

**POLICY 9460  
BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING,  
HARASSMENT, AND INTIMIDATION  
INVOLVING STUDENTS**

Effective: April 9, 2025

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**Policy Outline**

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**I. Policy Value Statement**

The Board of Education of Howard County (Board) is committed to providing a safe, engaging, productive, and supportive school environment that values diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Board is also committed to fostering a climate where individuals are valued and their safety and rights are protected. Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) school property should be places where students are treated with kindness and empathy, while building a relationship-focused, welcoming, supportive environment fostering academic and personal growth for all.

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation compromise the school environment and well-being of students. Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation of any person on school property, at school-sponsored activities, or that has a connection or nexus back to the school setting is prohibited. Retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation or who are victims, witnesses, bystanders, or others with reliable information about an act of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation is prohibited.

The Board recognizes that HCPSS employees must be knowledgeable regarding bullying and victimization in order to promote an environment where opportunities for bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation do not occur. Incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation should be reported to the appropriate (HCPSS) authority and will be investigated appropriately.

## **II. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations for maintaining a safe and respectful school climate where bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation on school property, at school-sponsored activities, or that has a connection or nexus back to the school setting, are not tolerated. This purpose of the policy is to provide standards for what to do when a student is the target of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation and for identifying and preventing bullying, cyberbullying, harassing, or intimidating behavior.

## **III. Standards**

- A. The HCPSS will work to ensure that HCPSS school environments are free from incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation.
- B. The display of symbols, images, language, materials, or items that demean an identifiable person or group or are reasonably perceived as promoting hatred, intimidation, or harassment, such as but not limited to, swastikas and confederate flag symbols, are prohibited on school property or at school-related activities and are subject to the standards of this policy.
- C. HCPSS employees and school bus contractors will receive annual professional development on the provisions of this policy. This professional development will include supports for targeted students, prevention education, interventions and supports for students exhibiting bullying, cyberbullying, harassing, or intimidating behavior, as well as procedures for reporting bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation.
- D. The prevention and intervention strategies of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation will be presented to all students in prekindergarten through grade twelve.
- E. HCPSS will adhere to the Education Article §§7-424-424.3 of the Maryland Annotated Code.
- F. All HCPSS schools will follow established procedures for bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation prevention, investigation, intervention, and provision of supports as outlined in the implementation procedures.
- G. Students engaging in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation will be subject to disciplinary and/or legal action.
- H. In an effort to maintain a positive school culture, consequences for violations of this policy will be administered in accordance with Policy 9200 Student Discipline, the

HCPSS Student Code of Conduct, and all applicable state and federal laws. Prior violations of this policy will be considered when determining consequences.

- I. Retaliation against anyone who has reported bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation is prohibited and may be subject to disciplinary and/or legal action.
- J. An HCPSS employee who reports an act of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation under the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, §7-424.1 in accordance with the county board's policy is not civilly liable for any act or omission in reporting or failing to report an act of bullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation under this policy.
- K. HCPSS will report incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation against students on public school property to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in accordance with the Education Article §7-424.

#### **IV. Responsibilities**

- A. The HCPSS will ensure the Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation (BCHI) Form is used to report alleged incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation that occur on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, or have a connection or nexus back to the school setting that create a risk of harm to other students while they are at school, or interfere with the educational environment. The form will be made available electronically on the school system's website as well as paper copies at each school.
- B. The HCPSS will provide annual professional development for HCPSS employees and school bus contractors on the provisions of this policy.
- C. The Superintendent/designee will ensure that students, parents, HCPSS employees, and other individuals on school property are notified of the provisions of this policy annually.
- D. The Superintendent/designee will ensure that this policy is highlighted in the school system's student handbook and on the HCPSS website.
- E. The Superintendent/designee will ensure appropriate action is taken in response to a violation of this policy.
- F. The Superintendent/designee and/or school administrators will ensure that all illegal behaviors are reported to the appropriate social service agencies, law enforcement agencies, and the MSDE.
- G. School administrators/supervisors will notify those under their supervision of the

provisions of this policy.

