

DOLORES SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-4A

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DOLORES SCHOOL DISTRICT ANTI-BULLYING PLAN

PREFACE

The safety of our students is of the utmost importance. Any behavior that threatens the safety of our students will not be tolerated. Safe School Violations will be directed to the principals and handled with immediacy. Safe School violations (See all JICDE Board Policies) are defined as any behavior that threatens the general safety and welfare of the district, its students or staff. More specifically any behavior that:

- causes physical harm
- damages property
- is of a sexual nature or
- is proven to be bullying

(Board Policy JKD/JKE-E)

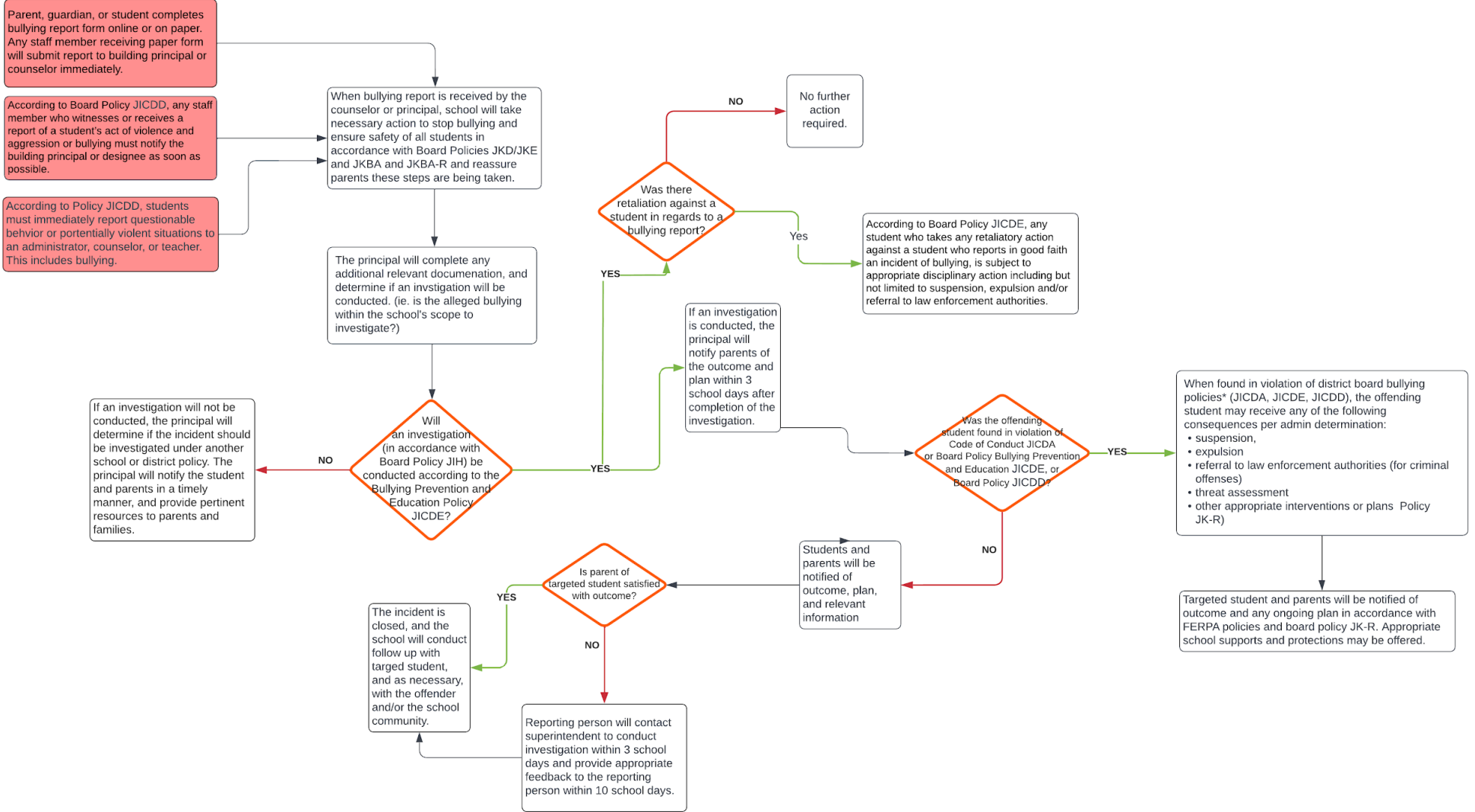
Researchers and legal experts define bullying as any purposeful, unwanted, mean or hurtful behavior that happens . . .

