing.
- h. Student Support Services personnel shall provide appropriate counseling support to the student victim and offender in a timely manner, not to exceed two (2) weeks after the investigation. If during the counseling session(s) it is determined that the bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, or bias behavior continues, it shall be reported to the administrator/ designee. Student Support Services personnel, working with the student(s), shall determine if there is a need for further support.
- i. The administrator/designee should be aware that some acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior could also be delinquent acts. If they are delinquent acts, they shall be reported promptly to the responsible law enforcement agency according to the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.01.15.
- j. Filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, or bias behaviors shall not reflect upon the student's status nor will it affect the student's future educational program.

### 3. **Remediation**

- a. Consequences and remedial actions for persons committing acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, or bias behavior and for persons engaged in reprisal or retaliation and for persons found to have made false accusations should be consistently and fairly applied after appropriate investigation has determined that such an offense has occurred.
  - i. It shall be the responsibility of every principal to take necessary

- action to ensure such instances of unlawful bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior are addressed promptly, fairly and effectively. The school administrator/designee shall apply consequences and/or remedial actions consistent with due process rights from the range of consequences listed in the Code of Student Conduct.
- ii. The offender shall be informed that retaliation against a victim or bystander is strictly prohibited and that progressive consequences shall occur if the activity continues.
- b. The safety and welfare of all students involved in incidents of alleged bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior are the primary concern of principals and all school staff members.
- i. If, after an initial inquiry, it has been determined that a student may have been involved in an incident of alleged bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior the principal or designee shall make every reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian. A follow-up letter to the parent/ guardian shall be sent by first class mail.
  - ii. To provide confidentiality and to protect the rights of all parties involved, the information that is shared shall be limited to the involvement of the parent/guardian own child.
  - ii. If the principal determines the timing of the notice to and acknowledgment from the parent/guardian impedes prompt, fair, and effective action dealing with an alleged bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior incident, the administrator/designee shall proceed with discussions, interviews, and resolution of the incident.
- c. In accordance with COMAR 13A.08.01.11, a student whose presence in a school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process may be removed immediately from school. In such cases the necessary notice and hearing shall follow as soon as possible.
- d. Any student who violates this Regulation shall be subject to appropriate actions, which may include counseling, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the severity of the offense and as defined by the Code of Student Conduct.
- e. Students shall receive information on this Regulation in the student rights and responsibilities documents.

- f. Utilization and/or exhaustion of these procedures are not a prerequisite to the reporting of complaints to state or federal agencies.

## E. PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

The prohibition of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, hazing, and bias behaviors in schools and reprisal and retaliation against individuals, who report these behaviors, as well as consequences and remedial actions, cannot be effective unless they are part of a whole-school prevention/intervention program.

### 1. Prevention

- a. Professional development shall be provided for administrators and all staff to increase awareness of the prevalence, causes, and consequences of bullying and to increase the use of evidence-based strategies for preventing bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behaviors.
- b. School-wide evidence-based anti-bullying programs shall be implemented as part of a system of positive behavioral supports and school improvement efforts at all grade levels.
- c. School climate improvement efforts shall be utilized in order to promote student involvement in the anti-bullying efforts, including information related to the role and responsibility of the bystanders, peer support, mutual respect, and a culture which encourages students to report incidents of bullying to adults.
- d. Collaboration with families and the community shall occur to inform parent (s)/guardian) about the prevalence, causes, and consequences of bullying behaviors, including its central role as a public health hazard, and the means of preventing it.
- e. Annual school-building-specific data collection on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying which is used to guide local decision-making related to surveillance, prevention, intervention, and professional development.
  - i. Information obtained from the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Forms* shall be recorded for data collection and submitted according to the requirements of Education Article §7-424, Annotated Code of Maryland.
  - ii. Schools shall receive summary information obtained from the *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Forms*.

**2. Intervention/Remediation**

- a. Professional development shall be provided for school staff on how to respond appropriately to students who engage in bullying behaviors, including cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, or bias behaviors, are targets of these behaviors, and are bystanders who report these behaviors.
- b. Education/counseling shall be given for the students exhibiting bullying behaviors, including remedial measures to correct the bullying behavior, prevents another occurrence, empowering bystanders and protects the victim.
- c. Support/counseling for the victim shall include protection from retaliation and further episodes of bullying.
- d. Community health and mental health resources shall be utilized for those students who do not stop bullying behaviors in spite of school intervention, for those students involved in bullying behaviors as perpetrators, or victims whose mental or physical health, safety, or academic performance has been impacted.
- e. Recognition shall occur for positive behaviors exhibited by the student who has previously exhibited bullying behavior, the student who has been a target and is implementing strategies to offset past problems, and the bystander who has taken an active role in addressing bullying behaviors.

