

Waitsfield Elementary School Bullying Prevention Plan

Bullying may involve a range of misconduct that, based on the severity, will warrant a measured response of corrective action and/or discipline. Behaviors that do not rise to the level of bullying, as defined below, still may be subject to intervention and/or discipline under another section of the discipline plan or a discipline policy.

Definition

Bullying means any overt act or combination of such acts directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:

- (a) occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity;
- (b) is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and
- (c) is repeated over time.¹

Notice of Prohibition Against Bullying and Anti-Bullying Interventions

The Waitsfield School District recognizes that students should have a safe, orderly, civil and positive learning environment and that bullying has no place and will not be tolerated in its schools.

The Waitsfield School shall:

- (a) Include the prohibition against bullying in the student or school handbook and in other ways make students aware of the prohibition against bullying, the penalties for engaging in bullying, and the procedures for reporting bullying.
- (b) Develop strategies for school staff to prevent and intervene in bullying

Reporting, Investigating, and Notifying Parents of Bullying Reports

To address bullying, the Waitsfield School encourages students to report to teachers, administrators and other school staff acts of bullying. The school principal and guidance counselor are the designated respondents to all acts of bullying. Teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying or receive student reports of bullying are required to promptly notify these designated personnel. Students and families are also encouraged to make direct reports to these personnel as well.

The school counselor and principal are required to accept and review all reports of bullying. If after initial inquiry, a report appears to warrant further investigation, designated staff shall promptly continue with an investigation. The families of both the victim and the person bullying will be contacted.

Data Gathering

The Waitsfield School District delegates the responsibility of data collection to the school principal. He/she shall collect data on the number of reported incidents of bullying and the number of incidents that have been verified and to make such data available to the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Education and to the public.

Waitsfield Elementary School Bullying Prevention Plan

Possible Steps for Intervening in Bullying Situations

- Intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
- Talk to the person bullying and the victim separately. If more than one student is involved in bullying behavior, talk to each separately, in quick succession.
- Remind the person bullying about school and classroom rules, reiterate what behavior is expected, and discuss sanctions that will be imposed for future bullying behavior.
- Reassure the victim that everything possible will be done to prevent a recurrence.
- Make other students aware of the consequences of the bullying behavior. Reiterate the school's policy of zero tolerance toward bullying.
- Contact the parents of both the bully and the victim as soon as possible
- Continue to monitor the behavior of the person bullying and the safety of the victim.

Strategies for Prevention of Bullying

- Regularly assess the school environment.
- Adopt a comprehensive approach that considers the bully, the target and bystanders.
- Provide bullying prevention and intervention training to all faculty and staff.
- Closely supervise all areas of the school.
- Utilize multiple means for publicizing clear behavioral standards/rules.
- Consistently and fairly enforce standards/rules.
- Establish an anonymous reporting system.
- Encourage parent and community involvement in bullying prevention.
- Use classroom management techniques for response to classroom behavior and when needed, use appropriate discipline.
- As warranted, refer victims and bullies to school counselors or mental health professionals