

Students

Cyberbullying

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Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to the following: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening to hurt or kill a student or staff member, or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate or hurtful e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or Web site postings (including but not limited to blogs or social networking sites). It is recognized that the author (poster or sender) of the inappropriate material is often disguised (logged on) as someone else.

The District recognizes its responsibility to educate students regarding appropriate behavior on social networking and chat room sites. Therefore, students shall be provided instruction about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking sites and in chat rooms as well as cyberbullying awareness and response.

All forms of cyberbullying or harassment over the Internet are unacceptable and viewed as a violation of this policy and the District's acceptable computer use policy and procedures. Further, the District's computer network and the Internet, whether accessed on campus or off campus, during or after school hours, may not be used for the purpose of cyberbullying, harassment, or other inappropriate behavior.

Cyberbullying shall also include situations which originated outside of school or from a non-District computer that have a direct and negative impact on the victim's academic performance or safety in school. Disciplinary action for cyberbullying originating from a non-District computer shall be based on whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the educational process so that it markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operations of a school. A student who redistributes inappropriate content, as previously described, is also subject to disciplinary action.

Students, teachers, staff, or community members who believe they have been subjected to cyberbullying should report the act(s) of cyberbullying in accordance with the reporting procedure established in the District's bullying policy, 5131.911. Students, staff and community members who believe they have been the victims of such misuse of technology should not erase the offending material from the system. A copy of the material should be printed and brought to the attention of the Principal or Director of Pupil Personnel.

The administration shall investigate all reports of cyberbullying incidents.

Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, loss of computer privileges, detention, suspension, or expulsion for verified perpetrators of cyberbullying. In addition, violation of any law, including when any kind of threat is communicated, when

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a hate crime is committed, or when any sexting images are communicated, shall be reported to local law enforcement officials.

(cf. 0521 – Equal Opportunity)

(cf. 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion and Due Process)

(cf. 5131 – Conduct at School and School-related Activities)

(cf. 5131.8 – Out of School Misconduct)

(cf. 5131.9 – Gang Activity and Association)

(cf. 5131.911 – Bullying Behavior in the Schools)

(cf. 5145.51 – Sexual Harassment)

(cf. 6121 – Nondiscrimination in the Instructional Program)

(cf. 6141.3 – Telecommunication, Computer and Internet Acceptable Use)

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

10-222d; 10-233a through 10-233f

PA 02-119, An Act Concerning Bullying Behavior in Schools and Concerning the Pledge of Allegiance

Kyle P. Packer PPA Jane Packer v. Thomaston Board of Education.

(SC 15862)

Policy adopted: December 13, 2010