**3. Support/Referral Services**

The school shall provide a range of support and referral services to students who have been targets of bullying behaviors, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, or bias behaviors. A list of these services which are consistent with the policies and regulations of the Board is available to students, parent(s)/guardian(s), and staff members.

- a. School System supports and services include, but are not limited to:
  - i. counseling;
  - ii. conflict resolution;
  - iii. problem-solving skills;
  - iv. social skills training;
  - v. anger management training;
  - vi. peer support groups;
  - vii. schedule modifications; and
  - viii. targeted supervision (e.g. hallways, cafeteria, buses).

- b. Community/Family Referral Sources
  - i. public or private community-based mental health services;
  - ii. faith-based services;
  - iii. youth development organizations;
  - iv. Department of Juvenile Services;
  - v. Department of Social Services; and
  - vi. law enforcement agencies.

*Regulation history:*      *Developed by the Superintendent 03/03/09*  
                                  *Reviewed by the Board of Education 06/04/14*  
                                  *Issued 06/04/14*

*Note previous regulation history: Replaces Regulation JCC-RAE, adopted 6/7/06, Revised 03/10/10*

**Appendix II: Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form**

**BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR INTIMIDATION REPORTING FORM**

Directions: Bullying, harassment, and intimidation are serious and will not be tolerated. This is a form to report alleged bullying harassment, or intimidation that occurred during the current school year on school property, at a school-sponsored activity or event off school property, on a school bus, on the way to and/or from school\*, or on the internet-sent on or off school property; or that substantially disrupted the orderly operation of the school. Bullying, harassment and intimidation includes any intentional conduct, including verbal, physical or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication, that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being. (Definitions are Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, and Intimidation are provided below.)

1. **Bullying** – A pattern or behavior when a person repeatedly uses power in an intentional manner, including verbal, physical, or written conduct or intentional electronic communication against one or more students.
2. **Cyberbullying** – The use of electronic communication to harm or harass others in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner.
3. **Harassment** – Includes actual or perceived negative actions that offend, ridicule, or demean another individual with regard to race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, physical or mental ability, or disability.
4. **Intimidation** – subjecting an individual to intentional action that seriously threatens and induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority.

Conduct that is of a sexual nature is generally thought to mean actions, language or visual materials which specifically refer to, portray or involve sexual activity or language. Conduct of a sexual nature may include overt sexual solicitations, inappropriate touching, sexual jokes, and inquiries about a person's sex life. Sexual harassment is the broader term that encompasses conduct of a sexual nature such as unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment also includes acts that are not overtly sexual but rather are directed at individuals based on their gender such as profanity or rude behavior that is gender-specific.

If you are a student, the parent/guardian of a student, a close adult relative of a student, or a school staff member and wish to report an incident of alleged bullying harassment, or intimidation, complete this form and return it to the principal at the student victim’s school. You may contact the school for additional information or assistance at any time.

(PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION)

Today’s date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

School: \_\_\_\_\_

School System: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>PERSON REPORTING INCIDENT</b>	Name: _____
Telephone: _____	E-mail: _____
Place an X in the appropriate box: <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/guardian of a student <input type="checkbox"/> Close adult relative of a student <input type="checkbox"/> School Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Bystander	

1. Name of alleged student victim(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of alleged witness(es) (if known):  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name(s) of alleged offender(s) (if known):	Age	School	Is he/she a student?
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

4. On what date(s) did the incident happen?:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Month    Day    Year                    Month    Day    Year                    Month    Day    Year

5. Place an X next to the statement(s) that best describes what happened (choose all that apply):

- Any bullying, harassment, or intimidation that involves physical aggression (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Getting another person to hit or harm the student
- Teasing, name-calling, making critical remarks, or threatening, in person or by other means
- Demeaning and making the victim of jokes
- Making rude and/or threatening gestures
- Excluding or rejecting the student
- Intimidating, extorting, or exploiting
- Spreading harmful rumors or gossip
- Related to the student's disability
- Related to the student's perceived sexual orientation
- Cyber bullying (e.g. social media including Facebook, Twitter, Vine, Snapchat, Periscope, kik, Instagram, etc.)
- Electronic communication (e.g. email, text, sexting, etc.)
- Gang related
- Gang recruitment
- Human trafficking/Prostitution recruitment
- Racial Harassment
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual in nature
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Where did the incident happen (choose all that apply)?

