Purpose: To establish the basic structure for maintaining a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The board prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying of a student by students, staff and third parties that interfere with or disrupt a student’s ability to learn and the school’s responsibility to educate its students in a safe and orderly environment whether in a classroom, on school premises, on a school bus or other school related vehicle, at an official school bus stop, at a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises, or at another program or function where the school is responsible for the student.

For purposes of this policy, harassment, intimidation or bullying is defined as a gesture, electronic communication, or a written, verbal, physical or sexual act reasonably perceived to have the effect of either of the following:

- harming a student physically or emotionally or damaging a student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of personal harm or property damage
- insulting or demeaning a student or group of students causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school

Any student who feels he/she has been subjected to harassment, intimidation or bullying is encouraged to file a complaint in accordance with procedures established by the superintendent. Complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and confidentially. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or his/her designee. Reports by students or employees may be made anonymously.

The district prohibits retaliation or reprisal in any form against a student or employee who has filed a complaint or report of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The district also prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The board expects students to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified and respectful manner. Students and employees have a responsibility to know and respect the policies, rules and regulations of the school and district. Any student or employee who is found to have engaged in the prohibited actions as outlined in this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion in the case of a student or termination in the case of an employee. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. The district will take all other appropriate steps to correct or rectify the situation.

Students, parents/legal guardians, teachers and staff members should be aware that the district may take disciplinary actions for conduct initiated and/or created off campus involving the inappropriate use of the Internet or web-based resources if such conduct poses a threat or substantially interferes with or disrupts the work and discipline of the schools, including discipline for student harassment and bullying.

The superintendent will be responsible for ensuring notice of this policy is provided to students, staff, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and members of the community, including its applicability to all areas of the school environment as outlined in this policy.

The superintendent will also ensure that a process is established for discussing the district policy with students.
The board is committed to ensuring that every student is able to experience an environment, which is safe, secure, and conducive to learning. In the board’s opinion, harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, including cyberbullying, are disruptive and can adversely affect academic achievement and the school climate. Therefore, the board prohibits harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying of a student by any person on district property, at a school- or district-sponsored activity or event, on a school or activity bus and/or vehicle, or which substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school(s).

The board prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any individual, who reports a valid act of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying.

Any student who feels s/he has been subjected to harassment, intimidation or bullying, is encouraged to file a complaint in accordance with procedures established by the superintendent. The superintendent is expected to develop guidance and enforce the provisions of an administrative rule ensuring all schools are in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations addressing harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying of students. The principal of each school is to be familiar with and adhere to the board’s expectations as contained in policy and administrative rule.

The board further expects that the superintendent will ensure principals and assistant principals are made aware annually of their responsibilities for complying with the district’s harassment, intimidation, and bullying procedures to include, at a minimum, following the reporting process, investigating reports, publicizing this policy and its accompanying administrative rule, attending mandatory training, and subsequently conducting educational programs for students, teachers, and staff on harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

Cf. GBEB, JIC, JICDA

Adopted 1/16/07; Revised 7/19/16

Legal references:

A. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:
   1. Section 16-3-510 – Organizations and entities revised (hazing unlawful; definitions).
   4. Sections 59-63-210 through 270 – Grounds for which trustees may expel, suspend or transfer pupils; petition for readmission; notices and parent conferences; expulsion for remainder of year and hearings; transfer of pupils; corporal punishment; regulation or prohibition of clubs or like activities.
   5. Section 59-63-275 – Student hazing prohibited.

B. Federal Cases:

C. State Board of Education Regulations:
   1. R43-279 – Minimum standards of student conduct and disciplinary enforcement procedures to be implemented by local school districts.
A. Federal Law and Regulations
   2. Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act
   5. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
   6. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act
   7. Disabilities Education Act

B. S. C. Code, 1976, as amended:
   1. Section 16-3-510 - Organizations and entities revised
   2. Section 59-19-90 - General powers and duties of school trustees
   3. Section 59-63-110, et seq. – Safe School Climate Act
   4. Sections 59-63-210 through 270 - Grounds for which trustees may expel, suspend or transfer pupils; petition for readmission; notices and parent conferences; expulsion for remainder of year and hearings; transfer of pupils; corporal punishment; regulation or prohibition of clubs or like activities
   4. Section 59-63-275 - Student hazing prohibited
   5. Section 59-67-240 - Other duties of bus driver; discipline of students for misconduct

B. State Board of Education Regulations:
   1. R-43-279 - Minimum standards of student conduct and disciplinary enforcement procedures to be implemented by local school districts