- H. Students, parents, HCPSS employees, and other individuals on school property will report alleged incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation.
- I. School administrators/supervisors will ensure compliance with the Education Article §§7-424-424.3 of the Maryland Annotated Code.
- J. School administrators/supervisors will take immediate action to protect targeted students regardless of how the alleged violation is reported.
- K. School administrators/supervisors will ensure that professional development regarding this policy occurs annually.
- L. School administrators/supervisors will implement systemwide procedures for prevention and intervention of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation.
- M. School administrators/supervisors will investigate and address all reported incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation in accordance with this policy and applicable laws.
- N. School administrators, supervisors, or the Director of Student Well-Being/designee will provide appropriate assistance to students, parents, and other individuals who have been affected by behavior prohibited in this policy.
- O. The Department of Student Well-Being will compile and report bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation data to the Board.
- P. All students, parents, HCPSS employees, and other individuals on school property will maintain a safe and supportive school climate.

## **V. Delegation of Authority**

The Superintendent is authorized to develop appropriate procedures for the implementation of this policy within the limits set forth by this policy.

## **VI. Definitions**

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Bullying – Unwanted, demeaning behavior among students or employees that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or is highly likely to be repeated, over time. To be considered bullying, the behavior must be intentional and

include: 1) an imbalance of power (students who bully use their physical, emotional, social, or academic power to control, exclude, or harm others), and 2) repetition (bullying behaviors happen more than once or are highly likely to be repeated based on evidence gathered).

- B. Community – The society at large which includes, but is not limited to families, businesses, faith communities, government agencies, nonprofit service organizations, other organizations, and individuals.
- C. Cyberbullying – Bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through texting, apps, or online via social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or hurtful content about another person. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.
- D. Harassment – Includes actual or perceived negative actions that offend, ridicule, or demean another person with regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, family/parental or marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, disability, or political opinion.
- E. Hate/Bias Incident – Any act or expression of hostility or aggression that is motivated by bias against a protected class but does not constitute a crime under State or federal law. Protected classes in Maryland include race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, national origin, and/or homeless status.
- F. HCPSS Employee – Any individual who is a permanent or temporary employee of the HCPSS whose compensation is paid in whole or part by the Board, including but not limited to, school-based administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, paraeducators, and other school-based and Central Office support staff.
- G. Intimidation – Any communication or action directed against another person that threatens or induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority. Retaliation may be considered a form of intimidation.
- H. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the child or vulnerable adult:
  - 1. Biological Parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  - 2. Adoptive Parent – A parent who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.

3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
  4. Guardian – A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
  5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody or control over the student, but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian as long as the person satisfies the requirements of the Education Article §7-101(c) (Informal Kinship Care) or has been issued a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Verification of Release form entering into a custodial arrangement with the federal government.
  6. Foster Parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a state agency or a licensed child placement agency as provided by the Family Law Article, §5-507.
- I. Retaliation – The act or process of threatening or otherwise penalizing a person for reporting an alleged violation of this policy or for participating in an investigation of an alleged violation.
  - J. School Bus Contractor – A legal entity approved to operate school buses when awarded a school bus contract by the Board.
  - K. School Property – Any property owned or leased by the HCPSS or used by HCPSS for school-related activities. The concept of property extends to school activities such as field trips, use of parks and recreation facilities, proms at hotels, etc. School buses, school bus stops, and facilities scheduled by the school system for student use are considered an extension of school property.
  - L. School-Related Activity – Any school system activity, on or off school property, in which a student directly participates (e.g. school field trip, athletic event, or class/graduation activity), or an activity in which the student does not directly participate but represents the school or student body simply by being present (e.g. spectator at a school event).

