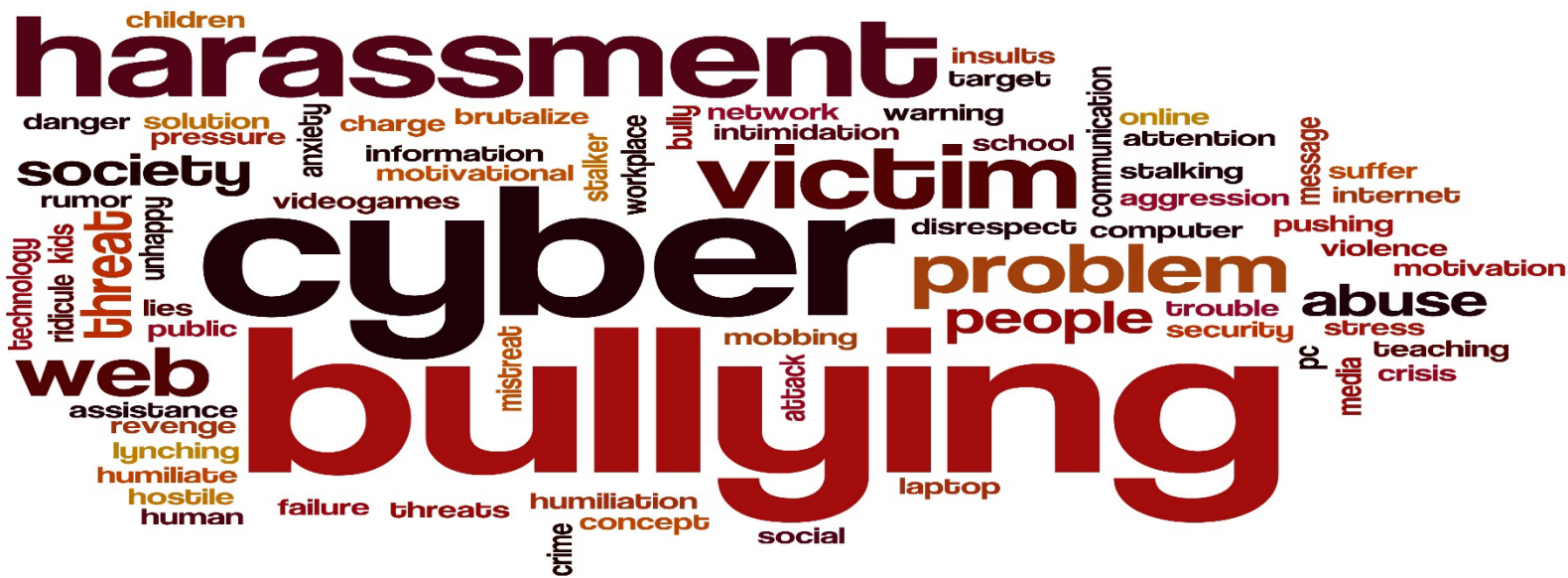# Poughkeepsie City School District

Bullying & Cyberbullying Frequently Asked Questions

Developed by the Office of School Engagement

Introduction

The Poughkeepsie City School District (PCSD) is committed to creating and maintaining safe environments conducive to learning and instruction. A critical component of student success is promoting the physical and mental health and well-being of our students. High Needs Student Supports is the Poughkeepsie City School District's framework for providing all students, particularly those displaying extraordinary needs, with supports, services, and programming needed to find success as students and future citizens. The goal is to provide a comprehensive network of coordinated programs and interventions which support the academic, social, behavioral, and emotional development of all students.

The objectives under this framework is to:

- strengthen the District's impact on positive youth development.
- align internal and external supports and resources to better meet the needs of students.
- develop strategies with community partners and students collaboratively to address student need.
- provide professional development/capacity building opportunities to staff, parents, students, and community partners.

