BULLYING PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

The Board of Education prohibits bullying as defined in policy JICDE, Bullying Prevention and Education.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as the use of coercion to obtain control over another person or to be habitually cruel to another person. Bullying can occur through a written, verbal or electronically transmitted (cyberbullying) expression or by means of a physical act or gesture. Bullying is prohibited on district property, at district sanctioned activities and events, when students are being transported in any vehicle dispatched by the district or one of its schools, off school property when such conduct has a nexus to school, or any district curricular or non-curricular activity or event.

Publication to Students and Parents

To ensure notification to students and parents, student handbooks will contain a statement incorporating the definition of bullying as set forth in Board Policy JICDE and a statement of how and where parents and students can access a copy of the policy. Handbooks will also state that any student found to have engaged in bullying as defined in Board policy JICDE will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and expulsion, in accordance with Board policy. In addition, each student handbook will provide information regarding procedures a student who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying (or any other person, including parents/guardians) may use to report the matter, orally or in writing, to any teacher or member of the school administration. The procedures also provide that the student may anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and administrators and parents/guardians may also file anonymous reports of suspected bullying.

Informing Staff

Building principals shall be responsible for informing teachers and other school staff of their responsibility to report to administrators any acts of bullying witnessed by them or any reports of bullying received by them. Information provided to teachers and staff shall include a requirement that acts and reports of bullying be reported to administrators as soon as possible, but in no event later than twenty-four hours after the teacher or other staff member witnessed any act of bullying or received any report of bullying. Teachers and other staff will be advised that they are required to be knowledgeable of Board policy JICDE regarding bullying and will be provided a copy of the policy and this regulation.

Investigation of Complaints or Reports of Bullying

Upon notification of a report or complaint of bullying, the building principal, or other appropriate administrator, will promptly investigate the complaint or report or cause such an investigation to be conducted. The investigation will include interviews with the complainant or reporter, the alleged victim, the alleged perpetrator or perpetrators, and any witnesses. The statements of the alleged victim, the alleged perpetrator, and witnesses, if any, will be recorded and the person interviewed will be asked to read and sign the statement unless the person's age makes such a request for a signature inappropriate. Where anonymity is requested, the statements of persons interviewed will be recorded without reference to the person's name. Where the alleged victim of bullying requests anonymity he or she, and his or her parent/guardian, will be advised that such a request may hinder the ability of the administration to take appropriate disciplinary action if bullying is substantiated.
**Reporting and Notification Obligations**
Each school shall notify the parents/guardians of students who have engaged in acts of bullying and the parents/guardians of students against who such acts have been directed of the results of the investigation. Building administration will meet with parents/guardians upon request. The notification shall include a description of the response of school staff to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying.

The notification will be made by a member of the school administration designated by the superintendent to provide such notification in a manner that is consistent with the confidentiality of personally identifiable information contained in student records and student due process rights. This means that the notice shall not disclose to the parent or guardian of the victim either the name of the perpetrator or the specific disciplinary consequences imposed upon the perpetrator. The notification also shall not include any reference to the specific consequences that a student may face for further acts of bullying since as a matter of due process such consequences cannot be determined in advance. Rather, such notification will advise the parents that further acts of bullying may lead to additional discipline, such as suspension or expulsion, in accordance with Board policy and other relevant policies that govern student conduct.

**Post Investigation Intervention and Actions**
Bullying behavior can take many forms and therefore will vary in severity. Consequences for a student who commits an act of harassment or bullying shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student’s history of problem behaviors and performance and must be consistent with the Board of Education’s approved code of conduct. As a result, the extent of discipline, if any, to be imposed where bullying is substantiated cannot be prescribed in advance.

Substantiated acts of bullying will be met with imposition of some form of student discipline up to, and including, expulsion. In all cases where bullying is substantiated the building administration will determine the appropriate level of disciplinary action in accordance with the Thompson School District discipline matrix and other relevant policies that govern student conduct.

School administration will take reasonable measures to prevent further acts of bullying by the student or students involved. Such measures may include counseling, mediation, or restorative practices and be afforded both the victim and perpetrator(s) of bullying. Other preventive measures may be employed on a school wide basis, such as, the use of a curriculum that fosters respect for the personal integrity of others, both physical and mental, along with other positive character traits, and other instructional strategies intended to foster student mutual respect, and modeling by teachers of appropriate behavior on the part of students.

Adopted June 15, 2011