

Cyber Bullying Policy

A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Cyber-bullying by a pupil in the district directed toward another school pupil or school staff member is conduct that disrupts both a pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in a safe environment.

The School Committee prohibits acts of cyber-bullying by school district pupils *when those acts cause or threaten to cause a substantial and material disruption at school or interfere with the right of students to be secure. These acts may take place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity, at an official school bus stop or on school provided transportation. These actions are prohibited whether they use district internet or e-mail systems or personal digital devices on campus or off campus that impact the rights of others.* The Building Principal or designee may report allegations of cyber-bullying to law enforcement authorities.

DEFINITIONS

"Cyber-Bullying" is the use of electronic information and communication devices, to include but not be limited to, e-mail messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and defamatory websites, that:

1. Deliberately threatens, harasses, intimidates an individual *student or a group of students*; or
2. Places a *student or staff member* in reasonable fear of harm to *person or property*; or
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

"School district owned, operated, or supervised technologies" is any computer, networking system, electronic equipment, or any other equipment or device that may be used by a person to communicate to another which is owned, leased, operated, or under the control or supervision of the school district and/or school district staff.

REPORTING PROCEDURE AND INVESTIGATION

Any pupil or school staff member who believes he/she has or is being subjected to cyber-bullying, as well as any person who has reason to believe a pupil or school staff member has knowledge or reason to believe another pupil or school staff member is being subjected to or has been subjected to cyber-bullying shall immediately make a report to the Building Principal or designee.

The Building Principal or designee shall investigate all reports of such conduct. If the investigation results indicate cyber-bullying was not committed, the Building Principal or designee will inform the affected parties of the investigation results. In the event the investigation results indicate cyber-bullying was committed by a school district pupil on school grounds and/or using school district technologies, the pupil will be subjected to appropriate discipline.

In the event the investigation results indicate cyber-bullying was committed by a school district pupil using non-school district technologies away from school grounds, the Building Principal or designee may report the investigation results to local law enforcement. In addition, school authorities have the right to impose a consequence on a pupil for conduct away from school grounds, including on a

school bus or at a school-sponsored function. This authority shall be exercised only when it is reasonably necessary for the pupil's physical or emotional safety, security, and well-being or for reasons relating to the safety, security, and well-being of other pupils, staff, or school grounds. This authority shall be exercised only when the conduct, which is the subject of the proposed consequence, materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school.

Any investigation regarding an allegation of cyber-bullying will provide all parties the appropriate due process rights, including the right to appeal the determination of the Building Principal or designee.

DISCIPLINE AND CONSEQUENCES

Some acts of cyber-bullying may be isolated incidents requiring the school district to respond appropriately to the individual committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or part of a larger pattern of cyber-bullying that require a response either at the classroom, school building, or school district level or by law enforcement officials.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for pupils who commit an act of cyber-bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension. In addition, cyber-bullying using district technology violates the *Martha's Vineyard Public Schools Network Acceptable Use Policy For Students*.

Prevention and intervention techniques to prevent cyber-bullying and to support and protect victims shall include appropriate strategies and activities as determined by the Building Principal or designee.

REPRISAL OR RETALIATION PROHIBITED

The school district prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of cyber-bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Building Principal or designee after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, Federal and State statutes and regulations, and district policies and procedures.

CONSEQUENCES FOR FALSE ACCUSATION

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a pupil found to have falsely accused another of an act of cyber-bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another of an act of cyber-bullying shall be *imposed* in accordance with district policies and procedures.

{Adoption Date} October 22, 2009 by the All Island School Committee

CROSS REFS:

LEGAL REFS:

1 st Reading	-	09.10.2009
2 nd Reading	-	10.08.2009 by Edgartown, MVRHS, Oak Bluffs and UIRSD
		10.13.2009 by Tisbury
3 rd Reading	-	10.22.2009