As one of the many strategies employed under this framework, the ***Bullying & Cyberbullying Frequently Asked Questions*** document is intended to educate and mobilize school and community stakeholders to become upstanders in combating the bullying epidemic that is affecting children in and out of school across the country. Research* indicates that:

- 90% of students in grades 4-8 report having been harassed or bullied.
- 28% of students in grades 6-12 experience bullying.
- 20% of students in grades 9-12 experience bullying. (stopbullying.gov)
- In grades 6-12, 9% of students have experienced cyberbullying.
- Over 160,000 kids refuse to go to school each day for fear of being bullied. (Nation Education Association)
- 70.6% of students report having witnessed bullying in their school–and over 71% say bullying is a problem.
- Over 10% of students who drop out of school do so due to being bullied repeatedly.
- Each month 282,000 students are physically assaulted in some way in secondary schools throughout the United States–and the number is growing.
- Statistics suggest that revenge [due to bullying] is the number one motivator for school shootings in the U.S.
- 86% of students surveyed said, "other kids picking on them, making fun of them or bullying them" is the number one reason that teenagers turn to lethal violence at school.
- Nearly 75% of school shootings have been linked to harassment and bullying.
- 87% of students surveyed report that bullying is the primary motivator of school shootings.
- 64% of students who are bullied do not report it. (Petrosina, Guckenburg, Devoe and Hanson 2010)

The above data merits the need to immediately act to address the pervasiveness and catastrophic effect of bullying. PCSD remains committed in collaborating with all school and community stakeholders to address this very serious school and community issue.

TOPICS COVERED

A.)   Bullying

B.)   Cyberbullying

C.)   Reporting Bullying and Cyberbullying

D.)   Bullying Laws and Policy

E.)   Resources

F.)   DASA Coordinator Contact Information

STOP BULLYING

Frequently Asked Questions

Bullying

1. **What is bullying?**

   Per the Poughkeepsie City School District's Code of Conduct, bullying is any overt acts by a student or a group of students, or an employee directed against a student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the student while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity which acts are repeated against the same student over time.

   Additionally bullying:

   o Is a form of aggressive behavior that is intended to cause harm. When bullying occurs, there is an imbalance of power between the peer (or group of peers) bullying and the victim. Bullying usually happens over and over.

   o Can take both direct and indirect forms including:

   Direct bullying or identifiable bullying actions may include:
   - Hitting, tripping, shoving, pinching, and excessive tickling
   - Verbal threats, name calling, racial slurs, and insults
   - Demanding money, property, or some service to be performed
   - Stabbing, choking, burning, and shooting

   Indirect bullying may be more difficult to detect and may include:
   - Rejecting, excluding, or isolating target(s)
   - Humiliating target(s) in front of friends
   - Manipulating friends and relationships
   - Sending hurtful or threatening e-mail or writing notes
   - Blackmailing, terrorizing, or posing dangerous dares
   - Relational bullying (ganging up, spreading rumors, gossiping)
   - Cyberbullying (harm inflicted via computers, cell phones, electronic means, developing a Web site devoted to taunting, ranking, or degrading a target and inviting others to join in posting humiliating notes or messages).

   o Bullying abuse is not conflict, where two parties have a disagreement or misunderstanding. It is also different from playful teasing or rough-and tumble play, which is a give-and-take where both people see it as fun and good-natured.

2. **What are some signs that my child may be being bullied?**

   The impact of bullying is different for every child. Typical signs that a child may be being bullied are:
   - Change in behavior

- not interested in doing things that he/she used to like doing
- withdrawn
- Not wanting to go to school or be in social situations
- Unexplained illnesses, cuts, or bruises
- Most children who are bullied tend to be quiet at home and classroom. A smaller number engage in offensive or irritating behaviors that may make the bullying worse.

3. What are some signs that my child may be bullying others?

Similar to its impact on children being bullied, the indicators for those that are engaging in bullying behavior can be different for each child. Some typical signs may include:

- Referring to others negatively
- Lacking empathy
- Possessing a strong need to get his or her own way
- Having hostile/defiant attitude
- Angering easily and/or quickly
- Denying involvement or blaming others when behavior is addressed

4. What can I do to prevent bullying?

Preventing bullying from occurring is very important in the positive development of children. The responsibility of preventing bullying should be shared by every adult, as adults are models for appropriate behavior. To impact the positive development of all youth adults should:

- Be a positive role model
  - talk with and listen to your child
  - treat others with dignity and respect
- Get involved in school, community, and at home
- Know the school's policies in terms of bullying prevention and intervention
- Teach children good habits early and consistently
  - establish high expectations for behavior and low tolerance for being mean
- Teach responsible use of technology; supervise and limit electronic activities
  - for example, have computers in common areas (not bedrooms), know child's password, be their friend on social media accounts
  - Bring cell phones and computers into the parents' room to charge overnight.

