

## **Harassment, intimidation and bullying—not allowed**

*District strengthens policy in line with state standards*

Kidding, teasing and practical jokes have been happening in schools, on playgrounds and in backyards for ages. These actions often lead to hurt feelings and childhood spats, which are quickly resolved with time or an apology amongst friends.

Harassment, intimidation and bullying are something else.

### **What are harassment, intimidation and bullying?**

A person who is harassed, intimidated and/or bullied is exposed to abusive actions repeatedly over time. These actions are forms of violence and may be direct or indirect.

Direct or identifiable actions may include:

- Tripping, shoving or physically harming another person; and
- Verbal threats, name calling, racial slurs and insults; and/or
- Demanding money, property, or some service to be performed.

Indirect actions may be more difficult to detect and may include:

- Rejecting, excluding or isolating target(s); and
- Humiliating target(s) in front of friends; and
- Manipulating friends and relationships; and
- Sending hurtful or threatening e-mails, text messages, instant messages or written notes; and
- Blackmailing, terrorizing or posing dangerous dares; and/or
- Using the Internet to taunt or degrade a target and inviting others to join in posting humiliating notes or messages.

During its July meeting, Clover Park School District's Board of Directors adopted Policy 3207—Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying. In accordance with state law, ([RCW 28A.300.285](#)) district administrators worked with staff members, parents, students and community members to revise and enhance its existing anti-bullying policy and procedures.

"The safety of our students is one of our biggest priorities," said Superintendent Debbie LeBeau. "The district already had an anti-bullying policy, but it was important to update it to reflect changes in state law and our changing world. District administrators worked with staff, students, families and the community to ensure many voices were heard in the process. Harassment, intimidation and bullying are very serious offenses and our new policy and procedures ensure that our students are safe; people know how to report problems; and staff know what to do to immediately stop the inappropriate behaviors."

### **How do I know if my child is a victim?**

If you suspect your child is being harassed, intimidated and/or bullied, do not accept the behaviors as a problem your child has to live with. It's important children understand that telling a trusted adult is not tattling.

Victims of bullying often display tell-tale symptoms. These can include:

- Trouble sleeping;
- Wetting the bed;
- Stomach and headaches;

- Lack of appetite and/ or throwing up;
- Fear of going to school;
- Visiting the school nurse more often;
- Crying before/after school;
- Lack of interest at social events that include other students;
- A marked change in attitude, dress or habits;
- Unexplained broken personal possessions, loss of money, loss of personal items;
- Acting out aggression at home; and/or
- Missing or incomplete school work, or decreased success in class.

**How do I report an incident?**

If the problem is happening at school, report it right away. Reports of harassment, intimidation and bullying may be made verbally or in writing to any staff member— anonymously, confidentially or non-confidentially.

**What’s being done to prevent harassment, intimidation and bullying?**

The newly-adopted procedures include several actions related to the prevention of harassment, intimidation and bullying:

- Students will receive age-appropriate information to help them recognize, report and prevent harassment, intimidation and bullying;
- Staff will receive annual training on the new policy and procedures, including roles and responsibilities;
- District and school websites will share information on how to report instances of harassment, intimidation and bullying—including contact information for the appropriate district administrators and district compliance officer;
- The policy and procedures will also be readily available on district and school websites and in all schools and district offices; and
- Anti-bullying strategies and expectations will be incorporated into the counseling and guidance curriculum.

**What can I do to teach my child about harassment, intimidation and bullying?**

It’s important that parents teach their children the following:

- To respect and treat others the way they want to be treated;
- It isn’t okay to make fun of someone different;
- How to clearly tell someone to stop teasing them before it becomes harassment, intimidation and/or bullying; and
- When to ask for help.

For questions or more information, contact Holly Shaffer, director of student services and district compliance officer, at 583-5154.