

Descriptor Term:

JDC

STUDENT BULLYING

ISSUE DATE: 7-19-10

Revised: 12-13-10

Revised: 6-20-11

Revised: 08-14-17

The Jackson County School District does not condone and will not tolerate bullying or harassing behavior. Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any physical act or threatening communication or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics that (a) places a student or school employee in actual or 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 or substantially disrupts the operation of a school. A "hostile environment" means that the alleged 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. Bullying or harassing behavior will not be condoned or tolerated when it takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, or when it takes place off school property when such conduct, in the determination of the school superintendent or principal, renders the offending person's presence in the classroom a disruption to the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils and teacher of such class as a whole.

The Jackson County School District will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no student or school employee is subjected to bullying and harassing behavior by other school employees or students. Likewise, the District will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no person engages in any act of reprisal or retaliation against an alleged victim, witness or a person with reliable information about an act of bullying or harassing behavior. The District requires anyone who has witnessed or has information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior to report the incident to the appropriate school official within three school days of the incident. A student who is a victim or witness subjected to bullying behaviors will obtain assistance and intervention along with counseling options. The District prohibits the imposition of a disciplinary measure on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying, on the basis of that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying. Discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities must comply with requirements under IDEA and other federal laws that may apply.

The Jackson County School Board directs the superintendent or designee to design and implement a prohibition against and procedures for reporting, investigating, and addressing bullying and harassing behaviors. The procedures should be appropriately placed in District personnel policy handbooks, school handbooks that include discipline policies and procedures, and any other policy or procedure that deals with student or employee behavior along with the District website. The discipline policies and procedures must recognize the fundamental right of every student to take "reasonable actions". Furthermore, the Jackson County School District defines one "reasonable action" as promptly reporting the behavior to a teacher, principal, counselor, or other school employee when subjected to bullying or harassing behavior.

The policies and procedures must recognize 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 evidenced menacing or threatening behavior through bullying or harassing.

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The District shall adopt a policy on student suicide prevention. The policies shall be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professions, and suicide prevention experts and will address procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention as established by the State Department of Education. (The Suicide Prevention Policy is pending specific criteria required from the Mississippi Department of Education.)

The District will conduct in-service training on suicide prevention education for all school district employees as developed by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health. Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year and thereafter, the District will comply with all State Department of Education requirements to conduct in-service training provided by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health on suicide prevention education for all newly employed personnel.

Ref: SB 2015; H.B. No. 263, 2017, MS Code Ann 37-11-67 Miss. Code Ann. 37-7-301(e)