5. What can the community do about bullying?

Bullying doesn't happen only at school. Community members can use their unique strengths and skills to prevent bullying wherever it occurs. Bullying can be prevented, especially when the power of a community is

brought together. Community-wide strategies can help identify and support children who are bullied, redirect the behavior of children who bully, and change the attitudes of adults and youth who tolerate bullying behaviors in peer groups, schools, and communities. Preventing and responding to bullying is the responsibility of the entire community (i.e. school administrators, teachers, staff members, students, parents, and community based organizations. The entire community must recognize the responsibility to create a climate in which bullying is not tolerated. Following are a few effective ways the community can address bullying:

- o Organize a solution oriented open forum where members of the community can come together to discuss collective strategies for addressing bullying.
- o Raise awareness of bullying and its impact of positive youth development. Develop and distribute print media. Encourage local radio, TV, newspapers, and websites to give public service announcement space. Introduce bullying prevention information, strategies, and programming to community youth groups (i.e. community centers, athletic coaches, youth leaders, etc.).
- o School Parent groups can organize and identify antibullying resources that can be shared with other parents to review and go over with their children.
- o Partner with school and other youth development officials to develop an aligned response to bullying.

Cyberbullying

1. **What is cyberbullying?**
   Per the Poughkeepsie City School District's Code of Conduct, cyberbullying is the act of tormenting, threatening, harassing, humiliating, embarrassing or otherwise targeting a student by another student using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies and/or mobile phones.

   - o Cyberbullying is deliberate and repeated acts of harm inflicted through computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.
   - o Electronic devices are used to harass, threaten, humiliate, and hassle peers. This includes posting obscene, insulting, and slanderous messages or photos, as well as developing websites to promote and distribute hateful or hurtful content.
     - • Cyberbullying can be carried out through many different communication modalities, including:
       - o text messages, emails, video, phone calls, chatrooms, instant messages, blogs, websites, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr), and internet gaming
     - • The kinds of behaviors being transmitted through these modalities include:
       - o **harassment** - aggressive pressure or intimidation.

CYBERBULLYING FACTS

- sexual harassment – unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, taking or sending sexually explicit videos, pictures or auditory recordings or other inappropriate verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature, directed toward others.
  - **denigration** - the action of unfairly criticizing someone or something.
  - **impersonation** - an act of pretending to be another person for the purpose of entertainment or fraud.
  - **outing** - the act or practice of revealing, exposing someone when not desired
  - **tricking** - deceive or outwit (someone) by being cunning or skillful.
  - **exclusion** - deny (someone) access to a place, group, or privilege.
  - **cyberstalking** - the repeated use of electronic communications to harass or frighten someone, for example by sending threatening emails.
  - **happy slapping** - the practice whereby a group of people assault a stranger at random while filming the incident on a mobile device, so as to circulate the images or post them online.

2. **What are some signs that my child may be a victim of cyberbullying?**

A child may be a victim of cyberbullying if he or she:

- Unexpectedly stops using personal technology (e.g., cell phones, computer, games)
- Appears nervous or jumpy when (s)/he receives messages via electronic devices
- Appears angry, upset, depressed, or frustrated after using the computer or his or her cell phone
- Avoids discussions about activities on the computer or cell phone
- Becomes unusually withdrawn from friends and/or family members
- Has thoughts of harming themselves or committing suicide

3. **What are some signs that a child may be cyberbullying others?**

A child may be cyberbullying others if (s)he:

- quickly switches screens or closes programs when someone walks by
- becomes unusually upset when personal device uses are restricted
- avoids discussions about activities on the computer or cell phone
- uses multiple online accounts or an account that is not his or her own

In general, if a youth significantly changes his or her behavior when using technological devices, steps need to be taken to find out why.

