

## Students

### Bullying

### Cyberbullying

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 harassment. All forms of harassment over the Internet, commonly referred to as cyberbullying, are unacceptable and viewed as a violation of this policy and the District's acceptable computer use policy and procedures.

### Definitions

**“Cyberbullying”** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

**“Mobile electronic device”** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

Malicious use of the District's computer system to develop programs or to institute practices that harass other users or gain unauthorized access to any entity on the system and/or damage the components of an entity on the network is prohibited. Users are responsible for the appropriateness of the material they transmit over the system. Hate mail, harassment, discriminatory remarks, or other antisocial behaviors are expressly prohibited.

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

Students and community members who believe they have been the victims of such misuses of technology, as described in this policy, should not erase the offending material from the system. A copy of the material should be printed and brought to the attention of the School Climate Specialist/Principal.

All reports of cyberbullying will be investigated promptly in compliance with the District's "Safe School Climate Plan."

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#### Cyberbullying (continued)

In situations in which the cyberbullying originated from a non-school computer, but brought to the attention of school employees, any disciplinary action shall be based upon 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. In addition, such conduct must also be violative of a publicized school policy. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, threats, or making a threat off school grounds, to kill or hurt a teacher or student. A student who redistributes inappropriate content, as previously described, is also subject to disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may include, but are not limited to, the loss of computer privileges, detention, suspension, or expulsion for verified perpetrators of cyberbullying. In addition, when any kind of threat is communicated or when a hate crime is committed, this shall be reported to local law officials.

*For districts participating in the federal E-Rate program:*

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

- (cf. 0521 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)
- (cf. 5131 – Conduct)
- (cf. 5131.21 – Threats or Acts of Violence)
- (cf. 5131.8 – Off School Grounds Misconduct)
- (cf. 5131.82 – Restrictions on Publications and Written or Electronic Material)
- (cf. 5131.912 – Aggressive Behavior)
- (cf. 5131.911 – Bullying)
- (cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
- (cf. 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)
- (cf. 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)
- (cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)

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Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
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)  
Public Law 110-385 Broadband Data Improvement Act/Protecting Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act  
*Wisniewski v. Bd. Of Educ.*, 494 F.3d 34 (2<sup>nd</sup> Cir. 2007)  
*Doninger v. Niehoff*, 257 F. 3d 41 (2<sup>nd</sup> Cir. 2008)  
P.A. 11-232 An Act Concerning The Strengthening of Bullying Laws

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REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 14  
Bethlehem and Woodbury, Connecticut