



Rappahannock County Public Schools Process to Prevent Bullying

Definition of Bullying

Bullying means any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyber bullying. (“Bullying” does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument or peer conflict).*

Rappahannock County Public Schools’ Stand on Bullying

A student, either individually or as a part of a group, shall not bully others either in person or by the use of any communication technology including computer systems, telephones, pagers, or instant messaging systems. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, physical, verbal, or written intimidation, taunting, name-calling, and insults and any combination of prohibited activities. (Rappahannock County School Board Policy JFC-R).

Bullying is included as an infraction the *Code of Student Conduct* in each school’s *Student-Parent Handbook*, along with a range of consequences. Disciplinary actions include referral to the Rappahannock County School Board for long term suspension or expulsion and referral to law enforcement.

Planning Team

Rappahannock County Public Schools has established a *Bully Prevention Planning Team* composed of the Superintendent/designee, principals, school psychologist and guidance counselors. This team, coordinated by the school psychologist, meets at least annually to review staff training, student education, reporting processes and program evaluation. Additionally, each school has a building level team to plan annual activities appropriate for their student body.

*Per VA Code Section 22.1-276.01

Professional Development

Rappahannock County Public Schools implemented the *Olweus Bully Prevention Program* in 2011. Training continues on an annual basis to update staff on current legislation, model practices and reporting procedures. Additionally, planning team members attend conferences to keep abreast of current trends and research in bully prevention.

Procedures and Interventions

1. All students participate in regular lessons/activities designed to educate them on the importance of bully prevention. While these lessons utilize the Olweus philosophy as their foundation, emphasis is placed on implementing positive character traits in an effort to improve the overall school climate.
2. Any suspected cases of bullying should be immediately reported to a staff member.
3. The staff member will complete a *"Bully Incident Report Form"* and submit it to the Principal.
4. The Principal will investigate the issue and make a determination as to whether the reported behavior is considered bullying.
5. Parents of students involved in bullying incidents will be contacted when founded cases of bullying are determined.
6. Follow-up activities will be conducted as needed, which may include development of a safety plan, referral to a guidance counselor, and/or an IEP meeting for special education students.

Student Engagement

Students at RCES participate in bi-weekly class meetings to promote positive peer relations and diminish bullying behaviors. A team-building day is also held annually to increase positive interactions with peers by working together to complete common goals.

High school students participate in monthly PRIDE Clubs designed to give students the opportunity to demonstrate good character and leadership skills. Eighth grade students also attend a field trip to Verdun Adventure Bound Camp to participate in team-building activities.

Students in both schools participate in authentic events to inspire positive character traits and compassion for others, such as food and clothing drives and Spirit Weeks. Activities such as these lend themselves to open and honest interactions in which bullying and possible interventions can be addressed.

Parent and Community Engagement

Rappahannock County Public Schools has posted a webpage to inform the public of bully prevention activities being implemented within the school division and available resources. This information is also included in the Student-Parent Handbooks disseminated annually.

Special programs and Spirit Weeks are planned annually to provide opportunities for parents and the community to become involved in our bully prevention program. These activities are advertised on each school's webpage.

Program Evaluation

The school division will work in partnership with the Parent Teacher Organization to administer the *Olweus Bullying Questionnaire* biennially. Results will be used to identify target areas that can be strengthened in our bully prevention program.

Resources

- Information on the Olweus Bully Prevention Program:

<http://www.clemson.edu/olweus/about.html>

- Warning Signs:

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/warning-signs/index.html>

http://www.education.com/magazine/article/Warning_Signs_that_Your_Child/

- Talking About Bullying:

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/talking-about-it/index.html>

- What Parents Can Do:

<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying/what-parents-can-do>