4. **What common apps should I be aware of in monitoring my child's use of technology?**

Please note that the above apps are not a complete list. Also note that presentation of these apps suggest that if your child uses them they are being cyberbullied or engaging in cyberbullying, which may not be the case.

More Information on Parental Monitoring of Technology/Apps: https://cyberbullying.org/parental-monitoring-apps-cyberbullying-review-recommendation

Reporting Bullying and Cyberbullying

1. **What can I do if my child is being bullied or cyberbullied?**
   The Poughkeepsie City School District (PCSD) takes incidents of bullying and cyber bullying very seriously. PCSD is committed to creating a safe and supportive learning environment to ensure that every school is thriving and that every student graduates college and career ready.
   o If your child is being bullied:
     - Listen and empathize (for example, "Tell me what happened, that must have been very scary for you.")
     - Take it seriously
     - Work with the child to find out more about the situation
     - If you suspect your child is being bullied at school, you may contact your child's teacher, counselor, social worker or Administrator for assistance and support
     - **To file a report** of bullying, **contact the building Principal** (the Dignity Act Coordinator) or making an **Online Bullying Report on the district's webpage** found here: https://www.poughkeepsieschools.org/Domain/352

   Make a Report:
   - Go to the district's webpage by visiting https://www.poughkeepsieschools.org/Domain/352
   - Click onto the link labeled "Dignity Act Incident Fillable Form"
   - Complete form and submit.

POUGHKEEPSIE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

DIGNITY ACT INCIDENT REPORTING FORM[1]

Instructions: complete the form, make a copy and submit the original to the Principal's Office.

Name of Reporter: _____   Date of Report: _____

Relationship to Student on whose behalf you are reporting: _____

Name of Student subjected to harassment/bullying/discrimination (target): _____

Grade of target: _____   School of target: _____

Name of suspect(s): _____   Grade of suspect(s): _____

School of suspect(s) _____   Did you witness the incident(s)? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

List any witnesses: _____
_____
_____

2. **What will happen when an incident of bullying is reported?**
   The Poughkeepsie City School District takes student safety and reports of bullying very seriously.

   - Poughkeepsie City School District Principals (DASA Coordinators) conduct a detailed investigation of the bullying incident that is witnessed or reported

   - Upon investigating Principals take immediate and appropriate action to address the allegation. This includes making sure that the student who has been bullied is safe and addressing the misbehavior of the bully.

3. **What happens to students who bully?**
   Bullying and cyberbullying is a violation of the PCSD Code of Conduct. Per the Code of Conduct:

   Student engagement in Intimidation, Harassment, Menacing, or Bullying Behavior and Not Physical Contact (threatening, stalking, or seeking to coerce or compel a person to do something; intentionally placing or attempting to place another person in fear of imminent physical injury; or engaging in verbal, written or electronic means of communication or physical conduct that threatens another with harm, including intimidation through the use of epithets or slurs involving race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, religious practices, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, weight or disability) may lead to the following interventions:

   - **Level One Intervention** – Classroom support and student support team involvement (See Code of Conduct for complete list of interventions that can be applied).

   - **Level Two Intervention** – School administration involvement (See Code of Conduct for complete list of interventions that can be applied).

   - **Level Three Intervention** – School administration involvement including short term suspension (1 -5 days) (See Code of Conduct for complete list of interventions that can be applied).

   - **Level Four Intervention** - School and district administration involvement including long term suspension (6 or more days) (See Code of Conduct for complete list of interventions that can be applied).

4. **In what other ways does the Poughkeepsie City School District address bullying?**
   As part of its efforts to maintain an environment that is safe and conducive to learning and instruction the Poughkeepsie City School District addresses the positive social, emotional and wellness development of all students by:

   - Providing student support service personnel at each PCSD school. Each school has an assigned social worker, psychologist, and school counselor(s). Crisis Intervention Specialists are assigned to Poughkeepsie High School, Poughkeepsie Middle School, and Morse Elementary School. Safety Monitors are assigned to Poughkeepsie High School and Poughkeepsie Middle School.

   - Training school safety officers on how to recognize and address bullying in schools.

   - Creating anti-bullying resources for students, parents, and school staff.

   - Providing support to students who are victim to bullying.

