

Bullying, Harassment, Hazing and Teen Dating Violence/Abuse

Harassment or bullying of students or staff is an extremely serious violation of the Student Code of Conduct. It can also be a violation of criminal law. The District will not tolerate unlawful bullying and harassment in schools or school campuses, school sponsored buses, school-related or school-sponsored events, or through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of the district. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action initiated pursuant to this policy.

Bullying means *systematically* and *chronically* inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or school employees. It is unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; is carried out repeatedly and is often characterized by an imbalance of power; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to:

Unwanted teasing or taunting	Physical violence
Social exclusion	Theft
Threat	Sexual, religious, or racial/ethnic harassment
Intimidation	Public humiliation
Stalking	Destruction of property

Violations of this policy should be immediately reported to the principal or designee as soon as possible after the alleged incident. The principal or designee will promptly investigate reports of bullying or harassment. If the investigation finds an instance of bullying or harassment has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action.

Harassment means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or employee that:

- Places a student or employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of school

Unlawful Harassment

The District School Board of Pasco County does not tolerate unlawful harassment on any of the prohibited bases, including sex/gender, race, color, national origin, religion, age, marital status and disability. Any student who believes he or she has been subjected to unlawful harassment, including sexual assault, gender-based harassment, or other sex-based harassment should immediately report the unlawful harassment to the principal or designee. The District is committed to taking immediate action to eliminate the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and reduce its effects. Students found to have engaged in acts of unlawful harassment will be subject to prompt disciplinary action. Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to work together to prevent unlawful harassment. Please contact District School Board of Pasco County Equity Manager/Title IX Coordinator: Sandy May, Office for Employee Relations at (813) 794-2322 with concerns.

Hazing

The District School Board of Pasco County prohibits hazing activities of any type and at any time, whether in school facilities, on school property, and/or off school property, if the misconduct is connected to activities or incidents that have occurred on school property.

Hazing means any action or situation that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student at a school with any of grades 6 through 12 for purposes including, but not limited to, initiation or admission into or affiliation with any organization operating under the sanction of a school with any of grades 6 through 12. "Hazing" includes, but is not limited to:

- Pressuring, coercing, or forcing a student into:
 - Violating state or federal law
 - Consuming any food, liquor, drug, or other substance
 - Participating in physical activity that could adversely affect the health or safety of the student
- Any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, or exposure to the elements

Hazing does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions or any activity or conduct that furthers a legal and legitimate objective.

Acts of hazing, unlawful harassment, teen dating violence, bullying and harassment shall be addressed and may result in disciplinary action and/or civil and criminal penalties in accordance with the law. If the principal or designee determines that a student has committed such an act, violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension, assignment to another school or program, recommendation for expulsion, or referral to law enforcement as defined in the Discipline Matrix and elsewhere in district policy and procedure.
(F.S. 1006.135)

Teen Dating Violence and Abuse

Dating violence and abuse shall be defined as emotional, verbal, sexual, or physical abuse of a student who is in a current or was in a past dating relationship by the other person in that dating relationship. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, stalking, threats and/or acts of mental, physical or sexual abuse. It may also be a pattern of demeaning, coercive, abusive actions that amount to emotional or psychological abuse. Dating violence and abuse may also include abuse, harassment, and stalking via electronic devices such as cell phones and computers, as well as harassment through a third party.

Any student who is the victim of an act of dating violence and abuse, or has cause to believe that they are in immediate danger of becoming the victim of an act of dating violence and abuse, should report the matter to the principal or to any member of the school staff.

Any resident of the community or other member of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, who observes an act of dating violence and abuse perpetrated by one student against another, or who has reason to believe that a student is a victim of dating violence and abuse is encouraged to report the matter to a school administrator. These reports can be made either in person or anonymously to Crime Stoppers of Tampa Bay at <http://crimestopperstb.com> (1-800-873-TIPS).

The Board reserves the right to investigate a report of dating violence and abuse regardless of whether the student who is allegedly the victim of the dating violence and abuse wants to pursue the matter. Further, the Department of Children and Families shall be notified if the student who is found to have perpetrated the act of dating violence and abuse is eighteen years of age or older and the student who was the victim of the act of dating violence and abuse is a minor.
(F.S. 1003.42, 1006.148)