## VII. References

- A. Legal
  - Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972
  - Md. Ann. Code, Criminal Law Article, §3-805 “Grace’s Law”
  - Md. Ann. Code, Education Article, §7-424
  - Md. Ann. Code, Education Article, §7-424.1 and §7-424.3
  - COMAR 13A.01.04.03 – School Safety
  - COMAR 13A.08.01.15 – Reporting Delinquent Acts

- B. Board Policies
  - Policy 1000 Civility
  - Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination
  - Policy 1020 Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct
  - Policy 1025 Title IX Sexual Harassment
  - Policy 1030 Child Abuse and Neglect
  - Policy 1040 Safe and Supportive Schools
  - Policy 3050 Records Management
  - Policy 8080 Responsible Use of Technology, Digital Tools, and Social Media
  - Policy 9020 Students' Rights and Responsibilities
  - Policy 9050 Student Records
  - Policy 9060 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Compliance: Section 504
  - Policy 9200 Student Discipline
  - Policy 9280 School Use of Community or Reportable Offenses
  - Policy 9290 Gangs, Gang Activity, and Similar Destructive or Delinquent Group Behavior
  - Policy 10000 Student, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement
- C. Relevant Data Sources
  - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation in Maryland Public Schools: A Report to the Maryland General Assembly, (March 31, 2015)
  - HCPSS Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reports to MSDE
  - HCPSS Suspensions for Bullying/Harassment trend data
  - Suspensions, Expulsions, and Health Related Exclusions Maryland Public Schools Annual report
- D. Other
  - Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Investigation Form
  - Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form
  - HCPSS Student & Parent Handbook
  - HCPSS Student Code of Conduct
  - HCPSS Threat Management Procedures
  - Maryland's Model Policy To Address Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation
  - SRO Memorandum of Understanding

**VIII. History<sup>1</sup>**

ADOPTED: June 11, 2009  
REVIEWED: December 21, 2015  
MODIFIED: June 12, 2014  
            August 14, 2014  
            October 8, 2020  
            March 10, 2022  
            April 9, 2025  
REVISED: June 8, 2017  
            June 8, 2023  
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<sup>1</sup> Key: ***Adopted***-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; ***Reviewed***-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; ***Modified***-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; ***Revised***-The date the Board took action on a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; ***Effective***-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.



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**I. Announcement/Dissemination of Information**

- A. School administrators/supervisors will provide annual written notice of the general provisions of this policy that states bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation are prohibited in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). This notice will be provided to students, parents, and HCPSS employees in their school/offices during the first week of each school year, to new hires under their supervision during the first (2) two weeks of their start date, and to new students and their parents upon registration.
- B. School administrators/supervisors will provide additional notification by:
  - 1. Providing announcements over the school public address system and/or through online communication tools.
  - 2. Publishing a link to the policy in school newsletters, on the school website, and in student/parent handbooks.
  - 3. Posting notification in offices, classrooms, and other commonly used areas.
  - 4. Providing this policy in hard copy to any student, parent, or HCPSS employee upon request.
- C. School administrators/supervisors will annually ensure that students, parents, and HCPSS employees are aware of the Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation (BCHI) Reporting Form and how to access it online and in hard copy. The BCHI Reporting Form will be readily available and accessible to students, parents, and HCPSS employees. At a minimum, hard copies of the BCHI Reporting Form will be available in the main office, staff workroom, school counseling office, media center, and health services office. Posters with information about the online reporting form will be displayed throughout all schools.

**II. Professional Development**

The HCPSS will provide annual professional development to ensure that HCPSS employees increase their awareness of the prevalence, causes, and consequences of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation.

- A. Professional development will include supports for targeted students, prevention education, interventions and supports for students exhibiting bullying,

cyberbullying, harassing, or intimidating behavior, as well as procedures for reporting bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation.

- B. Professional development will include strategies for teachers regarding the development of a safe, supportive, culturally responsive classroom system, integrating social/emotional learning and trauma-informed practices to help all students feel welcomed, included, and connected.
- C. Professional development will be provided for all HCPSS employees during the first month of school and within the first month of their start date for new HCPSS employees hired at any time during the school year.
- D. School administrators/supervisors will receive ongoing job embedded training opportunities to cover topics such as reporting, investigating, remediating and follow-up with students and families involved in bullying situations.
- E. All HCPSS employees and school bus contractors are required to complete professional development provided by the HCPSS on how to respond to students, parents, and employees regarding bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation.
- F. Professional development will include strategies for increased awareness, the ability to identify and respond to bullying behaviors and identifying students vulnerable to bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation.
- G. Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation data will be analyzed and if trends or patterns emerge as a result of this analysis, additional professional development will be provided to schools to address the identified needs.