1. **Over time**
2. And where there is an **Imbalance of Power** (Olweus, 1993, p.9, 73; What is Bullying, 2022)

Any safe school violation can be a part of bullying behavior. Board policies that specifically address harassment and discrimination, which are also repeated, purposeful and unwanted behaviors (See JICDE Board Policy), fall under the bullying umbrella. They are legal terms that focus on specific reasons a person may be targeted. These reasons have, over time, received express legislation protecting them (i.e. race, religion, gender, sexual identity, etc.). But bullying in all its forms and for any reason is against the law. (Colorado State AG, pp. 33-40). The Dolores anti-bullying plan will address all forms of bullying. It will address, but not focus on, any one specific reason a person gets targeted. The anti-bullying plan will also address, but not focus on, the specific means by which the bullying is delivered (i.e. physical, relational, or cyber). All forms of bullying for any reason will be addressed and stopped with immediacy. The focus will be on proactively preventing the bullying behavior, and on stopping the perpetrators when it does occur. We will also work together with parents and community to provide post investigation supports and effective plans to restore health and well-being to *both* targets and perpetrators*.

*Research supports that perpetrators of bullying behavior are most likely suffering from at-risk or diagnosable social, emotional and/or mental health disorders. They are at much higher risk for future problems, including suicide, than their targets. (Olweus, 1993, pp.34-36) While the district cannot require parents to take their child for an evaluation, parents do have the right to know there may be an underlying issue. We recommend, but do not require, that parents study all they can to eliminate mental health issues as a possibility. (Kutscher, 2007, p.172)

DOLORES SCHOOL DISTRICT BULLYING PROCEDURE



DOLORES SCHOOL DISTRICT BULLYING PREVENTION PLAN

Dr. Dan Olweus, the world's leading authority on bullying, has shown that the two most effective ways to prevent bullying are:

#1. To Increase Supervision

#2. Empower Bystanders (Olweus, 1993, pp. 123-127)

#1. Increase Supervision: Teachers and staff supervise and monitor all less-structured time: arrival and dismissal, cafeteria, recess, and transitions. Dolores District has also installed cameras on buses, in hallways and other common areas where bullying and incidents of aggression or harassment might occur.

#2. Empower Bystanders: Counselors provide, and staff reinforce, empirically sound guidance lessons that: increase and refine social skills; strengthen character; teach specific and effective ways to respond to unwanted behavior; encourage reporting of repeated bullying behaviors in ways that will restore balance to the situation; and stabilize self esteem. (Baumeister, 2005a, p. 37; Maslow, 1943, p.12; Seligman, 1995, pp.31-42).*

We would like to encourage parents and community to help us reinforce the following strategies that have proven to be effective in both preventing, mitigating and even stopping bullying behavior:

(Click on the strategies to be linked to further explanation and references):

1. [Shift the pity response from students who are the targets of bullying to the students who perpetrate the bullying.](#)
2. [Convey nonchalance in response to put-downs.](#)
3. [If a response is needed, do so "softly," i.e. with non-accusatory, non-defensive, and/or inclusive language.](#)
4. [Record frequency and report bullying behaviors in private.](#)
5. [Resist the urge to retaliate or "bully-back".](#)

*Please see the Counselor pages on the school website for references to the empirically sound guidance lessons.

DOLORES SCHOOL DISTRICT BULLYING REPORT FORMS

Think carefully about the incident/s you are about to report. If it is a recent event that has happened once or twice, or if you believe it is a fight for which both parties are equally responsible, please use either the [Secondary Incident Report Form](#) or the [Elementary Incident Report Form](#).

If however you believe the incidents meets the criteria for bullying: it is **purposeful, unwanted, mean or hurtful behavior that has happened . . .**

1. **Over Time**
2. And there is an **Imbalance of Power**.*

Then please use one of the report forms below:

[Printable Version of the Secondary Bully Report Form](#)

[Printable Version of the Elementary Bully Report Form](#)

[Online Version of the Bully Report Form - High School](#)

[Online Version of the Bully Report Form - Middle School](#)

[Online Version of the Bully Report Form - Elementary School](#)

Please turn any paper incident or bullying report forms into a staff member immediately. Paper forms may be obtained from the office, or staff members. Online forms will be automatically directed to the appropriate principal and school counselor.

