

Bullying

The North Canaan Board of Education (Board) promotes a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Board that hazing, bullying and teen dating violence of a student by another student is prohibited.

The Board believes that a school environment in which students feel safe, supported, engaged, and helpfully challenged is optimal for learning and healthy development. The Board seeks an environment in which students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically safe; an environment that is free of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Definitions

"Hazing" means abusive or harmful tricks or ridicule.

"Bullying" means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in North Canaan Elementary School that:

- a) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,
- b) places such student in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property,
- c) creates a hostile environment at school for such student, d) infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- e) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. (The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same school district as the students engaged in the activity.)

"Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices, or any electronic communications.

"Teen dating violence" means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

"Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

"Electronic communication" means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electro-magnetic, photo electronic or photo-optical system.

"Hostile environment" means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to alter the conditions of the school climate.

"Outside of the school setting" means at a location, activity or program that is not school-related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local board of education.

"School employee" means (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional, or coach employed by a local board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (b) any other individual who, in the performance of his/her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local board of education.

"School climate" means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults (and reflects norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures).

Examples of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence 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
- 6) the misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school ("cyberbullying")
- 7) targeting of a student based on the student's actual or perceived "differentiating" characteristics such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic or academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and, therefore, hazing, bullying and teen dating violence is not acceptable behavior in North Canaan Elementary School and is prohibited.

Students who engage in any act of bullying on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board, and outside of the school setting, if such bullying;

- 1) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
 - 2) infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
 - 3) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school,
- are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

A comprehensive program, to improve the school climate, involving everyone in the school and the community, to address bullying at all school levels is essential to reducing incidences of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence. Such a program must involve interventions at all levels, school-wide, classroom, and individual.

North Canaan Elementary School's Safe School Climate Plan

- 1) This plan addresses the existence of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence in school and requires at the beginning of each school year that students and their parents/guardians be notified of the process by which students may make such reports;
- 2) Permits anonymous reports of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence by students to school employees and written reports of suspected hazing, bullying and teen dating violence by parents/guardians, and requires at the beginning of each school year that students and their parents/guardians be notified of the process by which students may make such reports;
- 3) Requires school employees who witness acts of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence or receive reports of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence, to orally notify the safe school climate specialist or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one (1) school day after such employee witnesses or receives a report of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence, and to file a written report not later than two (2) school days after making such an oral report;
- 4) Requires the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report, and that the parents/guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence and the parents/guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;

- 5) Requires the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report; .
- 6) Requires each school to have a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, as amended, for school employees to deal with hazing, bullying or teen dating violence, including language about hazing, bullying and teen dating violence in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;
- 7) Provides for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning hazing, bullying and teen dating violence;
- 8) Requires each school to notify parents/guardians of all students involved in a verified act of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence, not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the investigation and verbally and by electronic mail, that such parents/guardians may refer to the plan language explanation of the rights and remedies posted on the district's website (available under CGS 10-4a and 10-4b);
- 9) Requires the school to invite parents/guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents/guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of student(s) against whom such an act of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence was directed and the policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence;
- 10) Requires the school to invite the parents/guardians of a student who commits any verified act of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence to a meeting separate and distinct from the meeting of the parents/guardians of the student against whom the act of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence was directed, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence;
- 11) Establishes a procedure for the school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence in the school, and make such list publicly available; and report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
- 12) Requires the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing incidents of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
- 13) Prohibits discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence;
- 14) Requires the development of student safety support plans for students against who an act of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence was directed that addresses safety measures the school

will take to protect such students against further acts of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence;

15) Requires the Principal of the school, or his/her designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such Principal, or his/her designee, believes that any act of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence constitutes criminal conduct;

16) Prohibits hazing, bullying and teen dating violence (a) on school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board, and (b) outside of the school setting, if such hazing, bullying or teen dating violence (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such hazing, bullying or teen dating violence was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such hazing, bullying or teen dating violence was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process of the orderly operation of the school;

17) Requires all school employees to annually complete the training required by C.G.S. 10-220a, as amended. Such training shall include identifying and responding to hazing, bullying and teen dating violence preventing and responding to youth suicide;

Certified employees are required to complete annual training on the prevention and identification of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence and response to hazing, bullying and teen dating violence and the prevention of and response to youth suicide.

The State Department of Education, within available appropriations, is required to provide annual training to non-certified school employees.

18) Requires students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified at the beginning of the school year of the process by which they may make reports of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence;

19) As required, the Board shall approve the safe school climate plan developed pursuant to statute and submit such plan to the Department of Education for its review, analysis, cooperative assistance and approval not later than July 1, 2014; and

20) Requires that not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the State Department of Education, the safe school climate plan shall be made available on the Board's and school's Internet website, and such plan is to be included in North Canaan Elementary School's publication of rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools, and in all student handbooks.

The Board expects prompt and reasonable investigations of alleged acts of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence. The safe school climate specialist of the school is responsible for handling

all complaints of alleged hazing, bullying and teen dating violence. The safe school climate specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence promptly.

In addition, the norms that are established by adults through consistent enforcement of all policies pertaining to conduct and modeling appropriate behavior at school and at home will reduce the instances and damage of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that is accepted and encouraged.

