

**MCLEAN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

# **POLICY ON BULLYING**

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- **McLean ISD Policy on Bullying**

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. The purpose of the McLean Independent School District's policy on bullying is to assist the district in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, and other similar disruptive behavior. An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on district property or at school-related functions. This policy applies not only to students who directly engage in an act of bullying but also to students who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another student's act of bullying.

- **When is Bullying Prohibited?**

The McLean Independent School District prohibits bullying. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of district policy.

The district prohibits the bullying of any student:

1. During any educational program or activity conducted by the district;
2. During any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity or on a school bus;
3. Through the use of any electronic device or data while on school grounds or on a school bus or through the use of computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of the school district. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action initiated under this section; or
4. Through threats, using any of the above methods, to be carried out on school grounds, which includes threats made outside of school hours that are intended to be carried out during any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity, or on a school bus.

Though an incident of alleged bullying may occur off campus and may not entail threats of acts to occur during school hours, if a student's ability to receive an education or a school's ability to provide an education is significantly impaired, as determined by the district administration, disciplinary sanctions may be imposed.

Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying whether it takes place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function, or in a school vehicle.

A student or witness may file a complaint following the same procedures for bullying against a student that occurs at a bus stop or en route to and from school, and the school shall investigate and/or provide assistance and intervention as the principal or designee deems appropriate, which may include the use of the McLean ISD police department.

- **How is Bullying Defined?**

The following definitions shall apply:

**Bullying** means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students. Bullying of a student may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, extortion, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, ridicule, name-calling, rumor spreading, slurs, jokes, innuendos, demeaning comments, and ostracism of the person or another.

It is further defined as any unwanted purposeful gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e., Internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand-held device) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, ethnicity, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex,

sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, socio-economic background, social/family background, linguistic preference, political beliefs, or a mental, physical, or sensory disability, difference, or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic or because of one's association with a particular person or group of persons.

Bullying also includes, but is not limited to, any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student, that has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment or cause long-term damage, cause discomfort or humiliation, or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation, or is carried out repeatedly and is often characterized by an imbalance of power.

Bullying may involve, but is not limited to

- **Verbal:** Hurtful name-calling, teasing, gossiping, making threats, making rude noises, or spreading hurtful rumors.
- **Nonverbal:** Posturing, making gang signs, leering, staring, stalking, destroying property, using graffiti or graphic images, or exhibiting inappropriate and/or threatening gestures or actions.
- **Physical:** Hitting, punching, pushing, shoving, poking, kicking, tripping, strangling, hair pulling, fighting, beating, biting, spitting, or destroying property.
- **Emotional (Psychological):** Rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, intimidating, humiliating, blackmailing, manipulating friendships, isolating, ostracizing, using peer pressure, or rating or ranking personal characteristics.

Bullying occurs when a student or a group of students engages in written or verbal expression or physical conduct that:

- Will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- Is so sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student; or
- Has the effect of substantially negatively impacting a student's emotional or mental well-being.