

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Madison County School District is committed to providing a safe, orderly, and well-mannered educational setting for students, employees, volunteers and patrons that is free from harassment, intimidation or bullying.

BULLYING AND HARASSING BEHAVIOR

The Mississippi Code of 1972, Section 37-11-67 defines "Bullying or Harassing Behavior" as any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

(a) Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or

(b) Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits and/or substantially disrupts the operations of a school. For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Madison County Schools prohibit the bullying of a student or school employee, retaliation against any person, including a victim, a witness or another person who in good faith provides information concerning a bullying incident. The district has established procedures for providing notice of an incident of bullying to parents/guardians of the victim and parents/guardians of the bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident.

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING BULLYING OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR

The school district's procedures for reporting bullying outline the steps a student should take to obtain assistance and intervention in response to bullying.

- Any student or school employee who feels he or she has been a victim of bullying or harassing behavior, or has witnessed such or has reliable information that another student or employee has been subject to bullying or harassing behavior shall report such conduct to a teacher, counselor, school administrator, or other appropriate school official within 5 calendar days of the alleged act(s).
- The parent or legal guardian of any student who feels he or she has been a victim of bullying or harassing behavior shall complete a complaint form and submit the completed form to the principal. The report will include the name of the person reporting, the specific nature and date of the misconduct, the name of the victim or victims, the names of any witnesses and any other information that would support an investigation of the complaint.
- Families of the alleged victim(s) and perpetrator(s) must be notified.
- The school administration will conduct an investigation into alleged acts.

- Disciplinary actions and procedures taken by the school must adhere to the fundamental right of every student to take “reasonable actions” as may be necessary to defend himself or herself from an attack by another student who has shown evidence of intimidating or threatening behavior through bullying or harassing. Disciplinary measures should not be imposed on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying.
- Disciplinary actions for bullying of a student with disabilities must comply with applicable requirements under federal law.
- Counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to change the behavior of the perpetrator and remediate the impact on the victim.
- The school will provide the victim of bullying with a plan of action that includes appropriate interventions and support to help restore a positive school environment for the victim and the school will also provide the victim or witness to the bullying with regular counseling sessions.
- The parents of all students involved will be notified in writing of the result/outcome of the investigation.
- If the parents of the victim(s) are not satisfied with the principal’s decision, they have 10 working days from the date of notification to appeal to the superintendent.
- The superintendent will notify the parents of his/her decision in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.
- If the victim’s parents are not satisfied with the superintendent’s decision, they have 10 days from receipt of the superintendent’s decision to appeal to the Board.
- The Board shall offer the victim’s parents an audience before the Board within 20 working days of the written appeal request.
- The Board shall notify the victim’s parents within 10 working days of its decision.
- The Board’s decision will be final and all appeals will be exhausted.

Legal Reference: Mississippi Code of 1972, Sections 37-11-67 and 37-11-69.