### **III. Prevention Procedures**

- A. HCPSS employees will implement school-wide, evidence-based anti-bullying programs as a part of a system of positive behavioral supports and school improvement efforts at all grade levels. Programs should have an emphasis on creating and maintaining a positive school climate where all students feel physically and emotionally safe. Components will include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - 1. Promotion of student involvement in anti-bullying efforts, peer support, and creating and maintaining a culture of mutual respect that encourages students to report incidents of bullying.
  - 2. Defined behavioral expectations.
  - 3. A plan for teaching behavioral expectations including understanding the impact of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, including hate/bias incidents, or retaliation.

4. An ongoing system for encouraging and recognizing appropriate behaviors.
  5. A system for responding to problematic behavior.
  6. The continuous collection and analysis of data to identify and implement strategies for maintaining and/or improving a positive school climate.
- B. Elementary classroom/secondary health education teachers will implement the curriculum regarding prevention and intervention of bullying for all students in prekindergarten through grade 9 by teaching the health education standards.
- C. HCPSS school-based employees will provide lessons on prevention and intervention of bullying for all students. These lessons will include:
1. Information about reporting systems such as the online BCHI Reporting Form and availability of paper copy forms.
  2. Instruction on how to support peers who may be targeted or vulnerable to bullying.
  3. Information related to potential consequences such as those defined by HCPSS policies and in Grace's Law.
- D. School administrators/supervisors will ensure that collaboration occurs with families and the community to inform parents about the prevalence, causes and consequences of bullying and its central role as a public health hazard, and the means of preventing it. This information can be communicated through online communication tools, newsletters, PTA presentations, parent information nights, and other school activities.
- E. School administrators/supervisors and HCPSS school-based employees will collect, analyze, and use school-specific data on the number of incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation to guide school improvement efforts that address safe, engaging, and supportive environments.
- F. As a part of a school-wide effort, school administrators/supervisors will share information with staff about the importance of adult visibility, especially during non-instructional activities such as lunch, recess, and hallway transitions.

#### **IV. Reporting Procedures**

The BCHI Form should be used to report alleged incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation that occur at school or have a connection or nexus back to the school setting that create a risk of harm to other students while they are at school, or interfere with the educational environment.

- A. School administrators/supervisors will maintain a climate in which students, HCPSS employees, and families may report an incident without fear of retaliation. This includes reducing barriers that prevent both targeted students and

student bystanders from reporting. Barriers may include feelings of powerlessness, fear of retaliation, and a lack of trust in the adults in the building.

- B. When a student reports that they are currently the target of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation, the HCPSS employee will:
  - 1. Respond quickly and appropriately to intervene;
  - 2. Report the incident to a school administrator; and
  - 3. Notify Student Services staff.
- C. If a student wishes to discuss the incident of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation with an HCPSS employee, the employee will make an effort to provide the student with a practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate way of doing so.
- D. A student, parent of a student, HCPSS employee, close adult relative of a student, or bystander, can complete and submit the BCHI Reporting Form to a school administrator/supervisor in person, by mail, or electronically, as soon as bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation is known or suspected. In the event the reporting party does not complete a BCHI Reporting Form, school administrators/supervisors will take the appropriate steps to address and document the incident.
- E. A student, parent of a student, close relative of a student, and/or bystander will be provided assistance from an HCPSS employee, if needed, to complete the BCHI Reporting Form at school.
- F. The school administrator/supervisor/designee will make every effort to notify the parent of the targeted student as soon as possible, but not later than one school day after the report. Parents of the accused will be notified of the investigation process in a timely manner, but not later than three school days after the report.

When the alleged motives are related to gender expression, gender identity or perceived sexual orientation, the administrator/supervisor will make every effort to speak with the targeted student prior to notifying the parent. Notification to the parent should include input from the targeted student.
- G. The school administrator/supervisor/designee will ensure the information from any report of known or suspected bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation is entered into the designated data management system.
- H. Information obtained from the BCHI Reporting Form is confidential and may not be redisclosed except as otherwise provided under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and may not be made a part of a student's permanent education record.

