



*Dent-Phelps R-III School  
Bullying Prevention and  
Intervention Plan*

## **Introduction**

The Dent-Phelps R-III School district expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for individual differences. Dent-Phelps is committed to providing a learning and working environment for students, employees, and visitors that is free from bullying and cyber bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behaviors that can impede the learning process. Dent-Phelps supports this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent / guardian involvement.

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Dent-Phelps R-III school district, no persons shall be discriminated against account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in this plan, however, prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate bullying and/or cyber bullying based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or district policies. Dent-Phelps R-III takes specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, teasing, or any forms of retaliation.

Dent-Phelps R-III will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form or bullying, cyber bullying or retaliation in our school building, on school grounds, or in/during school-related activities if they take place at Dent-Phelps R-III or at another district. All reports and complaints of bullying and retaliation will be promptly investigated, and the administration will take prompt action to end such behavior and restore a sense of safety for all.

## Definitions

Aggressor is a student/adult who engages in bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation.

Bullying is defined as intimidation, unwanted aggressive behavior, or harassment that is repetitive or is substantially likely to be repeated and causes a reasonable student to fear for his or her physical safety or property; substantially interferes with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of any student, without exception; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school. Bullying may consist of physical actions, including gestures, or oral, cyber-bullying, electronic, or written communication, and any threat of retaliation for reporting of such acts. (Missouri Revised Statues, Section 160.775.1)

Confidentiality is the expectation that anything done or revealed will be kept private.

Cyber-bullying is defined as the transmission of a communication including, but not limited to, a message, text, sound, or image by means of an electronic device including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager. (Missouri Revised Statues, Section 160.175.1)

Hostile environment is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the condition of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who 1) reports bullying, 2) provides information during an investigation of bullying, or 3) witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

## **Expectations**

It is a violation of this plan for any administrator, teacher or other employee, or any student to engage in or condone bullying in school or to fail to report or otherwise take reasonable corrective measures when made aware of an incident of bullying. This plan is not designed or intended to limit the school's authority to take disciplinary action or take remedial action when such bullying occurs out of school but has a connection to, or is disruptive to an employee's or student's work or participation in school related activities. Reports of bullying occurring in or out of school will be reviewed and, when a connection to work or school exists, will result in a complete investigation and disciplinary action and corrective measures.

Bullying is hereby prohibited 1) on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored or related activities/functions both on and off school grounds, at school bus stops, on busses or other vehicles owned, leased, or used by the Dent-Phelps R-III school district; 2) through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by Dent-Phelps R-III; 3) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or electronic devices that are not owned, leased or used by the Dent-Phelps R-III school district if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school of materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation of any form against a person is forbidden. If retaliation occurs, it could be considered grounds for dismissal of staff or personnel, and removal from the educational setting for a student.

## **Reporting**

It is the responsibility of every employee, student, and parent to recognize acts of bullying and retaliation, and to take every action necessary to ensure that the applicable policies and procedures of Dent-Phelps R-III are implemented. Any employee or student who believes that he/she has been subjected to bullying or retaliation has the right to file a complaint and to receive prompt and appropriate handling of the complaint. Further, all reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of this policy may require disclosure of any or all information received.

The safety of suspected targets is our first consideration once a complaint is received. A safety assessment is made immediately and provisional accommodations are implemented by appropriate staff members as deemed necessary; the designated official for reporting (DOR) also immediately notifies the Transportation Director of both suspected target and perpetrators.

Due to confidentiality issues, professional judgement is used in information disclosure. If there is an injury or emergency on school property, or the incident involves a former student under the age of 21 on school grounds, the Juvenile Officer (JO) is immediately notified. The JO is also notified if criminal charges have been filed.

## **Reporters**

Designated officials for reporting bullying and retaliation are as follows: 1) The school principal, who will serve as the Chief Designated Official for Reporting (DRO) for all complaints related to bullying or retaliation; 2) the Superintendent of schools; 3) School Counselor for anonymous reports. The Juvenile officer shall serve as the law enforcement liaison. The Superintendent of Schools has oversight for district compliance with this plan. Each reporting official has a voice mail box and designated email address. Mail should be directed to the building principal or Superintendent.

All oral reports, in person or via telephone, are recorded on the Bullying Incident Form. The school principal shall maintain all records of these reports.

Anonymous reports may be made by dropping a note into the lunch money collection box outside of the office. If this system is utilized, please provide as much information as possible in order to ensure that a proper investigation can follow the complaint.

## **Investigation**

The principal is responsible for conducting a prompt investigation upon receiving a report of bullying or retaliation. The nature and duration of an investigation will depend on the circumstances, including the type, severity and frequency of the alleged conduct. The goal is to obtain accurate and complete account of all incidents and circumstances deemed relevant to the allegations in the complaint. The investigation will generally include personal interviews with the complainant, the subject(s) of the complaint and others who witnessed or may have potentially relevant knowledge about the alleged incidents giving rise to the complaint. Confidentiality guidelines will be followed. Review of documents, videos, voice mails, emails, websites, text messages, instant messages, and other items deemed relevant may also be included.