*Keep in mind that an imbalance of power does not mean stronger vs weaker except in the mind of the student perpetrating the aggressive behavior. It can simply mean that the target was strong enough to choose not to bully back. This prevents escalation and allows us to more clearly and easily investigate and put a stop to the behavior.

DOLORES SCHOOL DISTRICT BULLYING INVESTIGATION AND POST INVESTIGATION PLAN

When a report is received, administration will complete the [DSD Bullying Investigation Checklist](#). After investigation, when deemed necessary, the administration and appropriate team members will continue monitoring the situation, and will develop post investigation action and support plans for both students who have perpetrated the bullying behaviors and students who have been targets of the bullying behaviors.

The following are guidelines to be considered when investigating and creating support plans:

Students who have Perpetrated Bullying Behaviors

- Consequences should be visible to the student body. “Bringing their behavior into the open encourages the perpetrator of bullying to develop in more constructive ways.” (Olweus, 1993, pp. 48-9 & 99). This is not to humiliate the perpetrator but to reinforce the consistency of boundaries that cannot be crossed. It is a deterrent to other would-be perpetrators and gives a sense of support and safety to the students who have been targeted and the general student population. (Olweus, 1993, pp. 40-43)
- Consequences need to be: easy to administer; cause discomfort without hostility; separate the person from the behavior; state clearly the behavior they are being punished for; and adapt to the child's age, gender, and personality as a punishment to one might be a reward to another. (Olweus, 1993, p. 86)
- Consequences should be delivered matter of factly and with as little verbal interchange as possible. Negotiating is highly reinforcing to aggressors. (Olweus, 1993, p. 97)
- School Counseling could be offered, but not required. (ASCA, 2022)
- When deemed appropriate, mental health screening could be suggested to parents by a school mental health professional, but not required. (Kutscher, 2007, p. 127)
- Determine if a threat assessment is needed (Colorado SSRC, p.19)
- Determine if a safety plan, (or Response, Management and Support Plan) should be implemented (Olweus, 1993, pp. 100-105; Colorado SSRC. pp. 19-21)
- Meet with parents to collaborate on a school/home plan. (Olweus, 1993, p. 100; Colorado SSRC, 3-7)

Students Who Have Been the Targets of Bullying Behaviors

- Should not be made to “work things out” with their perpetrators. (Gardner, 2008, Forward)
- Should not be interviewed with their perpetrator (Gardner, 2008, Forward, Olweus, 1993, 91.)
- Determine if a safety plan needs to be implemented. (Olweus, 1993, pp. 100-105; Colorado SSRC. pp. 19-21)
- Freedom of the students who perpetrated the bullying behaviors may need to be restricted in order to ensure the safety of the students who were targeted, not vice versa. For example the perpetrating student would be moved to a different lunch time, or required to wait until the targeted student is safely home before they are dismissed from

school, etc. When severe enough, the student who perpetrated the bullying could be required to attend a different school. (Olweus, 1993, p.99)

- May be offered school counseling services. (ASCA, 2022)

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DSD Anti-Bullying Plan Authors:

Text and References By Susan Miller, School Counselor
Flow Chart by Caitlin West, Academic Counselor
Report Forms and Checklists by Amanda Higgins, School Counselor

Dolores School District Bullying **Prevention** Plan:

#1 Shift the pity response from the targets of bullying behaviors to the students who perpetrate bullying.

Perpetrators of bullying behaviors . . .

- do so because of **unstable** (not low) “egos” or self esteem. (Olweus, 1993, 36; Baumeister, 2005b)
- are awkwardly and “unexpectedly” attempting to gain social status. (Garcia Winner, 2006)
- tend to believe being in the “better than” position correlates with their self worth. (Olweus, 1993, pp. 30-36 & Coloroso, 2009, p.41.)
- bully impulsively because it is easier than building functional relationships. (Baumeister, 2005a, p. 217 & Rogers, 2019, p. 2, Olweus, 1993, p.34)
- are at a much higher risk for depression and suicide than their victims.(Wolke, 2015, p. 881)

Targets of bullying, on the other hand, tend to have. . .