- On school property       At a school-sponsored activity or event off school property       Via Internet- sent off school property
- On a school bus       On the way to/from school\*       Via Internet- sent on school property

\*Will be collected unless specifically excluded by local board policy

7. Describe the incident(s), including what the alleged offender(s) said or did. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

8. Why did the bullying, harassment or intimidation occur? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

9. Did a physical injury result from this incident? Place an X next to one of the following:

- No                       Yes, but it did not require medical attention                       Yes, and it required medical attention

10. If there was a physical injury, do you think there will be permanent effects?     Yes     No

11. Was the student victim absent from school as a result of the incident?     Yes     No  
If yes, how many days was the student victim absent from school as a result of the incident? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Did a psychological injury result from this incident? Place an X next to one of the following:  
 No     Yes, but psychological services have not been sought     Yes, and psychological services have been sought

13. Is there any additional information you would like to provide? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section: K-02 Workplace Violence Prevention and Response

The purpose of this document is to provide a policy and procedure for the prevention of and response to violence in the workplace and to provide a safe workplace for employees and the public. This policy and procedure applies to classified, exempt, temporary, seasonal and contractual employees of Anne Arundel County government and all volunteer services, and supersedes any previously issued handbook, or other direction or document.

### I. Policy

Anne Arundel County prohibits workplace violence in any form. No threatening or violent behavior is acceptable and no violent incident will be ignored. Therefore, except as may be required as a condition of employment:

1) No employee shall bring into any County worksite any weapon or dangerous instrument as defined herein; 2) No employee shall use, attempt to use, or threaten to use any such weapon or dangerous instrument on or in a County worksite; and 3) No employee shall cause or threaten to cause death or physical injury to any individual on a County worksite. Violation of the directives issued herein shall subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment or immediate termination of a contractual agreement or volunteer status. Action will be taken on all reports of violence, without exception, and may include disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The County will not tolerate acts of violence or threats of violence committed by or against County employees or members of the public on County property or while engaging in Anne Arundel County business at other locations (non-County facilities). The County will provide support mechanisms for and enforce its commitment to a workplace free from violence, and will work with law enforcement agencies to aid in the prosecution of anyone inside or outside of the organization who commits violent acts against employees.

It is the shared obligation of all employees, law enforcement agencies, and employee organizations to individually and jointly act to prevent or defuse actual or implied violent behavior at work. No employee acting in good faith, who reports real or implied violent behavior will be subject to retaliation or harassment based upon his or her report.

The objectives of this policy are as follows:

To reduce the potential for violence in and around the workplace;

To encourage and foster a work environment that is characterized by respect and healthy conflict resolution;

To mitigate the negative consequences for employees who experience or encounter violence while at work;

To protect employees who are working and who may be experiencing threats of violence from anyone, either an employee or a non-employee; and

To protect employees who are working off County property or in non-County facilities.

To ensure that any complaint of violence or the threat of violence is taken seriously and is thoroughly and promptly investigated.

### II. Definitions

**Workplace Violence:** Actions or words that endanger or harm an employee or result in an employee having a reasonable belief that he or she is in danger. Workplace violence includes, but is not limited to verbal or physical harassment, verbal or physical threats, intimidating or threatening behaviors, assaults or other violence, vandalism, domestic violence (abusive behavior used by one person in a relationship to control the other), robberies, commercial crimes, sexual assaults or threats, terrorism, hate crimes, work place confrontations, and any other behavior that causes others to feel threatened or unsafe. Workplace violence incidents can be perpetrated by a domestic partner, customers, co-workers, members of the public, or unknown individuals.

**Weapon:** Includes any firearm (including a BB or pellet gun) whether loaded or unloaded, any knife (excluding a small pen or pocket knife), including a switchblade or other knife having an automatic spring release device, a stiletto, a bow and arrow, any baton, bat, club, stick, any martial arts weapon, any electronic defense weapon or other items with the potential to inflict harm.