**V. Investigation Procedures**

- A. The school administrator will address incidents that occur at school or have a connection or nexus back to the school setting that create a risk of harm to other students while they are at school or interfere with the educational environment.
- B. The incident must be promptly and appropriately investigated by the school administrator, consistent with due process rights, using the BCHI Reporting Form in compliance with Maryland's Model Policy To Address Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation within two (2) school days after receipt of a reporting form.
- C. The school administrator will strive to maintain the confidentiality of the targeted student, the accused, and the witness(es) to the extent possible. The school administrator should not promise confidentiality to involved parties at the onset of an investigation. It cannot be predicted what will be discovered. Efforts should be made to increase the confidence and trust of the targeted student and any witnesses. Students should be informed that any information discussed and recorded will be confined to "need to know" status.
- D. The school administrator will make every effort to notify the parent(s) of the targeted student immediately, but no later than one (1) school day of the report. The parent(s) of the individual(s) who has/have been accused of participating in the incident will be notified in a timely manner, but no later than three (3) school days.
- E. The school administrator will conduct an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation of the complaint, which may include interviewing the complainant and witnesses along with the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence.
- F. The school administrator will comply with due process rights, which include:
  - 1. Notifying the accused of the allegations.
  - 2. Providing an explanation of the evidence if the accused denies the allegations.
  - 3. Allowing the accused an opportunity to respond to the allegations and encouraging them to provide a written response, when appropriate.
  - 4. Notifying the parent(s) of the accused promptly, in writing, of the violation and disciplinary consequence.
- G. The school administrator will inform all parties involved that they are prohibited from discussing or sharing any information regarding the incident in question, with the exception of their parents, appropriate HCPSS school-based employee, legal counsel, law enforcement personnel, or healthcare professional.
- H. The accused will be informed that retaliation, bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation against the targeted

student or bystander/witness is strictly prohibited and that progressive consequences will occur if the activity continues.

- I. The school administrator will create a written record of the bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation incident and any disciplinary actions taken, as well as the statements of the targeted student, witnesses, and accused. Discussions with all parties will be documented as soon as possible after the event. Any material records or evidence will be retained for a criminal investigation or prosecution resulting from the incident.
- J. The school administrator will provide notice to both sets of parents, in writing, of the outcome of the complaint and the basis for the decision within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of complaint by the school administrator, excluding extenuating circumstances.
- K. Any students and/or parents having concerns regarding the application of these procedures may refer to the formal concern process on the HCPSS website or in the HCPSS Student & Parent Handbook. Individuals may also contact the School Climate Initiatives Specialist with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) at 410-767-0306.

## **VI. Violations of Policy**

- A. Any school administrator who believes that a student has violated this policy must also consider the following: Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination, Policy 1020 Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct, Policy 1025 Title IX Sexual Discrimination, Policy 1030 Child Abuse and Neglect, Policy 1040 Safe and Supportive Schools, Policy 8080 Responsible use of Technology, Digital Tools, and Social Media, Policy 9060 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Compliance: Section 504, or Policy 9200 Student Discipline, the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct, or the HCPSS Threat Management Procedures.
- B. Consequences and remedial actions for students committing acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation, students engaged in retaliation, and students who have made false accusations will be consistently and fairly applied after an appropriate investigation has determined that such an offense has occurred. Guidelines on consequences and remedial actions include:
  - 1. Consequences for disciplinary infractions should be equitably, consistently, and fairly applied after an appropriate and thorough investigation has determined that an offense has occurred. The school administrator/designee will promptly implement one or more of the corrective actions outlined on the Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or Intimidation Investigation Form, consistent with the consequences outlined in the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct.

