

Windom Area Schools



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NOTICE TO SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

The Safe and Supportive Schools Act ("Act"), widely known as the anti-bullying law, recently was passed by the Minnesota legislature. The Act requires public schools to adopt a written policy to prevent and prohibit bullying and to discuss this policy with its volunteers. As a past school volunteer or new volunteer, we are notifying you of our new policy which may be found at www.windom.k12.mn.us under safe and Safe and Supportive Schools. In the hope that you wish to continue to volunteer, we also are inviting you to attend training sessions on the policy that we will be conducting with students and/or staff members. If you are interested in attending these training sessions, please contact your building principal, our Primary Contact Person with respect to this policy, to obtain information as to upcoming training dates and times.

If you are unable to attend a training session, it still is important that you are aware of some of the basic provisions of the new law and policy as set forth in this notice.

What Conduct is Prohibited?

Under the policy, students are prohibited from engaging in any act of bullying on school premises, school district property, at school functions or activities, or on school transportation. School policy also prohibits acts of cyberbullying that occur on school premises or through the use of school resources as well as cyberbullying that occurs off school premises, to the extent such acts substantially and materially disrupt student learning or the school environment. In addition, retaliation for asserting, alleging reporting or providing information about an act of bullying or cyberbullying or knowingly making a false report of bullying is prohibited.

What is Bullying?

For purposes of our policy, bullying is intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct that is objectively offensive and:

1. there is an actual or perceived imbalance of power between the student engaging in the prohibited conduct and the target of the prohibited conduct, and the conduct is repeated or forms a pattern; or
2. materially and substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges.

What Conduct is Considered to be Intimidating, Threatening, Abusive, or Otherwise Harming?

"Intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct" includes, but is not limited to, conduct that does the following:

1. causes physical harm to a student or a student's property or causes a student to be in reasonable fear of harm to person or property;
2. under Minnesota common law, violates a student's reasonable expectation of privacy, defames a student, or constitutes intentional infliction of emotional distress against a student; or
3. is directed at any student or students, including those based on a person's actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, creed, religion, national origin, immigration status, sex, marital status, familial status, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, sexual orientation including gender identity and expression, academic status related to student performance, disability, or status with regard to public assistance, age, or any additional characteristic defined in the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA). Prohibited conduct need not be based on any particular characteristic defined in this paragraph or the MHRA.

What is cyberbullying?

"Cyberbullying" means bullying using technology or other electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of a sign, signal, writing, image, sound, or data, including a post on a social network Internet website or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device. The term applies to prohibited conduct which occurs on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, on school transportation, or on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists, or off school premises to the extent that it substantially and materially disrupts student learning or the school environment.

What are the Obligations of Volunteers to Address Bullying?

As a volunteer, you are not obligated to report or refer incidents of bullying to school officials. In an effort to curb negative behavior, however, we do ask for your cooperation in making reasonable efforts to intervene in and report incidents of prohibited contact to our Primary Contact Person, the classroom teacher, or the building administrator.

The Windom School District greatly appreciates the time you have offered as a volunteer. If you have any questions about our anti-bullying policy or your role as a volunteer, please contact your building principal.