

BULLYING

What we can do in the National Trail Local School District

DO YOU KNOW THE NT BULLYING POLICY?

- Any intentional written, verbal, graphic, or physical act that a student or group of students exhibits toward another particular student(s) more than once and the behavior both causes mental or physical harm to the other student(s) and is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student(s); or
- Violence within a dating relationship

FACTS TO KNOW ABOUT BULLYING:

- Bullying is disrespectful and can be dangerous, humiliating and life threatening.
- Bullying includes electronically transmitted forms; “cyber bullying” occurs when a perpetrator conveys his/her message through the Internet or a cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA) or other wireless hand-held device.
- Bullying on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation is a form of bias or hate and should not be dismissed as teasing.
- Bullying behavior that continues into adulthood may turn into violent behavior toward strangers, friends and family.

HOW DOES THE STATE VIEW BULLYING?

- Ohio law [Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 3313.666(B)(E)] defines bullying, harassment and intimidation in Ohio schools as any intentional written, verbal, graphic or physical act that a student or group of students exhibits toward another particular student more than once, and that behavior both:
 - Causes mental or physical harm to the other student; and
 - Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student.

STEPS IN THE BULLYING PROCESS

- Reports may be filed with any school staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal for review, investigation, and action.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADMINISTRATORS

- By law, building principals (or their designees) are to respond to and investigate any incident of bullying that is reported (either verbally or in writing), document the incident in writing and notify parents or guardians of any students involved in such occurrences.
- Their responsibilities also involve using intervention strategies for protecting victims from additional harassment or retaliation and employing interventions or disciplinary procedures for any guilty students.

Strategies:

- Modeling behavior that is inclusive and promotes **respect for all students**;
- Providing students with opportunities to talk about bullying and enlist their support in **defining bullying as an unacceptable behavior**;
- Helping students know what to do if they observe or are confronted by a bully;
- Posting and publicizing rules against bullying, including **fair and consistent consequences**;
- Referring both the bully and his/her target to the principal or building designee;

- Establishing and explaining written student behavior codes to students, parents and the community and having students and parents sign behavior contracts consistent with these codes;
- Constantly monitoring cafeterias, playgrounds and other “hot spots” where bullying is likely to occur and where direct adult supervision may not be present;
- Taking immediate action when bullying is observed so that both the target and the bully know that mistreating someone is not tolerated;
- Creating cooperative learning activities that encourage interaction among students from different groups and ensure equal treatment of all participants;
- Implementing a buddy system that pairs students with friends, student mentors and other supportive students, particularly if they are new to the school; and
- Forming friendship groups that support children who are regularly bullied by peers.

DOCUMENT

- Make sure that you document all information and report it to the proper people.
- Follow the Code of Conduct for discipline.
- Keep a file or use the discipline database.
- Parents want to know that you are working on the situation, a phone call or email will help with communication.
- Follow any designated plans.