All investigations must be started within two school days of the initial complaint. From that time, the Principal (or designee) has ten school days to conclude the investigation unless good cause exists to extend the investigation. Any complaint involving physical violence or serious threats of harm will be expedited.

The Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, will take all steps deemed necessary to protect to the extent practicable the complainant, witnesses, and other individuals from further incidents or retaliation pending the outcome of the investigation. These steps may include, but are not limited to, ordering interim disciplinary action, appropriate adult supervision, reassigning classroom seating, temporarily transferring the student subject of the complaint from classes with the complainant, instructing the alleged perpetrator to avoid contact and maintain appropriate safe distances from the alleged target while on school property and at school events and monitoring compliance with any court-ordered protective orders. All interviewees, alleged targets, and alleged perpetrators will be warned against retaliation and made aware of the

prohibition to speak about the matter in order to maintain the integrity of the investigation. All interim safety measures will be monitored for success.

**Confidentiality** – Information from a student record of a target or aggressor may not be disclosed to a parent unless the information is about the parent’s own child. Disclosure of bullying or retaliation to a local law enforcement agency may be made without the consent of a student or his/her parents. Such communication must protect privacy of targets, student witnesses, and aggressors to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Student record information about a target or aggressor may be disclosed in connection with a health or safety emergency if such information is necessary to protect the health and/or safety of a student or other individuals. This is limited, however, to instances where there is an immediate and significant threat; all such disclosures must be documented with reasons why the health and/or safety emergency existed. All employee records are confidential.

### **Documentation and Records**

Dent-Phelps R-III maintains its Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Forms with distinct forms. The Principal shall keep written records of all oral interviews and written responses during the investigation. All investigatory reports, written items, documents, videos, and other types of evidence are maintained by the Principal.

### **Response to Bullying**

#### 1) *Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building*

Once the Principal (or designee) determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he/she may use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. These may include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on our anti-bullying curricula;
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals.
- Meeting with parents/guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills
- Making a referral for evaluation

#### 2) *Taking Disciplinary Action*

If the Principal (or designee) decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the action will be determined on the basis of facts found during the investigation including the nature of conduct, the age of the students involved, and the need to balance accountability with the

teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the plan and the district/school code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education improvement act, which should be considered in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents of students alleged to have engaged in bullying or retaliation may also be required to attend a meeting, at which the activities, words, and/or images subject to the complaint may be reviewed. If this is deemed necessary by the Principal, designee, or Superintendent, the student involved will not be readmitted to the regular school program until his/her parents/guardians attend such a meeting.

### 3) *Promoting Safety for the Target and Others*

The Principal will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others. One strategy that may be used is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur. Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Principal will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the Principal will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

## **Training and Professional Development**

**Annual Staff Training:** Annual training for all school staff will include staff duties as outline in the plan, an overview of the steps that the Principal will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades. Staff members hired after the start of the school year will participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

**Ongoing Professional Development:** The content of the district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- Developmentally, age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- Developmentally, age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witness to the bullying;
- Research finding on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyber bullying;

- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber bullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Plans. This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

### **Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches**

Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research with emphasizes the following approaches:

- Using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaging in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- Emphasizing cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications;
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and differences.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-relation section of the plan, including proper reporting procedures.

**General Teaching Approaches that support bullying Prevention Efforts:** The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment and will be emphasized in the Dent-Phelps R-III school district. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students.
- Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- Using positive behavior supports;
- Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- Using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- Using the internet safely;
- Supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

**Counseling and Other Services:** Dent-Phelps R-III shall ensure that a school counselor is available to students as much as is possible. This individual shall serve as a resource for students, and shall conduct in-class instruction as outlined in the plan above in an attempt to limit bullying and retaliation in the school.

### **Collaboration with Families**

Dent-Phelps R-III recognizes the vital importance of involving parents/guardians in the process of preventing bullying and retaliation behavior both inside and outside of the school environment. Parents shall be notified of the districts Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, and this plan and all subsequent resources shall be made available to all parents/guardians of enrolled students at the beginning of each school year. The district may also, as deemed necessary by administration, provide presentations for parents on bullying, retaliation, and cyber-bullying in an attempt to aid in the districts efforts to reduce the frequency of these behaviors.

### What is and Is Not Bulling

<b>CONFLICT</b>	<b>RUDE</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>BULLYING</b>
Occasional	Occasional	Once or Twice	Frequent; repeated
Not planned; in the heat of the moment	Spontaneous; unintentional	Intentional	Planned; intentional
All parties are upset	Can cause hurt feelings; upset	Can hurt others deeply	The target of the bullying is upset
All parties want to work things out	Based in thoughtlessness, poor manners or narcissism	Based in anger; impulsive cruelty	The bully is trying to gain control over the target
All parties will accept responsibility	Rude person accepts responsibility	Behavior is often regretted	The bully blames the target
An effort is made by all parties to resolve the problem	--	--	The target wants to stop the bully's behavior, but the bully does not
Can be resolved through mediation	Building social skills could be of benefit	Needs to be addressed; should NOT be ignored	CANNOT be resolved through mediation