

Field Community Consolidated School District #3 Bullying Policy

Updated 2-2015

Field Consolidated School District #3 believes this policy to be in full compliance with rules and regulations of the Illinois School Code. The purpose of the Policy on bullying is to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that no student will be subject to any bullying and to otherwise secure a safe, orderly and respectful environment that promotes teaching and learning. A feature of this Policy is the clarifying Comments to each section. The purpose of these Comments is to provide practical examples to assist in the interpretation and application of the Policy.

I. The Illinois General Assembly finds that “a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve and that bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with students’ ability to learn and participate in school activities. Because of the negative outcomes associated with bullying in schools, the General Assembly finds that school districts and non-public, non-sectarian elementary and secondary schools should educate students, parents, and school district personnel about what behaviors constitute prohibited bullying.” 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7. and “Every school district shall create and maintain a policy on bullying and must communicate its policy to students and their parents on an annual basis.” Id. and “The School board, in consultation with the parent-teacher advisory committees on student discipline and other community based organizations, must include provisions in the student discipline policy to address students who have demonstrated behaviors that put them at risk for aggressive behavior, including without limitation bullying, as defined in the policy. These provisions must include procedures for notifying parents or legal guardians and early intervention procedures based on available community based and district resources.” 105 ILCS 5/10-20.14(d).

II. Bullying is any type of conduct that may:

1. Reflect a coercive imbalance of power; AND

2. Is purposeful and repeated; AND

3. Places an individual in reasonable fear of substantial detrimental effect to his or her person or property or to otherwise substantially interfere in participating in any activity. Clarifying Comments
The Illinois legislature defines “Bullying” as meaning: “Any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

(1) Placing the student or students in reasonable fear or harm to the student’s or students’ person or property;

(2) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s or students’ physical or mental health;

(3) Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ academic performance; or

(4) Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.” 105 ILCS 5/27-23(b).

The Illinois legislature also authorizes school boards and their discipline advisory committees broad discretion to establish appropriate behavioral standards for their respective schools, which take into consideration but are not limited to conduct prohibited by State and federal laws. See, 105 ILCS 5/10- 20.14(d).

The statutory definition of bullying set forth in the School Code is intended to be incorporated into the Policy definition of bullying, but is not intended to limit conduct that otherwise falls

within the Policy definition from being classified as bullying conduct if that conduct does not also fall within the School Code's definition. For purposes of this Policy "Conduct" includes:

- Physical acts, such as physical contact with another, stalking, sexual assault and destruction or damage to property of another;
- Written and electronic communication any medium as well as verbal threats made to another or blackmail, or demands for protection money;
- Non-verbal threats or intimidation such as aggressive menacing gestures may also be considered conduct for purposes of this policy;
- Use of school property, including computers, the electronic network, or any other electronic device, to communicate with others; and.
- Any of the above conduct which occurs off school grounds when such conduct creates. Or reasonably can be expected to create, a substantial disruption in the school setting and/or at school sponsored activities and events.

In addition to that conduct described above, examples of conduct that may constitute bullying included the following:

- Blocking access to school property or facilities;
- Stealing or hiding or otherwise defacing books, backpacks or other personal possessions;
- Verbal, written, or electronic means of repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking putdowns, or demeaning humor relating to a student's race, color, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics, whether or not the student actually possesses them, that could reasonably be expected to result in the disruption of school activities or that results in a hostile educational environment for the student.

Conduct that would not ordinarily be considered bullying for purposes of this policy includes:

- Mere teasing
- "talking trash"
- Trading insults · The expression of ideas or beliefs (expressions protected by the First Amendment), so long as such expression is not lewd, profane, or intended to intimidate or harass another.

Field school may set rules or policies for civility, courtesy and responsible behavior to address conduct of this type. The examples set out in these Clarifying Comments are meant to be illustrative and are not exhaustive of conduct that may or may not be considered "Bullying." Nor are they intended to limit the exercise of discretion granted to school administrators under Sections 5/10-20.12(d) or 5/10-22.6 of the School Code for addressing instances of student misconduct.

III. Bullying is NOT acceptable and is strictly prohibited. Bullying conduct that is covered by this Policy is conduct that occurs on school property or at school or at school sponsored activities or events; while students are being transported or walking to or from school or school sponsored activities or events; while students are waiting at school bus stops, or when the conduct otherwise would substantially impede the educational environment, regardless of where the conduct occurs. Any student who engages in bullying will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion and referral to local law enforcement. A student's bullying conduct also may be addressed through any other behavioral interventions. Any student who is a bystander to any bullying conduct and who fails to take any action to discourage the bullying conduct also may be subject to appropriate discipline. No student shall be retaliated against for reporting bullying conduct. Any student who is determined to intentionally have falsely accused another of bullying shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

Clarifying Comments: The highest risk location for bullying occurs: on the school bus, in the halls, on the school playground, in the school cafeteria, in locker rooms, and in bathrooms, and through use of the Internet and cellular phones This Policy applies to bullying that may occur at any of these locations, but is not limited to these locations. For purposes of this Policy, a bystander to bullying is a witness to bullying conduct and may be considered to be aiding or abetting the bully. This aiding and abetting includes, but may not be limited to, standing idly by, looking away or otherwise actively encouraging the bully. In determining the appropriate response to or discipline of students who engage in bullying behavior, the school's administration should consider the ages and maturity of the students involved; they type, frequency and any pattern of behaviors; the context in which the incidents occurred; and any other relevant circumstances. In this regard, this Policy recognizes the sound principles in any response or discipline that may be imposed.

