

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, HAZING AND BULLYING

Harassment, intimidation and/or bullying is an intentional written, verbal or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student/school personnel more than once and the behavior causes both mental or physical harm to the other student/school personnel including placing an individual in reasonable fear of physical harm and/or damaging of personal property; and, is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student/school personnel.

Hazing means doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of intimidation or harassment to any student or group that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental and or physical harm to any person.

Permission, consent or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying does not lessen the prohibition contained in this policy.

Prohibited activities of harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying mean any intentional written, verbal, graphic or physical acts including electronically transmitted acts I.E., Internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand-held device, either overt or covert, by a student or group of students toward other students/school personnel with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule or humiliate and/or are inconsistent with the educational process and are prohibited at all times. No administrator, teacher or other employee of the Blanchester Local School District shall encourage, permit, condone or tolerate any harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying activities. No student, including leaders of student organizations, may plan, encourage or engage in any harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying. Such behaviors are prohibited on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity; on school-provided transportation or anytime that a student is under the supervision of school personnel.

Students and/or their parents/guardians may file reports regarding suspected harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times, dates and places of all of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected harassment, intimidation, hazing, and/or bullying, and the name(s) of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports must be filed with the building administrator for review and investigation. An informal complaint made to a teacher, school administrator or other school personnel will be documented in writing, including the above information and shall be promptly forwarded to the building administrator for review and investigation. Students and/or their parents/guardians may request that their

name be maintained in confidence by the school personnel who receive the complaint. Administrators, teachers and all other District employees are particularly alert to possible conditions, circumstances or events which might include harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying. If harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying or planned harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying is discovered and or reported, involved students are informed by the discovering school employee of the prohibition contained in this policy and are required to end all harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying activities immediately. All harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying incidents are reported immediately to the building administrator using the above documentation guidelines for review and investigation.

Under the direction of the building administrator or his/her designee, all such complaints shall be investigated promptly. A report of all findings of fact, including a determination of whether acts of harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying were verified, and, when prohibited acts are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action shall be included in the report. The report will be sent to the Superintendent and appropriate documentation will be placed in the student's file.

If after investigation, acts of harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying by a specific student are verified, the building administrator or his/her designee shall notify the parents or guardians of any student involved in a timely manner. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying.

Verified acts of harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying shall result in an intervention by the building administrator or his/her designee that is intended to ensure that the prohibition against harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such prohibited behavior will cease. Harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in seriousness and impact on the targeted individual and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of "harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying," as defined above will generally warrant disciplinary action against any student that is in violation of such behaviors, whether to impose, and to what extent to improve disciplinary action is a matter for the professional discretion of the building administrator or his/her designee. Student violating this policy are subject to the full range of non-disciplinary and disciplinary consequences. Complaints that are not otherwise verified shall not be the basis for disciplinary action, but may constitute non-disciplinary action.

The building administrator and/or their designee(s) will periodically check to see that no subsequent harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying or retaliation has occurred on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation or anytime that a student is under the supervision of school personnel.

Each building administrator or their designee will provide the Superintendent with a report of all reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying. The Superintendent/Designee must provide the Board President with a written report of all reported incidents of harassment. Intimidation, hazing and/or bullying and post the report on the District's website at the end of each semester. The report to the Board President shall be limited to the number of reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying, whether in the classroom, on school property, to and from school, or at school-sponsored events.

The administration will provide training on the Blanchester Local School District's harassment, intimidation, hazing and bullying policy to employees and volunteers who have direct contact with students. Additional training is provided to employees in violence and substance abuse prevention and positive youth development.

District employees, students and volunteers are provided with qualified civil immunity for damages arising from reporting an incident of harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying. Administrators, teachers, other employees and students who fail to abide by this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and may be liable for civil and criminal penalties in compliance with State law.

In addition to, or instead of filing a harassment/intimidation/hazing/bullying complaint through this policy, a complainant with outside agencies or options, including but not limited to filing a complaint with outside agencies or filing a private lawsuit. Nothing prohibits a complainant from seeking redress under any other provision of the Revised Code or common law that may apply.

Allegations of criminal misconduct will be reported to law enforcement, and suspected child abuse must be reported to Child Protective Services, per required timelines. Blanchester Local School District must also investigate for the purpose of determining whether there has been a violation of the Blanchester Local School District Policy or Procedure, even if law enforcement or Child Protective Services is also investigating. All Blanchester Local School District personnel will cooperate with investigations by outside agencies.

No one shall retaliate against an employee or student because he/she files a grievance or assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing regarding the charge of harassment, intimidation, hazing and/or bullying of an individual.

[Adoption date: October 20, 1997]

[Revised: October 15, 2007]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 117.53
 2307.44
 2903.31
 3301.22
 3313.666; 3313.667
 3314.03
 3319.073

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination/Harassment
 EDE, EDE-R Computer/Online Services (Acceptable Use
 And Internet Safety)
 EDE-E Computer Network Student Agreement Form
 JFC, Student Conduct
 JFCEA, Gangs/Groups of Students
 JFCK, Use of Electronic Equipment by Students
 JHG, Reporting Child Abuse
 Student Handbooks