

Student Bullying – School boards are required by section 118.46(2) of the state statutes to distribute the district's policy prohibiting bullying to all students enrolled in the school district and to their parents/guardians annually. They must also provide a copy of the policy to any person who requests it.

Article 635: Student Bullying

The Rio Community School District is committed to providing a safe, caring, respectful learning environment for all students in school buildings, on school grounds, and school buses and at school: sponsored activities. Bullying has a harmful social, physical, psychological and academic impact on bullies, victims and bystanders. The school district consistently and vigorously addresses bullying so that there is no disruption to the learning environment and learning process.

Definition - Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation or harm. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as but not limited to: age; national origin; race ethnicity; religion; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability; and social, economic or family status.

Bullying behavior can be:

Physical (e.g. assault, hitting or punching, kicking, theft, threatening behavior)

Verbal (e.g. threatening or intimidating language, teasing or name calling, racist remarks)

Indirect (e.g. spreading cruel rumors, intimidation through gestures, social exclusion and sending insulting messages or pictures by mobile phone or using the internet: also known as cyber bullying)

Prohibition - Bullying behavior by students and staff is prohibited whether it is of the nature of student(s) to student(s), staff member to staff member, staff member to student or student to staff member. Bullying is prohibited at school, on school grounds, during school: sponsored events, on school buses, and at bus stops or through the use of electronic, computer and telecommunications messaging devices (cyber bullying).

Complaint Procedure - It is considered a responsibility of all students and staff members to watch for and report acts of bullying in any of the above: described situations to a member of the school staff or administration. Students are requested and encouraged to report acts of bullying to a school staff member, building principal or other trusted adult. All school district staff members are required to report acts of students bullying to their immediate supervisor and/or building principal.

All reports are to be taken seriously by the party designated by policy to receive the reports. School staff and administration will support students and coworkers making such reports and protect them against any potential retaliation for making such a report.

An investigation to determine the facts will take place immediately or as soon as possible in order to verify the validity and seriousness of the report.

Filing a report in good faith will not reflect upon the individual's status, nor will it affect his/her grades if the complainant is a student or employment status by the District if the complainant is an adult staff member.

Sanctions and Supports - If it is determined that students participated in bullying behavior or retaliated against anyone due to the reporting of bullying behavior, the school district administration and school board may take disciplinary action, including: detention, suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement officials for possible legal action as appropriate. Pupil services staff will provide support for the identified victim(s).

Consequences - Where it is determined that students participated in bullying behavior in violation of the policy, the school may take disciplinary actions in the form of detentions, suspensions, expulsion and referral to law enforcement for legal action when deemed appropriate. Employees found to have participated in bullying behavior, or having become aware that bullying was taking place and failed to take

action or to report the behavior, are considered to be in violation of the prohibition expressed by the policy and, therefore, subject to disciplinary action consistent with the collective bargaining agreements.