IV. Anyone who witnesses any conduct that could constitute bullying shall make a written report as soon as possible to any school staff member. This report then shall be submitted to the principal or designees(s) responsible for student discipline who as soon as practicable shall conduct or cause to be conducted a thorough investigation of the alleged incident. The District may request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to student networking sites if the district has reasonable cause to believe that the student's account contains evidence that the student has violated a disciplinary rule or policy. Discipline and/or other intervention appropriate to the outcome of the investigation shall be imposed consistent with the School District's adopted discipline code. The police and State's Attorney shall be notified immediately of all incidents involving bodily harm, property damage or any conduct which reasonably is believed by the school administrator(s) to be a violation of the criminal laws. The investigation of any such bullying conduct shall proceed in cooperation with the police and other applicable law enforcement authorities. The School District always retains its' right to investigate and impose any discipline for violation of this Policy, whether or not criminal charges are pursued. The Superintendent or designee periodically shall review disciplinary incidents involving bullying conduct or conduct placing students at risk of bullying for purposes of monitoring:

- 1) the effectiveness of the District's programs and interventions in creating a climate of mutual respect and civility in the school community, and
- 2) the application of this policy in a non-discriminatory manner. A report of the Superintendent's findings shall be made to the Board of Education at least once a year.

V. Parents / legal guardians will be notified of this Policy annually through receipt of the school's Handbook. The Policy is also posted on the school's website. The school shall include a program on bullying prevention and character instruction appropriate to all grade levels. Such a prevention program includes incorporating student social and emotional development, as required by State law.

Field Community Consolidated District # 3 Acceleration Policy

Field's Board of Education believes that all students across the achievement spectrum should be challenged and supported to develop their potential. For some students needing a higher level of instruction, this can best be achieved by affording them access to curricula and learning environments more commonly provided to older students. This policy describes the process that shall be used for evaluating students for possible accelerated placement and identifying students who should be granted early admission to kindergarten or first grade, accelerated in one or more individual subject areas, or promoted to a higher grade level than their same-age peers. The policy shall be applied equitably and systematically to all students referred for acceleration regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gifted and talented status, twice/multiple exceptionalities, English language proficiency, or socioeconomic background.

1. Definitions

- a. *“Accelerated placement” is the placement of a student at the instructional level that best matches that student’s needs by allowing access to a curriculum that is usually reserved for children who are older or in higher grades than the student. Accelerated placement options must include, but need not be limited to, early entrance to kindergarten and first grade, individual subject acceleration, and whole grade acceleration. Accelerated placement is not limited to those students who have been identified as gifted and talented, but rather is open to all students who demonstrate high ability and who may benefit from accelerated placement. Eligibility for accelerated placement shall also be open to all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, English language proficiency, or socioeconomic status.*
- b. *“Early entrance to kindergarten” is the admission of a student to kindergarten who will not yet be five years old by September 1 of that school year.*
- c. *“Early entrance to first grade” is the admission of a student to first grade who will not yet be six years old by September 1 of that school year and who has not completed kindergarten. Students who are younger than six upon starting first grade but who were admitted early to kindergarten do not need to be reevaluated prior to admission to first grade.*
- d. *“Whole grade acceleration” is the practice of assigning a student to a higher grade level than is typical given the student’s age on a full-time basis for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.*
- e. *“Individual subject acceleration” is the practice of assigning a student to specific content at a higher instructional level than is typical given the student’s grade for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more subject areas.*

2. Publication of Acceleration Policy and Referral Procedures/Forms

- a. *Copies of this policy and referral forms for evaluation for possible early entrance to kindergarten or first grade, whole grade acceleration, and individual subject acceleration, shall be made available to district staff and parents at each school building and shall be published on the school district website.*
- b. The Principal (or his or her designee) of each school building shall solicit referrals of students for evaluation for possible accelerated placement annually, and ensure that all staff he or she supervises are aware of procedures for referring students for evaluation for possible accelerated placement.