**Dangerous Instrument:** Any instrument, article, or substance that, under the circumstances, is capable of causing death or physical injury.

**Worksite:** Any location, either permanent or temporary, where an employee performs any work related duty. This includes but is not limited to the buildings and the surrounding perimeters, including the parking lots. It includes all County-owned and leased space, including vehicles and any location where County business is conducted.

**Threat Assessment Team:** A team of County managers whose primary responsibility is to address threats as well as all incidents of workplace violence. The Threat Assessment Team initially will consist of:

Chair: Personnel Officer (or designee)

Vice-Chair Central Services Officer or Anne Arundel County Risk Manager

Representatives from:

Department of Public Works



Department of Planning and Zoning  
 Department of Recreation and Parks  
 Office of Facilities Management  
 Office of Law  
 Office of Emergency Management  
 Police Department  
 Fire Department

Upon completion of a general assessment of resources and potential incidents and the corresponding training to first line supervisors and communication to all employees, the Threat Assessment Team will be reduced to the following Department Heads or their designees:

Personnel Officer  
 Central Services Officer  
 Police Chief  
 Fire Chief  
 County Attorney

Safety Committee (Inspection Team): A team of employees whose primary responsibility is to determine the presence of hazards, conditions, operations and other situations that may place County workers at risk of occupation-related violent incidents.

### III. Procedure

All reports of workplace violence, without exception will follow the procedures set forth herein.

#### A. Responsibilities

##### 1. Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors are generally responsible for assessing potentially violent situations, responding appropriately, and then communicating information regarding the situation to the appropriate authority. Managers and supervisors are specifically responsible for:

- a. clearly communicating all safety and health policies and procedures involving workplace security to all employees;
- b. evaluating and possibly investigating any report of violence immediately and confidentially, and taking immediate action to defuse a hostile situation. (Refer to Section F-1 for guidance on conducting an investigation.) The incident should be reported as soon as possible to the Appointing Authority and the Threat Assessment Team to evaluate and coordinate a response to an incident of violence;
- c. eliminating the potential for workplace violence; and
- d. making a reasonable effort to review work schedules and enable employees who are victims of domestic violence to obtain medical treatment, counseling, legal assistance, to relocate, or to make other arrangements to create a safer situation for themselves and their children, if applicable.

##### 2. Employees

All employees are responsible for:

- a. reporting all acts of violence or threats of violence witnessed in the workplace;
- b. seeking assistance to resolve personal issues that may lead to acts of violence in the workplace, including utilizing the Employee Assistance Program, when necessary;
- c. cooperating in any investigation regarding violence in the workplace; and
- d. reporting to managers and supervisors any dangerous or threatening situations that occur outside of the workplace which may affect workplace safety, such as instances where a protection order has been issued, and there is a reasonable concern that an individual may seek to violate an order by threatening or engaging in acts of violence in the workplace.

##### 3. Threat Assessment Team

The Threat Assessment Team is responsible for:

- a. serving as the primary contact for the reporting of all incidents of workplace violence;
- b. assessing the vulnerability in any or all County facilities of the potential for workplace violence and making recommendations on

preventive actions to be taken;

c. reviewing all reports, to the extent permitted by law, concerning acts of violence within the workplace that have been reported or are suspected including, but are not limited to: Workers' Compensation claim forms, police reports, internal investigations, incident reports, training records, and grievances;

d. making recommendations concerning the reported incidents to diffuse the current problem and to avoid the problem in the future;

e. reporting incidents of workplace violence to the Chief Administrative Officer;

f. developing a training program for all employees that encompasses the key elements of this workplace violence policy including the assessment of and appropriate response to potentially violent situations; and

g. auditing the County's overall workplace violence policy.

#### 4. Safety Committee (Inspection Team)

In addition to responsibilities regarding workplace safety, Anne Arundel County's Safety Committee will serve as the County's Inspection Team and in the performance of their duties as Safety Committee members will also inspect workplaces and evaluate the work tasks of employees to determine the presence of hazards and other situations that may place County workers at risk of occupation-related violent incidents.