- a. Exclusionary discipline measures should be avoided and only used after all other available and appropriate behavioral interventions have been exhausted or if a student's continued presence in school would pose a threat to the safety of others.
    - b. School administrators/designees are encouraged to choose rehabilitative interventions designed to provide students the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.
  2. Student Services staff will provide appropriate individual interventions and supports to the targeted student and offender within two weeks.
  3. The school administrator/designee will hold separate conferences with the targeted student and offender within two (2) weeks after the investigation to determine whether the bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation has continued and whether additional consequences need to be implemented.
  4. The school administrator/designee will hold a follow-up conference with the targeted student four weeks after the initial follow-up conference to determine if the bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation has ceased.
  5. Communication with the parents of the targeted student and offender will continue until the issue is resolved.
- C. It is a violation of this policy for students to be engaged in retaliation. Consequences and/or remedial actions in accordance with HCPSS policies or the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct will be applied as a result of this policy violation.
- D. The Department of Student Well-Being will annually report bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation data to the MSDE in accordance with Maryland's Model Policy to Address Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation.
- E. Acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, or intimidation may also be delinquent acts. If acts are deemed delinquent, the acts will be reported promptly to the responsible law enforcement agency in accordance with MSDE Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 13A.08.01.15). Acts of cyberbullying that the school administrator/designee believes may be criminal will be reported promptly to the responsible law enforcement agencies to determine if Grace's Law has been violated. (The Annotated Code of Maryland, Criminal Law Article, §3-805)
- F. Gang related activity, as defined in the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct and Policy 9290 Gangs, Gang Activity, and Similar Destructive or Delinquent Group Behavior as it relates to bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, including hate/bias incidents, and intimidation, is considered a violation of this policy.

- G. For acts of sexual harassment, sexual assault and/or sexual violence, the school administrator/designee will promptly follow Policy 1020 Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct, which addresses these offenses in accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 ensuring the rights of the targeted student are protected.

## **VII. Intervention and Supports**

- A. School administrators will utilize a range of integrated tiered supports providing universal strategies for all students, targeted supports for both potentially vulnerable students and students exhibiting bullying behaviors, as well as individualized, intense supports for both the targeted student(s) and the student offenders(s).
- B. School administrators will ensure a continuum of positive behavior supports are implemented as part of their school-wide behavioral plan.
- C. A student who violates this policy may be required by the school administrator/supervisor to participate in appropriate counseling/intervention to increase the student's understanding of the offense and its impact on others.
- D. Support services available to the targeted student, the student exhibiting bullying behaviors, and witnesses or bystanders will be implemented as appropriate based on context, situation, age, and severity. Such supports may include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. School System
    - a. Counseling
    - b. Conflict resolution
    - c. Restorative practices
    - d. Problem-solving skills training
    - e. Social skills training, including anger management/impulse control
    - f. Peer support groups
    - g. Schedule modifications
    - h. Collaboration with school-based problem-solving teams
    - i. Anti-bias education
  - 2. Community/Family
    - a. Public or private community-based mental health services
    - b. Community mediations
    - c. Department of Juvenile Services
    - d. Department of Social Services
    - e. Law enforcement agencies
    - f. Health Department programs
    - g. Youth development organizations



- h. Faith-based services
- E. HCPSS employees who are trained in individual counseling will provide counseling, education, and intervention to students who have been found in violation of this policy. Education/counseling will include, but is not limited to teaching/counseling for:
  - 1. Mutual respect
  - 2. Replacement behaviors
  - 3. Anger management
  - 4. Impulse control
  - 5. Empathy
  - 6. Cultural proficiency/diversity training
  - 7. Assertiveness training
  - 8. Healthy relationships
  - 9. Resilience.
- F. When an incident is deemed to be bullying, mediation (an intervention used to bring two or more parties together to resolve a dispute) between the targeted student and offender is prohibited.
- G. School administrators/designees will collaborate, as needed, with community and mental health resources to assist students who continue to be involved in bullying behaviors as perpetrators, targeted students, or witnesses, and whose mental or physical health, safety, or academic performance has been impaired.

## **VII. Monitoring**

Policy 9460 implementation procedures will be overseen by the Division of Academics and Division of Schools.

## VIII. History<sup>1</sup>

ADOPTED: June 11, 2009  
REVIEWED: December 21, 2015  
MODIFIED: June 12, 2014  
            August 14, 2014  
            August 17, 2017  
            March 10, 2022  
            April 9, 2025  
REVISED: November 5, 2009  
            June 8, 2017  
            June 8, 2023  
EFFECTIVE: April 9, 2025

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<sup>1</sup> Key: ***Adopted***-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; ***Reviewed***-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; ***Modified***-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; ***Revised***-The date the Board took action on a that policy based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; ***Effective***-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.