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## BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

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It is the intent of the Bangor School Committee to provide all students with an equitable opportunity to learn. To that end, the Bangor School Committee has a significant interest in providing a safe, orderly, and respectful school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.

Bullying is detrimental to student learning and achievement. It interferes with the mission of the schools to educate their students and disrupts the operations of the schools. Bullying affects not only students who are targets but also those who participate and witness such behavior.

The Bangor School Committee also believes that promoting ethical and responsible behavior is an essential part of the school unit's educational purpose. Bullying interferes with the accomplishment of this goal.

It is not the Bangor School Committee's intent to prohibit students from expressing their ideas, including ideas that may offend the sensibilities of others, or from engaging in civil debate. However, the Bangor School Committee does not condone and will take action in response to conduct that interferes with students' opportunity to learn, the educational mission of the Bangor schools, and the operation of its schools.

Bullying is not acceptable conduct in schools and is prohibited. Any student who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension and expulsion. A student's bullying behavior may also be addressed through other behavioral interventions.

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" means any physical act or gesture, or any verbal, written, or electronically communicated expression that:

1. Causes physical harm to a student or damages a student's property;
2. Places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to his/her property;
3. Substantially disrupts the instructional program or the orderly operations of the school; or
4. Creates an intimidating, hostile educational environment for the student who is bullied.

This policy applies to bullying that takes place at school or on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity or event, or while students are being transported to or from school or school-sponsored activities or events.

The determination whether particular conduct constitutes bullying requires reasonable consideration of the circumstances, which include the frequency of the behavior at issue, the



location in which the behavior occurs, the ages and maturity of the students involved, the activity or context in which the conduct occurs, and the nature and severity of the conduct.

The Superintendent/designee will be responsible for developing and implementing procedures for:

1. Student and parent reporting of bullying to staff and school administrators;
2. Staff reporting of bullying to school administrators;
3. Review of reports and investigation of bullying incidents;
4. Intervention with and/or discipline of students who engage in bullying;
5. Support for students who are victims of bullying;
6. Training staff and students in bullying prevention; and
7. Periodic evaluation of bullying prevention, intervention, and training efforts in Bangor schools and reporting to the Bangor School Committee upon request.

Students who have been bullied or who observe incidents of bullying are encouraged to report this behavior to a staff member or school administrator. Staff should report bullying to the building principal.

Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an incident of bullying are prohibited. Any student who is determined to have falsely accused another of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences. Consequences may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension, expulsion, and/or reports to law enforcement officials.

Notice of what constitutes bullying, the Bangor School Committee's prohibition against bullying, and the consequences for students who bully shall be communicated to students and parents through the Code of Conduct stated in Student Handbooks as well as other school publications.

Legal Reference: 20-A M.R.S.A. § 1001(15)(H)  
P.L. 2005, ch. 307 § 4-5

ADOPTED: September 13, 2006