Prevention and Intervention Strategy

North Canaan Elementary School shall implement, as required by C.S.G. 10-222d, as amended, a prevention and intervention strategy which may include, but is not limited to:

- 1) Implementation of positive behavioral interventions and support process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence identified by the Department of Education.
- 2) School rules prohibiting hazing, bullying, teen dating violence, harassment, and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts.
- 3) Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom, and other specific areas where hazing, bullying or teen dating violence is likely to occur.
- 4) Inclusion of grade-appropriate hazing, bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through eighth grade.
- 5) Individual interventions with the bully or student who commits teen dating violence; parents/guardians, and school employees, and interventions with the students against whom the acts of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence are directed, parents/guardians and school employees.
- 6) School-wide training related to a safe school climate. (Funding for the school-based bullying intervention and school climate improvement may originate from public, private or philanthropic sources. For purposes of this section, "interventions with the bullied child" includes referrals to a school counselor, psychologist or other appropriate social or mental health service, and periodic follow-up by the safe school climate specialist with the bullied child.)
- 7) Student peer training, education and support.
- 8) Promotion or parent involvement in hazing, bullying and teen dating violence prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.

9) Culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation.

North Canaan Elementary School Safe School Climate Coordinator

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Principal shall appoint, from among existing staff, a Safe School Climate Coordinator..

The Coordinator shall:

- 1) Implement the North Canaan Elementary School's safe school climate plan; 2) Collaborate with safe school climate specialists, the Board and the Superintendent to prevent, identify and respond to hazing, bullying and teen dating violence in the North Canaan Elementary School; 3) Provide data and information derived from the safe school climate assessments, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department of Education.
- 4) Respond to hazing, bullying and teen dating violence in the North Canaan Elementary School;
- 5) Meet with the safe school climate specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss hazing, bullying and teen dating violence in the North Canaan Elementary School and make recommended changes to the school's safe school climate plan.
- 6) Successfully complete, for the school year commencing July 1, 2014, the mental health first aid training provided by the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services. (Such training is only required once.)

Safe School Climate Specialist

For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the school Principal shall serve, or designate someone to serve, as the Safe Climate Specialist for the school.

The Specialist shall:

- 1) Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence in the school in accordance with the North Canaan Elementary School's Safe School Climate Plan;
- 2) Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence in the school; and
- 3) Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to hazing, bullying and teen dating violence reports in the school.

Safe School Climate Committee

For the school year commencing, July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, the Principal of the school shall establish a new committee, or designate at least one existing committee, that is responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to

hazing, bullying and teen dating violence in the school. The committee must include at least one (1) parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school, appointed by the Principal.

The Safe School Climate Committee shall:

- 1) Receive copies of completed reports following investigations of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence;
- 2) Identify and address patterns of hazing, bullying and teen dating violence among students in the school;
- 3) Implement the provisions of the school security and safety plan (developed pursuant to Sec. 87 of P.A. 13-3) regarding the collection, evaluation and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of hazing, bullying or teen dating violence (defined in C.G.S. 10-222d) and report such information, as necessary, to the North Canaan Elementary School Safe School Climate Coordinator and to the school's security and safety committee.
- 4) Review and amend school policies relating to hazing, bullying and teen dating violence;
- 5) Review and make recommendations to the North Canaan Elementary School Climate Coordinator regarding the school's Safe Climate Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
- 6) Educate students, school employees and parents/guardians of students on issues relating to hazing, bullying and teen dating violence;
- 7) Collaborate with the North Canaan Elementary School Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data regarding hazing, bullying and teen dating violence; and
- 8) Perform any other duties as determined by the Principal that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school hazing, bullying and teen dating violence for the school.

Parent members of the Safe School Climate Committee are excluded from activities #1 and #3, or any other activity that may compromise the confidentiality of a student,

This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate that is protected by state or federal law.

(cf. [0521](#) – Nondiscrimination)

(cf. [4131](#) – Staff Development)

(cf. [5114](#) – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)

(cf. [5131](#) – Conduct)

(cf. [5131.21](#) – Violent and Aggressive Behavior)

(cf. [5131.8](#) – Out-of-School Misconduct)

(cf. 5131.912 – Aggressive Behavior)

(cf. 5131.913 – Cyberbullying)

(cf. [5131.91](#) – Hazing)

(cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)

(cf. 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)

(cf. [5145.5](#) – Sexual Harassment)

(cf. [5145.51](#) – Peer Sexual Harassment)

(cf. [6121](#) – Nondiscrimination)

(cf. [6121.1](#) – Equal Educational Opportunity)

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes
10-15b Access of parent/guardian to student's records. Inspection and subpoena of school or student records.
[10-222d](#) Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160, PA 11-232, PA 14-172 and PA 18-15 and PA 19-166
P.A. 06-115 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in Schools and Notices Sent to Parents/Guardians
P.A. 11-232 An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws
P.A. 14-172 An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities through Education and Ensuring Safe School Climates
P.A. 14-234 An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
PA 19-166 An Act Concerning School Climate

Adopted: March 12, 2015

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NORTH CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
North Canaan, Connecticut