   - Developing an enhanced student support response to students who engage in bullying.

   - Empowering student leadership teams to address bullying by establishing peer support groups, and anti-bullying campaigns and activities in schools and community.

   - Engaging parents in Parent Empowerment Learning Sessions on Bullying and Cyberbullying.

Bullying Laws and Policy

1. **What laws are established to addresses bullying in schools?**
   In 2010 New York State passed a law (Dignity for All Students Act) that is designed to provide all public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus, or at a school function. While the law was adopted in 2010, its implementation started July 2012.

2. **How does the Poughkeepsie City School District implement the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)?**
   In accordance New York State Education Law, each school is required to have a Dignity Act Coordinator who is thoroughly trained in responding to and investigating instances of harassment, bullying, and discrimination.
   - Dignity Act Coordinators are required to:
     - provide annual instruction to faculty and students on the Dignity for All Students Act;
     - to foster an environment free from intimidation, harassment or discrimination and;
     - respond quickly and thoroughly to reports of bullying.

3. **What is Poughkeepsie City School District's policy on bullying?**
   The Poughkeepsie City School District has several policies that address bullying. Those policies are as follows:
   - **District Code of Conduct**
   - **Dignity for All Students Act**
   - **Computer and Internet Use**

Resources

1. **What Poughkeepsie City School District based resources are available to families and students?**
   - **DASA Coordinators –** Each school has a DASA coordinator (principal) to assist families and students.
   - **Training** – Parents are provided Training in bullying and cyber-Bullying via the Parent Empowerment Center
   - **Programs** - Counseling, Social Skills groups, Mentoring is available

Where to get help

2. What are the online resources for families and students who need help?

- **The New York State Center for School Safety: https://www.nyscfss.org/parent-information**
- **Alberti Center for Abuse and Prevention: https://ed.buffalo.edu/alberti.html**
- **American Society for Positive Care of Children https://americanspcc.org/our-voice/bullying/statistics-and-information/**
- **The Dignity Act http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/**
- **Netsmartz https://www.netsmartz.org/Home**
- **Stop Bullying https://www.stopbullying.gov/**
- **The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Networ**k: www.glsen.org/cgibin/iowa/all/antibullying/index.html
- **GLBT National Help Center** www.glnh.org/index2.html
- **Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays:** www.pflag.org
- **The Trevor Project** www.thetrevorproject.org
- **Innerbody** https://www.innerbody.com/bullying-prevention-resources

Hotlines

- **LYRIC Youth Talk line:** 1-800-246-7743
- **National Suicide Prevention Helpline**: 1-800-273-TALK
- **GLBT National Youth Talk line**: 1-800-246-PRIDE
- **Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender National Hotline**: 1-888-THE-GLNH
- **Peer Listening Line for LGBT Youth:** 1-800-399-PEER

DASA Coordinator Contact Information

School Numbers	
Clinton Elementary School (main office)	845-451-4600 ext. 7400
Mrs. DaVetta Price, Assistant Principal (DASA Coordinator) Dpriceir@poughkeepsieschools.org	
Early Learning Center (main office)	845-451-4720 ext. 3400
Mr. Paul Weir, Assistant Principal (DASA Coordinator) pweir@poughkeepsieschools.org	
Krieger Elementary School (main office)	845-451-4660 ext. 3400
Ms. Jessica Baruffo jbaruffo@poughkeepsieschools.org	
Morse Elementary School (main office)	845-451-4690 ext. 5400
Ms. Yolanda Wright, Assistant Principal (DASA Coordinator) ywright@poughkeepsieschools.org	
Warring Elementary School (main office)	845-451-4750 ext. 2400
Mr. David Feliciano, Assistant Principal (DASA Coordinator) dfeliciano@poughkeepsieschools.org	
Poughkeepsie Middle School (main office)	845-451-4800 ext. 4400
Ms. Danielle Green Assistant Principal (DASA Coordinator) dreen@poughkeepsieschools.org	
Poughkeepsie High School (main office)	845-451-4850 ext. 6400
Mr. Joseph Mazzetti - Assistant Principal (DASA Coordinator) jmazzett@poughkeepsieschools.org	

POUGHKEEPSIE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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