#### 5. Personnel Officer

The Personnel Officer is responsible for:

a. ensuring that a written record of the violent act is placed in the employee's or County official's personnel file (to remain indefinitely) if it is determined the violent act was perpetrated by a County official or employee;

b. maintaining an accurate record of all workplace violence incidents for a minimum period of 5 years or for a time specified in the Statute of Limitations for Anne Arundel County;

c. maintaining records of training program contents, and the sign-in sheets of all attendees for 5 years in addition to maintaining records on the qualifications of the trainers; and

d. overseeing the implementation of this Policy and Chairing the Threat Assessment Team.

#### B. Procedure For Incident Response And Evaluation

##### 1. When a violent incident occurs:

a. If the act or altercation constitutes an emergency, immediately call 911 and follow their instructions. Report the emergency to the Personnel Officer, Appointing Authority, and the Chief Administrative Officer.

b. In instances that are not emergency situations, report the act immediately to your supervisor or manager, department head, or member of the Threat Assessment Team.

c. Complete a Workplace Violence Incident Documentation Sheet and return it to your supervisor or manager, department head, or member of the Threat Assessment Team.

d. The supervisor or manager, department head, or member of the Threat Assessment Team will record a list of witnesses and provide them with the Workplace Violence Incident Documentation Sheet and Incident Witness Report Forms to complete immediately.

e. The original form, along with any associated documentation, will be forwarded to the Inspection Team for investigation and appropriate action. A copy shall be provided for the chair of the Threat Assessment Team.

Note: The Office of Emergency Management will be provided the names, mobile phone numbers and home phone numbers of the members of the Threat Assessment Team. In the event a work-related incident occurs involving violence or threats directed at the County, or involving County elected officials or employees, after hours or on weekends, notification will be made to the Chair or any subsequent member of the Team. The member initially contacted will determine an appropriate course of action and notify the other members.

f. The Safety Committee (Inspection Team) will respond immediately to investigate, assess, and take appropriate remedial action relative to:

- 1) condition of the workplace site;
- 2) cause of the incident;
- 3) contributing factors;
- 4) risk precaution measures in effect, if any;
- 5) employee training; and
- 6) employee debriefing and counseling

g. The Safety Committee (Inspection Team) will submit their preliminary findings to the Threat Assessment Team within twenty-four hours. These findings shall include, but are not limited to:

- 1) a list of deficiencies, if applicable, found at the workplace in question;
  - 2) recommendations to correct the workplace deficiencies;
  - 3) recommendations for training or retraining of employees; and
  - 4) recommendations for changes to those portions of the Workplace Violence policy applicable to the incident.
- h. The final written report of the Inspection Team will be submitted to the Personnel Officer (or his designee) for review and action.

#### IV. Confidentiality of Information

Employees involved in handling a workplace violence incident are directed to observe to the extent possible confidentiality with respect to the events and persons involved. Information should be handled on a "need to know" basis.

Forms and Practices:

Form: Workplace Violence Incident Documentation Sheet and Incident Witness Report

## Appendix IV: Maryland Bullying Laws

### Article – Criminal Law

#### §3-607. Hazing

(a) A person may not recklessly or intentionally do an act or create a situation that subjects a student to the risk of serious bodily injury for the purpose of an initiation into a student organization of a school, college, or university.

(b) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 6 months or a fine not exceeding \$500 or both.

(c) The implied or express consent of a student to hazing is not a defense under this section.

#### §3-805. Misuse of electronic communication or interactive computer service

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) “Electronic communication” means the transmission of information, data, or a communication by the use of a computer or any other electronic means that is sent to a person and that is received by the person.

(3) “Interactive computer service” means an information service, system, or access software provider that provides or enables computer access by multiple users to a computer server, including a system that provides access to the Internet and cellular phones.

(b) (1) A person may not maliciously engage in a course of conduct, through the use of electronic communication, that alarms or seriously annoys another:

(i) with the intent to harass, alarm, or annoy the other;

(ii) after receiving a reasonable warning or request to stop by or on behalf of the other; and

(iii) without a legal purpose.

(2) A person may not use an interactive computer service to maliciously engage in a course of conduct that inflicts serious emotional distress on a minor or places a minor in reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury with the intent:

(i) to kill, injure, harass, or cause serious emotional distress to the minor; or

(ii) to place the minor in reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury.