- more stable self-esteem
- higher level social skills
- stronger social supports.
- Note: Provocative victims do have lower level social skills. They are more vocal, and generally annoying, but it is important to know they are by far the minority of victims. They are usually not cruel and do not deserve the contempt and disrespect that comes from being bullied.(Gardner, 2009, Forward; Olweus, 1993, pp. 33-34). We need to watch our tendency to generalize our experiences with them to all victims.

This knowledge empowers bystanders to make the switch to pitying the perpetrators of the bullying behavior and not the students they have targeted. ***Pity is the last thing a ‘bully’ wants and if that is all they get from the bullying behavior it will not meet their need for status. They will be motivated to look for and try more functional, though slower acting, paths to social status*** (i.e. building lasting, and reciprocal relationships, being kind and inclusive) (Haslam, 2006, pp. 1-5,13-15)

#2. Convey nonchalance in response to put-downs.

Getting a reaction from both the student being targeted and/or the bystanders is the reinforcement a perpetrator seeks. It is the evidence that proves what they are doing is working! They will get a ‘buzz’ or a ‘jolly’ that gives them the sense of being in the ‘better than’ position.(Baumeister, 2005b, p.2; Gardner, 2009, Forward.) If, on the other hand, they don’t get a response—if no one cares— they will not get reinforced and are less likely to continue with the bullying behavior. (Maslow, 1943, pp. 11-12; Baumeister 2005, pp. 217 & 222)

#3. If a response is needed, do so “softly,” i.e. with non-accusatory, non-defensive, and/or inclusive language.

When a bystander tells a student who is bullying to stop, the perpetrator of the bullying will interpret the defense as a counter attack—remember perpetrators have unstable egos/self esteem. (Baumeister, 2005b, p.39). They typically react with disproportionate and unexpected aggression. (Baumeister, 2005b, p.2) Instinctively, many of our children sense this.

If however, we teach them to stand up in a “softer” less accusatory manner, using non-defensive and when possible, inclusive language, the perpetrator of the bullying will not perceive any type of counter attack. They will not feel singled out and will feel no loss of status. They will have an easy out, so to speak, for changing their behavior. Using the non-accusatory preface to a response “It’s okay” will help everyone feel at ease. Saying “I’m sorry” without admitting fault is a great way to convey non-defensiveness. Using the pronoun “we” as often as possible is inclusive and will help the perpetrator of the bullying not to feel singled out (Patterson, 2002, pp. 32, 111, 136-137).

Students who bully typically have empathy deficits and inconsistencies. They already know what they are doing is wrong. They don’t care. We don’t need to point it out to them because it doesn’t work (Keelan, 2012, pp. 10-11).

Here are some soft responses to practice so that bullying can be prevented. Of course you can change the wording to make these your own. The point is to be non-accusatory, non-defensive and inclusive whenever possible. We will be teaching the students that they don’t have to care about or receive the put down. (Olweus, 1993, p.31; Gardner, 2008, forward.) This is how they can show it:

- Say nothing, Shrug your shoulders and turn or walk away.
- I’m sorry you feel that way!
- I hope you change your mind!
- That’s interesting.
- You’re right. I’m not good at that YET.
- You’re right, you are really good at _____!
- You’re right, you are really (say a praise). Good for you!
- It’s okay if you feel that way.
- It’s okay . . . but I’m not going to do that.
- That’s okay for you to feel that way, but I don’t feel that way.
- It’s okay if you don’t want to include (targeted student’s name), I’ll do it.
- It’s okay if you don’t want to include (targeted student’s name), you can play/hang out with us another day!
- It sounds like you don’t like (targeted student’s name). But if you knew (say something

- positive) about them, you might change your mind.
- It sounds like you don't like (targeted student's name) but did you know that both of you (say something they have in common)?
- Remember back when I told you what you were doing wrong? I'm sorry I said that, I'm not the teacher! (or, It wasn't my place). Then leave them alone for a while.
- We might not want to say that about (targeted student's name). It would be mean.
- Let's do something else, someone might get hurt.
- It won't make us feel good to be mean. Let's do something ELSE.
- They aren't very good at that YET. But we could help them get better.
- They are new and are used to doing things differently. We have all been new before. They don't know our rules YET.
- What's more important? Getting to do things our way or making a new friend? Let's try including them, they might be really cool.
- It's okay, you can go first, but then let's take turns.
- It's okay if you really want to do that, but we are going to do this instead. We hope you will join us.
- We can find something in common with them.
- We can find something we like about anyone.

