

East Gibson School Corporation

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Statement

The East Gibson School Corporation expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. We are committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behaviors that can impede the learning process.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying and cyberbullying, and take prompt actions to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

The East Gibson School Corporation is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. We seek to eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that may impede the learning process. We will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for our school community and provide our students with the skills, knowledge and strategies to identify, prevent, report, and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

This commitment is an integral part of our mission as a learning community.

Definitions Related to Bullying

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (1) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; (2) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; (3) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (4) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (5) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying includes cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

Hazing refers to any activity expected of someone joining a student organization that humiliates, degrades, or risk emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.

Hostile environment is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is directed.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

What Is Not Bullying

Many distressing behaviors are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

Mutual Conflict

In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for "retaliation" in a one-sided way.

Social rejection or dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

Policy Provisions

All East Gibson School Corporation and school employees, volunteers, and contracted service providers who have contact with students are required to verbally report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or principal's designee on the same day that an incident was witnessed or reliable information regarding the occurrence of an incident was received. A written report of the incident shall also be submitted to the school principal or principal's designee within one (1) school day of submitting the verbal report.

Students, parents, and visitors of a school within the East Gibson School Corporation are encouraged to submit a written report of alleged violations of this policy to the principal (or principal's designee) on the same day that an incident was witnessed or reliable information concerning the occurrence of an incident was received. Such a report may be made anonymously. Formal action for violations of the student handbook for students and athletes may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The principal or designee shall conduct a thorough and complete investigation for each report of an alleged incident of bullying received. The investigation shall be initiated by the principal or the principal's designee within one (1) school day of the incident. The principal may appoint additional personnel to assist with the investigation. The investigation shall be completed and the written findings submitted to the principal as soon as possible, but no later than five (5) school days from the date of the report of the alleged incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The principal shall submit the report to the superintendent of the East Gibson School Corporation within ten (10) school days of the completion of the investigation. The superintendent or his/her designee shall report the results of each investigation to the board of education on a quarterly basis during regularly scheduled board meetings.

The principal shall provide the parents of the students who are parties to the investigation with information about the investigation, in accordance with Federal and State law and regulation. The information to be provided to parents includes the nature of the investigation, whether the East Gibson School Corporation found evidence of bullying, and whether consequences were imposed or services provided to address the bullying incident if the evidence of bullying was substantiated. This information is to be provided in an expedited manner.

The superintendent of the East Gibson School Corporation is authorized to define the range of ways in which school staff and the principal or the principal's designee shall respond once an incident of bullying is confirmed, according to the parameters described in the East Gibson School Corporation's student handbook. The East Gibson School Corporation and the school board recognize that some acts of bullying may be isolated incidents requiring that the school officials respond appropriately to the

individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious that they require a response either at the corporation level or by local law enforcement officials. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student who commits an act of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

The principal shall proceed in accordance with the student handbook, as appropriate, based on the investigation findings. As appropriate to the investigation findings, the principal shall ensure the student handbook has been implemented, and provide intervention and/or relevant school services. Intervention and support implemented by the principal or his/her designee should include follow up services to both the targeted student and the bully. The principal shall inform the parents of the students involved in alleged incidents, and, as appropriate, may discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services.

The principal of each school within the East Gibson School Corporation is authorized to acknowledge and respond to instances of false reporting of alleged bullying incidents. The principal is expected to respond with consequences and remedial actions regarding any person found to have falsely accused another as a means of bullying as permitted under P.L. 285-2013 for:

Students - Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student could range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

School Employees - Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee or contracted service provider who has contact with students could entail discipline in accordance with corporation policies, procedures, and agreements.

Visitors and Volunteers - Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer should be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act, including law enforcement reports or other legal actions, removal of building or grounds privileges, or prohibiting contact with students or the provision of student services.

Jurisdiction - Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds
- at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds

- at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school district
- through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school,

and

- at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Note: Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

In addition:

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses bullying, or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

Consequences for Violation of the Anti-Bullying Policy

Depending on the severity and nature of the incident, the East Gibson School Corporation administration, faculty, or staff will take one or more of the following steps when bullying or false reporting of a bullying incident occurs:

Intervention, Warning, and Redirection

A teacher, principal, or staff member will ensure that the immediate behavior stops and reinforce to the student that bullying will not be tolerated. During this meeting with the student, the staff member will redirect the student and come up with a plan for success, in case they find themselves in a similar situation in the future.

Notification of Parents

School staff will notify the parents of involved students. The parents might be asked to meet with the principal or other members of the school staff, including the student's teacher and/or the school counselor.

Resolution with the Target of the Bullying

The student may be required to write a letter of apology to the student who was bullied. Depending upon the nature of the incident, the students involved may meet to help resolve the problem and ensure it does not happen again.

Referral to Professional School Support Staff

The student may meet with the school counselor/social worker to help prevent future violations.

Consequences

The student may serve one or more days of detention. The may also lose school privileges (extra-curricular activity, recess, etc.)

Suspension/Expulsion

In cases of severe or repeated bullying, the student may be suspended and/or expelled under school handbook policies.

PARENTS and STUDENTS: Sign the parent/student contract. Please cut along the dotted line and send the contract portion back to the teacher or school office.

East Gibson School Corporation Anti- Bullying Parent/Student Contract

I, _____, promise that I will do my best to keep our school a safe and caring place. This means that I will:

Treat *everyone* with kindness and respect.

Resolve disagreements with other students peacefully.

Never tease, hurt, call other students names, or bully another student.

Refuse to join in if I see someone else being bullied.

Ask for help from an adult if I am bullied or see someone else being bullied.

I have read and understand the East Gibson School Corporation Anti-Bullying policy.

Date: _____

Student's Signature

Parent's Signature