(c) It is not a violation of this section for any of the following persons to provide information, facilities, or technical assistance to another who is authorized by federal or State law to intercept or provide electronic communication or to conduct surveillance of electronic communication, if a court order directs the person to provide the information, facilities, or technical assistance:

(1) a provider of electronic communication;

(2) an officer, employee, agent, landlord, or custodian of a provider of electronic communication; or

(3) a person specified in a court order directing the provision of information, facilities, or technical assistance to another who is authorized by federal or State law to intercept or provide electronic communication or to conduct surveillance of electronic communication.

(d) Subsection (b)(1) of this section does not apply to a peaceable activity intended to express a political view or provide information to others.

(e) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or a fine not exceeding \$500 or both.

## **Article – Education**

### **§7–424. Reporting incidents of harassment or intimidation against students**

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) “Bullying, harassment, or intimidation” means intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication, that:

(i) Creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being and is:

1. Motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or

2. Threatening or seriously intimidating; and

(ii) 1. Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or

2. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

(3) “Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

(b) (1) The Department shall require a county board to report incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation against students attending a public school under the jurisdiction of the county board.

(2) An incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation may be reported by:

- (i) A student;
- (ii) The parent, guardian, or close adult relative of a student; or
- (iii) A school staff member.

(c) (1) The Department shall create a standard victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report form.

(2) Each victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report form shall:

- (i) Identify the victim and the alleged perpetrator, if known;
- (ii) Indicate the age of the victim and alleged perpetrator;
- (iii) Describe the incident, including alleged statements made by the alleged perpetrator;
- (iv) Indicate the location of the incident;
- (v) Identify any physical injury suffered by the victim and describe the seriousness and any permanent effects of the injury;
- (vi) Indicate the number of days a student is absent from school, if any, as a result of the incident;
- (vii) Identify any request for psychological services initiated by the victim or the victim’s family due to psychological injuries suffered; and
- (viii) Include instructions on how to fill out the form and the mailing address to where the form shall be sent.

(3) A county board shall distribute copies of the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report form to each public school under the county board's jurisdiction.

(d) (1) Each county board shall submit summaries of report forms filed with the county board to the State Board on or before January 31 each year.

(2) A county board shall delete any information that identifies an individual.

(e) The information contained in a victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report form in accordance with subsection (c) of this section:

(1) Is confidential and may not be redisclosed except as otherwise provided under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or this section; and

(2) May not be made a part of a student's permanent educational record.

(f) (1) The Department shall submit a report on or before March 31 each year to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, consisting of a summary of the information included in the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report forms filed with the county boards the previous year.

(2) The report submitted by the Department shall include, to the extent feasible:

(i) A description of the act constituting the bullying, harassment, or intimidation;

(ii) The age of the victim and alleged perpetrator;

(iii) The allegation of the alleged perpetrator's motive;

(iv) A description of the investigation of the complaint and any corrective action taken by the appropriate school authorities;

(v) The number of days a student is absent from school, if any, as a result of the incident; and

(vi) The number of false allegations reported.

#### **§7-424.1. Model policy prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation**

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) “Bullying, harassment, or intimidation” means intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication, that:

(i) Creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being and is:

1. Motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attribute, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or

2. Threatening or seriously intimidating; and

(ii) 1. Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or

2. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

(3) (i) “Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

(ii) “Electronic communication” includes a social media communication.

(b) (1) By March 31, 2009, the State Board, after consultation with and input from local school systems, shall develop a model policy prohibiting bullying, harassment, or intimidation in schools.

(2) The model policy developed under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall include:

(i) A statement prohibiting bullying, harassment, and intimidation in schools;

(ii) A statement prohibiting reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation;

(iii) A definition of bullying, harassment, or intimidation that is either the same as set forth in subsection (a)(2) of this section or a definition that is not less inclusive than that definition;

(iv) Standard consequences and remedial actions for persons committing acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and for persons engaged in reprisal or retaliation;



(v) Standard consequences and remedial actions for persons found to have made false accusations;

(vi) Model procedures for reporting acts of bullying, harassment, and intimidation;

(vii) Model procedures for the prompt investigation of acts of bullying, harassment, and intimidation;

(viii) Information about the types of support services available to the student bully, victim, and any bystanders; and

(ix) Information regarding the availability and use of the bullying, harassment, or intimidation form under § 7-424 of this subtitle.

(3) By September 1, 2016, and every 5 years thereafter, the State Board, after consultation with local school systems, shall update the model policy required under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(c) (1) Each county board shall establish a policy prohibiting bullying, harassment, or intimidation at school based on the model policy.

