

## **MVPS Bullying Policy**

Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying. Schools are meant to be safe and caring places where students can learn. As such, bullying in any form, as described below, will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of the entire school community to ensure that bullying is not allowed.

"Bullying", which is defined as the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

- 1) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property;
- 2) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;
- 3) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- 4) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- 5) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

Certain students maybe more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based upon actual or perceived differentiating characteristics which include: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

The School Committee expects administrators and supervisors to make clear to students and staff that bullying in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus or school-sanctioned transportation, or at school- sponsored functions will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion for students and termination for employees.

The District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying. The principal, or his/her designee, of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying.

Each school district shall develop, adhere to and update, at least biennially, a plan to address bullying prevention and intervention. The plan shall apply to students and members of a school staff, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals.

All schools and school districts must implement, for all school staff, professional development that includes developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying; research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

Revised 5.2014 LEGAL REFS: M.G.L.

Chapter 151C M.G.L.

Chapter 76 § 5 M.G.L.

Chapter 269 § 17, 18, 19 M.G.L.

Chapter 71 §§ 82, 84 M.G.L.

Chapter 71 §370, 380