

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying – the intentional harassment, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, defamation, threat, or incitement of violence on a continual basis by a student against another student This harassment may occur by a written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that causes or creates a clear and present danger of one of more of the following:

- Physical harm to a public school employee or student or damage to the public school employee's or student's property;
- Substantial interference with a student's education or with a public school employee's role in education;
- A hostile educational environment for one or more students or public school employees due to the severity, persistence, or pervasiveness of the act, ; or
- Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or educational environment.

“Electronic Act” means without limitation a communication or image transmitted by means of an electronic device, including without limitation a telephone, wireless phone or other wireless communications device, computer, or tablet that results in the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or educational environment.

“Harassment” means a pattern of unwelcome verbal or physical conduct relating to another person's constitutionally or statutorily protected status that causes, or reasonably should be expected to cause, substantial interference with the other's performance in the school environment; and

“Substantial Disruption” means without limitation that any one or more of the following occur as a result of the bullying:

- Necessary cessation of instruction or educational activities;
- Inability of students or educational staff to focus on learning or function as an educational unit because of a hostile environment;
- Severe or repetitive disciplinary measures are needed in the classroom or during educational activities; or
- Exhibition of other behaviors by students or educational staff that substantially interfere with the learning environment.

Bullying is prohibited:

- While in school, on school equipment or property
- In school vehicles
- On school buses
- At designated school bus stops
- At school-sanctioned events

- By an electronic act that results in the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or educational environment, whether or not the electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic act is directed specifically at students or school personnel and maliciously intended for the purpose of disrupting school.

Believing that prevention is the strongest means available in eliminating bullying, the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind will offer programs and educational materials regarding the nature of bullying, its consequences should a child choose to engage in this type of behavior, and the procedures for reporting an incident which involves bullying. The information will emphasize that ARDB will not tolerate bullying, and that school employees, volunteers, and students are encouraged to report any instances of bullying without fear of consequences. Any reports will take into account the age of the offending student, the level of seriousness of the behavior, and whether or not the offending student has developed a habit of engaging in bullying behaviors. Appropriate measures will be taken when dealing with such students. A school principal or his/her designee who receives a credible report or complaint of bullying shall promptly investigate or make a record of the investigation and any action taken as a result of the investigation.

Students or adults who knowingly fabricate allegations and falsely accuse a student of being a bully will be subject to disciplinary action. Individuals who withhold information, purposely provide inaccurate facts, or otherwise hinder an investigation of a student for bullying, shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Reporting Procedures

- Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind will be utilizing an anonymous reporting service called "STOPit". STOPit services allow parents, students, or staff to make an anonymous report for bullying/cyberbullying, inappropriate student/teacher relationships, violence/threats, hazing, weapons possession, drugs/alcohol, substance abuse, and intolerance/discrimination. Students can make these reports using an app from their smart phone or on a computer. Reports will be directed to the appropriate administrator for investigation.
- Any student who is a victim of bullying or who witnesses or has reliable information that a student has been victim of bullying should report the incident to the building administrator. The student's identity will be kept anonymous if he/she feels in danger of retaliation.
- Any school employee who witnesses or has reliable information that a student has been a victim of bullying will report the incident to any administrator. Any school employee who reports violations of this policy will be immune from any tort liability that may arise from the failure to remedy the reported incident.

- The building administrator will act promptly to investigate all complaints of bullying. If it is determined that bullying has occurred, the administrator will discipline any student or group of students according to the consequences listed below.

Cyberbullying of School Employees is expressly prohibited and includes, but is not limited to:

- Building a fake profile or website of the employee;
- Posting or encouraging others to post on the Internet private, personal, or sexual information pertaining to a school employee;
- Posting an original or edited image of the school employee on the Internet;
- Accessing, altering, or erasing any computer network, computer data program, or computer software, including breaking into a password-protected account or stealing or otherwise accessing passwords of a school employee; making repeated, continuing, or sustained electronic communications, including electronic mail or transmission, to a school employee;
- Making, or causing to be made, and disseminating an unauthorized copy of data pertaining to a school employee in any form, including without limitation the printed or electronic form of computer data, computer programs, or computer software residing in, communicated by, or produced by a computer or computer network;
- Signing up a school employee for a pornographic Internet site; or
- Without authorization of the school employee, signing up a school employee for electronic mailing lists or to receive junk electronic messages and instant messages.

Disciplinary Actions for Bullying

After completing an investigation of the reported incident, a student who was found to have participated in bullying behavior will be subject to disciplinary action that is appropriate to the degree of seriousness of the bullying behavior. Such disciplinary actions may include:

- Counseling
- Contact by Principal or Counselor with Parents/Guardian Detention
- In-School Suspension
- Revocation of Dormitory Privileges Parent Conference
- Out-of-School Suspension (3 days)
- Due Process Manifestation Determination Contact Police
- Expulsion