(2) The policy shall address the components of the model policy specified in subsection (b)(2) of this section.

(3) A county board shall develop the policy in consultation with representatives of the following groups:

(i) Parents or guardians of students;

(ii) School employees and administrators;

(iii) School volunteers;

(iv) Students; and

(v) Members of the community.

(4) By January 1, 2017, and every 5 years thereafter, each county board shall update its policy based on the State Board's update of the model policy under subsection (b)(3) of this section.

(d) Each county board shall publicize its policy in student handbooks, school system Web sites, and any other location or venue the county board determines is necessary or appropriate.

(e) Each county board policy shall include information on the procedure for reporting incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, including:

(1) A chain of command in the reporting process; and

(2) The name and contact information for an employee of the Department, designated by the Department, who is familiar with the reporting and investigation procedures in the applicable school system.

(f) (1) By July 1, 2009, each county board shall submit its policy to the State Superintendent.

(2) By January 1, 2017, and every 5 years thereafter, each county board shall submit its updated policy to the State Superintendent.

(g) Each county board shall develop the following educational programs in its efforts to prevent bullying, harassment, and intimidation in schools:

(1) An educational bullying, harassment, and intimidation prevention program for students, staff, volunteers, and parents; and

(2) A teacher and administrator development program that trains teachers and administrators to implement the policy.

(h) (1) A school employee who reports an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation under this section in accordance with the county board's policy established under subsection (c) of this section is not civilly liable for any act or omission in reporting or failing to report an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation under this section.

(2) The provisions of this section may not be construed to limit the legal rights of a victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

### **§7-424.3. Bullying, harassment, and intimidation policy**

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) "Bullying, harassment, and intimidation" means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, including an electronic communication, that:

(i) 1. Physically harms an individual;

2. Damages an individual's property;

3. Substantially interferes with an individual's education or learning environment; or

4. Places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual's person or property; and

(ii) 1. Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or

2. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

(3) "Electronic communication" means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

(4) "Nonpublic school" means a nonpublic school that participates in State-funded education programs.

(b) By March 31, 2012, each nonpublic school shall adopt a policy prohibiting bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

(c) The policy adopted under subsection (b) of this section shall include:

(1) A statement prohibiting bullying, harassment, and intimidation in the school;

(2) A statement prohibiting reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation;

(3) A definition of bullying, harassment, and intimidation that is either the same as set forth in subsection (a) of this section or a definition that is not less inclusive than that definition;

(4) Standard consequences and remedial actions for persons committing acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and for persons engaged in reprisal or retaliation, including:

(i) Specific penalties for persons who repeatedly commit acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation; and

(ii) A requirement that persons who commit acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation receive educational and therapeutic services concerning bullying prevention;

(5) Standard consequences and remedial actions for persons found to have made false accusations;

(6) Standard procedures for reporting acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, including a chain of command in the reporting process;

(7) Standard procedures for the prompt investigation of acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation;

(8) Standard procedures for protecting victims of bullying, harassment, or intimidation from additional acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, and from retaliation; and

(9) Information about the types of support services available to a student bully or victim and any bystanders.

(d) A nonpublic school is encouraged to develop the policy adopted under subsection (b) of this section in consultation with the following groups:

- (1) Parents or guardians of students;
- (2) School employees and administrators;
- (3) School volunteers; and
- (4) Students.

(e) A nonpublic school is encouraged to publicize the policy adopted under subsection (b) of this section in student handbooks, on the school's Web site, and any other location or venue the school determines is necessary or appropriate.

(f) A nonpublic school is encouraged to develop the following educational programs in its efforts to prevent bullying, harassment, and intimidation:

- (1) An educational bullying, harassment, and intimidation prevention program for students, staff, volunteers, and parents; and
- (2) A teacher and administrator development program that trains teachers and administrators to implement the policy adopted under subsection (b) of this section.

(g) An employee of a nonpublic school who reports an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation in accordance with the nonpublic school's policy adopted under subsection (b) of this section is not civilly liable for any act or omission in reporting or failing to report an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation in accordance with the policy.

(h) The provisions of this section may not be construed to:

- (1) Limit the legal rights of a victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation;
- or
- (2) Require a statewide policy in nonpublic schools relating to bullying, harassment, and intimidation.