3. Initiation of Evaluation Process

- a. Referral Procedures
 - i. Referrers: Any student residing in the district may be referred by a teacher, administrator, gifted education specialist, guidance counselor, school psychologist, or a parent or legal guardian of the student to the Principal for evaluation for possible accelerated placement. A student may refer himself or herself through a district staff member who has knowledge of the referred student’s abilities.
 - ii. Referral Intake Form: The referrer shall complete the appropriate section (parent/teacher/administrator/school counselor, psychologist or gifted education

specialist) of the referral form and submit it to the Principal. The Principal shall then forward the referral form to the appropriate individuals so that the remaining sections may be completed within 14 days. The submission of the referral intake form by the initial referrer starts the clock on the thirty (30) day evaluation process.

b. *Written Parental Consent: The Principal of the referred student's school shall obtain written permission from the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to evaluate the student for possible accelerated placement.* Consent is presumed when the individual referring the student for evaluation is a student's parent or legal guardian. The district shall evaluate all students who are referred for evaluation and whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) have granted permission to evaluate the student for possible accelerated placement.

c. Timeline:

- i. Students residing in the district who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement during the school year shall receive a determination within thirty (30) days.
- ii. Students residing in the district who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement sixty (60) or more days prior to the start of the school year shall be evaluated in advance of the start of the school year such that the student may be placed in the accelerated placement on the first day of school. In all other cases, including but not limited to students transferring into the district, evaluations of a referred student shall be scheduled at the student's Principal's discretion and placed in the accelerated setting(s) at the time recommended by those involved in determining whether the student should be accelerated.

4. Evaluation Process: *The policy must utilize a fair and equitable decision-making process that involves multiple persons and includes a student's parents or guardians.* This multi-person evaluation team is responsible for gathering relevant, reliable and comprehensive data in order to determine whether and what type of accelerated placement is appropriate for that student.

a. Multiple Evaluators/Decision Makers

i. *A diverse evaluation team shall consist of multiple participants.* Recommended team members include:

1. Gifted coordinator or the appointed designee responsible for understanding the needs of an accelerated student
2. Principal/assistant principal from the student's current school
3. Most current teacher of that student
4. School psychologist and/or school social worker

ii. *A parent or legal guardian of the student shall be invited to participate in the evaluation process.* The parent/legal guardian shall be allowed to invite an individual who is knowledgeable about the student's academic abilities. Accommodations should be made for parents with disabilities or who are not fluent English speakers to enable them to participate fully in the process.

b. Multiple Evaluation Criteria

i. *The evaluation process shall include multiple valid, reliable indicators.* The criteria used to determine whether accelerated placement is appropriate should be reasonable, e.g., helpful in assessing whether a student is ready for the accelerated placement and not whether he or she has already mastered the content at that level. For students referred for possible whole grade acceleration, use of the Iowa Acceleration Scale is recommended. For students referred for possible acceleration in an individual subject area, above-grade-level assessment in that subject area is recommended as part of the evaluation process.

ii. If any assessments are utilized as part of the evaluation process: A) the instruments shall be appropriate given the needs of the student (e.g., linguistically appropriate instruments should be used with English Learner students); B) any assessment accommodations to which the student may be entitled generally (e.g., by the terms of an IEP) shall be available during the evaluation for accelerated placement; and C) parents or guardians shall be notified about any assessments that will be conducted as part of the evaluation at the time that they are asked to consent in writing to the evaluation pursuant to Section 3(b).

iii. The student's desire to be accelerated shall be considered in the decision-making and transition planning process.

c. *Procedures for Notifying Parents/Guardians of the Decision is Required**

i. A parent or legal guardian of the evaluated student shall be notified in writing of the outcome of the evaluation process within thirty (30) days of the submission of the referral to the referred student's Principal. This notification shall include instructions for appealing the outcome of the evaluation process.

ii. A parent or legal guardian of the referred student may appeal in writing the decision of the evaluation team to the local Superintendent within thirty (30) days of being notified of the committee's decision. The Superintendent shall review the appeal and notify the parent or legal guardian who filed the appeal of his or her final decision within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal. The Superintendent's decision shall be final. However, the student may be referred and evaluated again at the next available opportunity if he or she is again referred for evaluation by an individual eligible to make referrals as described in this policy.

d. Communication of the Decision to Student's Educators: The decision that a student is eligible for accelerated placement shall be communicated to the student's current teacher(s) and to all teachers (including specialists) and relevant administrative personnel at the level to which the student will be accelerated, to ensure that all are informed and prepared to support the placement.

5. Accelerated Placement

a. The evaluation team shall create a written placement and transition plan for students selected for whole grade acceleration or acceleration in an individual subject area. The written plan will be provided to the student's parents or guardians and will detail the type of acceleration the student will receive and strategies to be used to support the student to facilitate a successful transition to the accelerated setting during a transition period specified in the written plan. Any accommodations or modifications the student is entitled to receive under an IEP or 504 plan shall be available in the accelerated setting.

b. The policy shall provide guidance regarding how the accelerated student's transition will be monitored and by whom. It is recommended that the accelerated student's transition be evaluated no later than thirty (30) days after placement. During the transition period specified in the written plan, the accelerated student's parent or guardian may request in writing that the student be returned to the non-accelerated setting without penalty.

c. At the end of the specified transition period, the student's records will be updated to reflect the student's accelerated status. This is designed to facilitate continuous progress in future years in the same district or if the student matriculates or transfers to a different district.

6. State Requirements

a. The superintendent or his or her designee shall ensure that accelerated students participate in appropriate state assessments based on guidance from the State Board of Education.

b. The superintendent or his or her designee shall ensure that data regarding accelerated placement is collected and reported in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of Education.