

Preston Public Schools

Comprehensive Bullying Prevention Policy

I. Statement of Purpose

Preston Public Schools is committed to maintaining a safe, positive learning environment free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation. Bullying behavior disrupts the educational process and will not be tolerated.

This policy aligns with the **School Safety and Bullying Prevention Act** and establishes procedures for prevention, reporting, investigation, and response.

II. Definition and Scope

Bullying is defined as:

Any pattern* of harassment, intimidation, threatening behavior, physical acts, verbal or electronic communication directed toward a student or group of students that results in or is reasonably perceived as being done with the intent to cause negative educational or physical results for the targeted individual or group, and is communicated in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student;" Okla. Stat. tit. 70, § 24-100. School Safety and Bullying Prevention Act

Bullying includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical bullying (hitting, pushing, damaging property)
- Emotional/verbal bullying (name-calling, threats, demeaning comments)
- Social bullying (spreading rumors, exclusion)
- Sexual bullying (unwelcome comments or contact)
- Cyberbullying (electronic communication of any written, verbal, or pictorial information or video content by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a tablet, a mobile or cellular telephone, or a computer.)

This policy applies:

- On school grounds
- In school vehicles

- At school-sponsored activities
- Off-campus if it impacts the school environment

Note: Pattern of behavior or isolated action* - Upon assessing the severity of the incident, isolated action can be bullying. In other words, severity supersedes pattern. Please refer to the “Investigating and Responding” section for more information.

Threatening Behaviors means any pattern of behavior or isolated action*, whether or not it is directed at another person, that a reasonable person would believe indicates potential for future harm to students, school personnel, or school property.

III. Prevention and Intervention

Preston Public Schools will:

- Provide required **annual training** for staff on bullying prevention, identification, response, and reporting.
- Provide **age-appropriate student education** on bullying identification, prevention, addressing, reporting, and consequences
 - The district will implement a research-based educational program as designed and developed by the Oklahoma State Department of Education for students and parents to prevent, identify, respond to and report bullying.
- Maintain a **Safe School Committee** that meets the requirements of 70 O.S. § 24-100.5(A) to help with:
 - Promote positive social behavior
 - Review school climate
 - Recommend prevention strategies
 - Annually review this policy and provide recommendations to the administration

When an act of bullying has been determined, consideration must be given to ensure that the most effective discipline and support are administered in each case. In all disciplinary actions, teachers, staff, and administrators shall consider alternatives to strictly punitive measures. Alternatives to punitive measures include, but are not limited to, those below.

- Counseling referrals
- Parent/student conferences
- Behavior contracts
- Restorative practices
- Community or support services
- Disciplinary consequences as appropriate

IV. Reporting and Documentation

Reporting Procedures

- Any student, parent, staff member, or community member may report bullying.
 - Reports are to be given to the building principal or Bullying Prevention Officer (BPO).
- Reports should be submitted using the **Preston Bullying Incident Report Form (FNCD-E)**.
- Reports may be **anonymous**, but discipline cannot rely solely on anonymous reports.
- Reports of bullying shall be kept confidential to the extent necessary to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Family Education and Privacy Rights Act (FERPA) and to protect students who report incidents of bullying from retaliation.
- Incidents involving criminal behavior may be reported to law enforcement
- Individuals may report concerns to the State Department of Education after following district procedures

Staff Responsibilities

- All employees **must report suspected bullying immediately** to the building principal or BPO. Failure by school employees to report incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Bullying Prevention Officer (BPO)

Each building site principal will designate a BPO responsible for:

- Receiving and tracking reports
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Monitoring patterns
- Supporting prevention efforts

Parent Notification

- Parents of all involved students will be notified within **24 hours** of a report.
- If a student expresses suicidal thoughts or intentions or encourages another student to commit suicide, the parents or legal guardians of the student(s) shall be notified immediately.

