

Anti-Harassment Policy

Section 1. Harassment, Violence, and Threats of Violence Prohibited

The Baldwin County Public School System is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect. Harassment, violence, and threats of violence are prohibited and constitute unacceptable behavior that will not be tolerated.

It is hereby the policy of the Baldwin County Public School System to oppose and prohibit, without qualification, unlawful harassment based on real or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

No student shall engage in or be subjected to harassment, violence, threats of violence, or intimidation by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics that have been identified by the Board in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions.

Section 2. Definitions

- a. The term *harassment* as used in this policy means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior that takes place on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to, written, electronic, verbal, or physical acts that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics set forth in Section 3(b) below. To constitute harassment, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:
 - Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
 - Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student.
 - Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school.
 - Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function.
 - Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

- b. The term *violence* as used in this policy means the infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.
- c. The term *threat of violence* as used in this policy means an expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student.
- d. The term *intimidation* as used in this policy means a threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student, especially for the purpose of coercing or deterring the student from participating in or taking advantage of any school program, benefit, activity, or opportunity for which the student is or would be eligible.
- e. The term *hostile environment* as used in this policy means the perception by an affected student or victim that the conduct of another student constitutes a threat of violence or harassment, and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that the conduct constitutes harassment, threat of assault, or assault.
- f. The term *student* as used in this policy means a student who is enrolled in the Baldwin County Public School System.

Section 3. Description of Behavior Expected of Students

- a. Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and to comply with the Student Code of Conduct. Students are expected and required (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting harassment, violence, or intimidation; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student; and (3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that is identified in this policy.
- b. Violence, threats of violence, harassment, and intimidation are prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary consequences and sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the victim of such conduct:
 - The student's race;
 - The student's sex;
 - The student's religion;
 - The student's national origin;
 - The student's disability;

- The student's marital status;
- The student's sexual orientation; or
- The student's gender identity.

Section 4. Consequences for Violations

A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Student Code of Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under authority of this policy.

Punishment shall conform with applicable federal and state disability, anti-discrimination, and education laws and school discipline policies.

Section 5. Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedures

- a. Complaints alleging violations of this policy must be made on Board approved complaint forms available at the principal and/or counselor's office and also located on our school system's website. The complaint must be signed by the student alleging the violation or by the student's parent or legal guardian and delivered to the principal or the principal's designee either by mail or personal delivery. (The complaint **can not** be written by an education employee on behalf of an affected student or his or her parent or guardian.) At the request of the complaining student or the student's parent or legal guardian, incidental or minor violations of this policy may be presented and resolved informally.
- b. Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal's designee will, in their sole discretion, determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the complaint alleges a serious violation, the principal or the principal's designee will undertake a thorough and complete investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence and will be conducted in a reasonably prompt time period taking into account the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violation(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system.
- c. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Student Code of Conduct. A student who personally or through his/her parents deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
- d. Referrals can also be made by parents or guardians to law enforcement and other agencies, even if insufficient to warrant a charge.

- e. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee will inform the student's parent or guardian of the report.

Section 6. Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms

This policy and any procedures, rules, and forms developed and approved to implement this policy will be published, disseminated, and made available to students, parents and legal guardians, and employees by such means and methods as are customarily used for such purposes, including publication on the Baldwin County Public School System's website. This policy also applies to students' participation in school-sponsored functions.