BULLYING

The Governing Board recognizes the harmful effects of bullying on student well-being, student learning, and school attendance and desires to provide a safe school environment that protects students from physical and emotional harm. No individual or group shall, through physical, written, verbal, visual, or other means, harass, sexually harass, threaten, intimidate, cyberbully, cause bodily injury to, or commit hate violence against any student or school personnel, or retaliate against them for filing a complaint or participating in the complaint resolution process.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop strategies for addressing bullying in district schools with the involvement of students, parents/guardians, and staff. As appropriate, the Superintendent or designee may also collaborate with social services, mental health services, law enforcement, courts, and other agencies and community organizations in the development and implementation of effective strategies to promote safety in schools and the community.

Such strategies shall be incorporated into the comprehensive safety plan and, to the extent possible, into the local control and accountability plan and other applicable district and school plans.

Any complaint of bullying shall be investigated and, if determined to be discriminatory, resolved in accordance with law and the district's uniform complaint procedures specified in AR 1312.3. If, during the investigation, it is determined that a complaint is about nondiscriminatory bullying, the principal or designee shall inform the complainant and shall take all necessary actions to resolve the complaint.

If the Superintendent or designee believes it is in the best interest of a student who has been the victim of an act of bullying, as defined in Education Code 48900, the Superintendent or designee shall advise the student's parents/guardians that the student may transfer to another school. If the parents/guardians of a student who has been the victim of an act of bullying requests a transfer for the student pursuant to Education Code 46600, the Superintendent or designee shall allow the transfer in accordance with law and district policy on intradistrict or interdistrict transfer, as applicable.

Any employee who permits or engages in bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Cyberbullying Occurring Outside of School Hours

The Governing Board also believes that all students have the right to a safe, respectful, and supportive educational environment. The district, schools, and community share a responsibility to promote mutual respect, responsible digital behavior, and positive interactions among students both on campus and online.

The District also prohibits acts of cyberbullying that interfere with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

For purposes of this policy, cyberbullying includes bullying conducted through electronic communication or digital platforms. Cyberbullying may include, but is not limited to, sending or posting harmful messages, images, or videos; impersonating another student online; creating false profiles; spreading rumors or threats through electronic means; or encouraging others to participate in online harassment.

Cyberbullying may occur on campus or off campus, inside or outside of school hours. The district is authorized but not required to address reported acts of cyberbullying occurring outside of school hours when the conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive to have the actual and reasonably expected effect of creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment.

Students and staff are expected to promptly report incidents of cyberbullying to the principal or designee. School personnel who witness or become aware of cyberbullying shall take appropriate steps to ensure the incident is reported and addressed consistent with district procedures. Reports of cyberbullying will be reviewed and investigated in a timely manner pursuant to applicable district policies and procedures.

The district may respond to cyberbullying using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework that promotes prevention, early intervention, and appropriate responses to harmful behavior. These supports may include social-emotional learning, restorative practices, trauma-informed approaches, counseling, and schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports.

Students who engage in cyberbullying may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with district policy and applicable law. Alternatives to discipline may include restorative interventions, counseling, behavioral supports, or other corrective measures designed to address the behavior and support a safe school environment.

The district may promote digital citizenship education and responsible use of technology to help prevent cyberbullying and foster respectful online communication.

Students and parents will receive information about the district's cyberbullying policies and reporting procedures through the student handbook, school website, and other communications. The district prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports cyberbullying or participates in an investigation.

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