For Provocative Victims

- I know they can be pretty annoying sometimes, but it doesn't hurt their feelings to tell them that, as long as we still include them.
- Let's try helping them to do something ELSE when they get annoying. It helps to do active things when we hang out with them.

From the Squabbles Curriculum:

- (Hold up your hands in front of you and say) "Are you mad at me? I am sorry about that."

#4. Record frequency and report bullying behaviors in private.

Unfortunately with bullying, the burden of proof lies with the student who is being targeted. They need to prove that they have been bullied by showing that it has happened over time, and that there is an imbalance of power.(Olweus, 1993, p.9, 73; What is Bullying, 2022) It is to the targeted student's advantage to keep an accurate record of the frequency and details of the bullying. The school and parents should help the students with this! Keeping a record needs to be done in private. This cannot be stressed enough! If they tell their friends and start gossiping about keeping a record it becomes a retaliation and disrupts the imbalance of power. But when done in private, keeping a record does a myriad of good things for the student who has been targeted.

- a. It helps the targeted student be accurate. The human brain goes crazy to protect itself from negative experiences. Sometimes it minimizes and sometimes it

- exaggerates. Keeping a record will help them stay connected to the truth and provide credibility when they decide to report. (Seligman, 2013, p. 169)
- b. It empowers them to see clearly that the bullying wasn't their fault. Even if they remember triggering the behavior by doing something the perpetrating student perceived as a put down—i.e. correcting them or trying to help them when it was unwanted or embarrassing, they can see that the perpetrating student's response was disproportionate. (Baumeister, 1999, p. 211) This protects against depression. (Seligman, 1997, p.86)
 - c. If they are responding softly, they will almost always see a decline in the frequency. They might even have solved their own problem. How empowering is that?! They also will have reinforced to everyone that soft responding is effective. (Patterson, 2002, p. 174)
 - d. Keeping a record of the frequency and the details empowers and motivates the targeted student not to retaliate or 'bully back.' Knowing that they can accurately report when and if they are ready, builds foresight and confidence and helps them resist the urge to react. Parents can help their children keep track of the details. Make sure they include dates and times when possible. Past events can be recalled to the best of their ability. And including the names of bystanders is a powerful way to increase supervision on their own. (Youth Development, p. 6 & 17)
 - e. If there is no decline in the bullying behavior they will have an accurate record of both frequency and imbalance of power to turn in . . . IN PRIVATE . . . with their bullying form. (Beckles, 2021, para. 3-8)
 - f. If a student is getting assaulted and defends themselves to get away . . . that of course is not a retaliation or a *bully-back!* (Gibbs, 2014)

IMPORTANT NOTE: When a safe school violation occurs, (i.e. if someone is getting physically hurt, if property is getting damaged or if it is anything sexual in nature) it needs to be reported IMMEDIATELY. Detail who was reported to and the date.

#5. Resist the urge to “bully-back”.

We often hear parents and others encouraging the targeted students to bully-back by giving the perfect come-back or by “putting the bully in their place” in one way or the other. Because our society reinforces the notion that not responding looks weak, this is a hard notion to combat. But bullying back upsets the balance of power and now it becomes a fight. (Olweus, 1993, p.9, 73; What is Bullying, 2022) As we have stated before, perpetrating students of bullying behavior will respond with disproportionate anger and aggression and targeted students who bully back may endure further and more severe abuse. (Baumeister, 2005b, p.2) Avoiding bullying-back is not weakness. In fact, according to Dr. Brooks Gibbs, doing so requires incredible moral strength and is highly effective. (Gibbs, 2014). In an unrecoverable article from Healthtree.com in 2010, the authors noted that when aggressors cannot escape the discrepancies between

reality and their overinflated self view, “. . . the person may become enraged, experience, feelings of emptiness, or develop clinical depression.” Researchers, using Dr. Martin Seligman’s attributional style questionnaire with populations that get caught and must face the consequences of their actions, concur with this finding. (O’Sullivan, PLoS, para. 4)

By CHOOSING not to bully back, by taking the higher moral ground, the targeted student solidifies their self-esteem and resilience. (Baumeister, 2005a, p. 37; Seligman, 1999, pp. 31 & 134) By not bullying back they are soon able to prove the imbalance of power and the chances of stopping the bullying skyrocket!

* Dr. Gibbs is the author of the preventative and empowering guidance curriculum called “Squabbles.”