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to;

- Report bullying when it occurs and complete a harassment/bullying incident report form
- Take advantage of opportunities to talk to their children about bullying
- Watch for symptoms that their child may be a victim of bullying and report those symptoms

- Cooperate fully with school personnel in identifying and resolving incidents.
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V. Investigation Procedures

The procedure for investigating reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying or threatening behavior is as follows:

1. The matter should immediately be reported to the building principal or BPO. If the bullying involved an electronic communication, a printed copy of the communication as well as any identifying information such as email address or web address shall be provided to the building principal. As much detailed information as possible should be provided to the building principal or BPO in written form to allow for a thorough investigation of the matter.
2. Upon receipt of a written report, the building principal shall contact the superintendent and begin an investigation to determine the severity of the incident and the potential for future violence.
3. If, during the course of the investigation, it appears that a crime may have been committed the building principal and/or superintendent shall notify local law enforcement and request that the alleged victim also contact law enforcement to report the matter for potential criminal investigation.
4. If it is determined that the school district's discipline code has been violated, the building principal shall follow district policies regarding the discipline of the student. The building principal shall make a determination as to whether the conduct is actually occurring.
5. Upon completion of the investigation, the principal or superintendent may recommend that available community mental health care substance abuse or other counseling options be provided to the student, if appropriate. This may include information about the types of support services available to the student bully, victim, and any other students affected by the prohibited behavior. If such a recommendation is made, the administration shall request disclosure of any information that indicates an explicit threat to the safety of students or school personnel provided the disclosure of information does not violate the provisions or requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Section 2503 of Title 12 of the Oklahoma Statutes, Section 1376 of Title 59 of Oklahoma Statutes, or any other state or federal laws relating to the disclosure of confidential information.
6. Upon completion of an investigation, timely notification shall be provided to the parents or guardians of a victim of documented and verified bullying. This information should be provided within 3 school days of the conclusion of the investigation.
7. Upon completion of an investigation, timely notification shall be provided to the perpetrator of the documented and verified bullying. This information should be provided within 3 school days of the conclusion of the investigation.

Any person who knowingly makes a false report shall receive disciplinary consequences and any accusations found to be false will be removed from the falsely accused student's records.

If bullying is confirmed:

- Appropriate disciplinary and restorative actions will be implemented
- Support services will be offered to all affected students

Disciplinary responses may include, but are not limited to:

- Conferences with students/parents
- Detention or suspension
- Counseling referral
- Behavior plans
- Loss of privileges
- Involvement of outside agencies
- Suspension; Expulsion

Discipline will:

- Be individualized
- Include restorative options
- Avoid punishing the victim (e.g., schedule changes)

The Superintendent shall be responsible for enforcing this policy. The building principal should notify the superintendent within twenty-four (24) hours of any report of bullying. Upon completion of an investigation, the building principal should notify the superintendent of the findings of the investigation. Documentation should also be provided to the superintendent to establish that timely notification was provided to the parents of the victim and the parents of the perpetrator.

VI. Safeguards and Supports

Students who report bullying or other inappropriate behavior in good faith, or who participate as witnesses in an investigation, are protected from retaliation. Retaliation of any kind—including threats, intimidation, exclusion, harassment, cyberbullying, spreading rumors, or any other adverse treatment intended to discourage or punish a student for reporting a concern—is strictly prohibited. Any student found to have engaged in retaliatory behavior will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with school policy. Students who believe they have experienced retaliation should report it immediately to a teacher, school counselor, administrator, or other trusted school employee so that the matter can be promptly investigated and addressed. If an employee of the district is found to have engaged in retaliatory action against a student who has reported bullying, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken which could include termination of employment.

The district will provide:

- Protection for victims from retaliation

- Counseling and mental health referrals
 - Academic and behavioral supports
 - Interventions for both victim and offender
 - Consequences for false reporting
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VII. Publication and Accessibility

The district will:

- Publish this policy annually to students, parents, and staff
 - Include it in handbooks
 - Post it on the district website
 - Make reporting forms easily accessible at
 - Website
 - Building Principal's office
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VIII. Supporting Documents (Adopted with Policy)

- FNCD – Bullying Policy
- FNCD-R – Prohibiting Harassment Regulation
- FNCD-E – Bullying Incident Report Form
- FNCD-P - Prohibiting Bullying (Investigation Procedures)