

## **Bullying Fact Sheet**

This document acts as an informational guideline to the latest laws on bullying, RSD17 policies, and programs and safeguards that HKMS has in place to combat this issue. Please read through this document so that you have a great understanding of the issue and how our school deals with all aspects of the issue.

The following is the law, updated in 2009.

### **Bullying – The Law - The law, *An Act Concerning School Learning Environment* (P.A. 08-160)**

The law defines bullying as overt acts by a student or a group of students committed more than once per school year against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity, or on a school bus. It requires each board of education to develop and implement a policy to address the existence of bullying in its schools. The policies must include provisions on reporting, investigation, notification, and intervention. The policies can include provisions addressing bullying outside of the school setting if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school. (CGS § 10-222d).

**Below is a list of 10 items that all schools need to have in place by law. I've included the 10 items showcased in the law, and underneath each item have included evidence and pertinent information about HKMS policies and programs. These are written in red.**

### **BULLYING POLICIES**

The required policies must:

1. allow students to anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators and require students to be notified annually of the process for making such reports;

We encourage all students to email the assistant principal at [nenglish@rsd17.org](mailto:nenglish@rsd17.org), or the principal at [mwagner@rsd17.org](mailto:mwagner@rsd17.org). We like to know who is reporting the incident so that we can talk to those who report and ask questions. Students will not be implicated in the investigatory process in any way.

If students are uncomfortable with reporting in this matter, they can go to the middle school website at: [www.rsd17.org/hkms](http://www.rsd17.org/hkms). There is a red reporting box that a student or parent can use to leave anonymous information to the administration. This information is then used to investigate matters of bullying.

2. enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying;

The bullying report form is located on the middle school website at: [www.rsd17.org/hkms](http://www.rsd17.org/hkms). Look in the blue box under Bullying Report Form. Parents can fill this form out at any point in time to report pertinent information to administration about bullying.

3. require teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying or receive student reports of bullying to notify school administrators in writing;

Teachers and school staff are obligated to report acts of bullying to the administration. The school has a very detailed reporting process that consists of level 2 and level 3 demerits. Teachers can also communicate with the administration at anytime via written form in mailboxes and/or telecommunications.

4. require school administrators to investigate any written reports and to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action can be taken based solely on an anonymous report;

Administrators are obligated to investigate any and all acts of reported bullying. Students, staff or parents can be contacted to provide accounts of disciplinary investigations.

5. include a prevention and intervention strategy for school staff to deal with bullying;

School personnel are required to patrol hallways, lockers, and areas where students can engage in behaviors that violate school policies. The staff is encouraged to use professional development to become more skilled in detecting behaviors in students that can lead to bullying type behavior. Administrators are current in bullying laws and policy and deliver the latest of strategies to staff in a timely manner. HKMS has multiple programs in place to educate the students on bullying, the reporting process, and the affects that bullying has on others. The following are the programs that were instituted this year at HKMS:

1. Bullying presentations given by the AP and the guidance counselor for all 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in the beginning of the year.
2. Bullying as a unit of study for all 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in their developmental guidance curriculum.
3. Bullying and positive choices is a focus in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade DARE program.
4. Cyber bullying presentation given by Sgt James Smith, the top State Police presenter in the state of CT, grades 5-8. This was given during our school wide Safety Day.
5. Monthly town meetings where administration talks to the students about community issues. Each month, talks are given to the students about positive community behaviors and negative behaviors that are prevalent and undesired. Administrators focus on students avoiding physical contact and creating positive energy in our school environment. Students are showcased in these meetings for their unique talents and positive contributions to the community.

6. In grade 6, the student council performed some role playing skits on bullying and then had a question and answer session afterward.
7. The school counselor talked to grade 6 about bullying and acceptance during a pod meeting.
8. The school has a Random Acts of Kindness program, which focuses solely on positive community behaviors. These are spotlighted publicly in monthly town meetings.
9. HKMS has a monthly newsletter that includes sections that focus both on health and safety and school related issues. Those issues focus on community related information such as family issues, bullying, and others.
10. Anti-Bullying presentations were administered during Community Week by administration, social workers, and school psychologist focusing on the importance of positive school behaviors and the affects of bullying on students. Topics also included are cyber bullying, how to talk to a bully, the difference between tattling and telling, HS transitions, acceptance and the role of bystanders.
11. Community Week that focuses on no name calling, expanding social groups and norms, and anti-bullying behaviors.
12. Three Mix-It-Up days a year, which forces students to sit with new students and talk about issues and questions. Program instills an importance on acceptance and expanding social norms.
13. Bullying informational document emailed to all parents and sent home with students that highlight the laws, the policies, and the specific actions and programs that HKMS has in place to combat this issue.
14. PACT club offered by Youth and Family Services focusing on information and counseling associated with those who have been bullied.
15. Anonymous Report Form included on the middle school website. Community members can provide information to the administration anonymously.
16. Tight District bullying policies that require swift and deliberate action in cases where bullying is suspected to have occurred.

6. provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;

The RSD17 policy is stated below. It's also included in your family agenda book and also discussed in the student agenda book.

7. require each school to notify the parents or guardians of the bully and bullied student, and include in the notice a description of the school's response, any consequences of future acts, and an invitation for them to attend at least one meeting;

After a thorough investigation has ensued and bullying has proven to have occurred, parents are informed immediately and are encouraged to meet with the administration if they choose to do so.

8. require each school to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school and make it available for public inspection, and, within available appropriations, annually report the number to SDE;

There is a BLUE folder located in the office that contains all of the verified acts of bullying. Due to FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) laws, any identifying information is redacted from this document. These acts are reported to the State Department of Education on a monthly basis as well.

9. direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;

We have a full staff of guidance counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists that are trained to handle issues that are explicitly or implicitly related to bullying. We rarely see students that engage in this type of behavior repeatedly; however, these staff members are trained and ready to deal with this issue as necessary.

10. identify the appropriate school personnel, which cannot be limited to pupil services personnel, responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint.

All administrators and counselors can receive bullying reports and the administration engages in the investigation of those reports immediately.

*Below is the HK BOE policy on bullying:*

### **Regional School District 17 Board Policy on Bullying**

#### **Bullying**

The Regional School District 17 Board of Education promotes a safe and caring school climate, conducive to teaching and learning, that is free from threat, harassment or any other type of bullying behavior. Therefore, in accordance with state laws, it is the policy of the Board of Education that any form of bullying behavior is expressly forbidden. Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline up to and including expulsion in accordance with Board of Education policy on student discipline.

Bullying is defined as any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school sponsored activity, or on a school bus, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year. Bullying which occurs outside of the school setting may be addressed by school officials if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical violence and attacks
2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
3. Threats and intimidation
4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
5. Exclusion from peer groups within the school

Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and, therefore, bullying is not acceptable behavior in this district and is prohibited.

Students who engage in any act of bullying, while at school, at any school function, or in connection to or with any district sponsored activity or event are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials. (BOE 5131.911)