

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Do you want to know more about anti-bullying?**

The School Board of Okeechobee County has established an ANTI-BULLYING POLICY for all Okeechobee County students and staff that prohibit bullying and harassment - by anyone, of anyone!

### **Take a look!**

The Policy defines bullying as: “systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as: unwanted purposeful written, verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior, including but not limited to any threatening, insulting or dehumanizing gestures, by an adult or student, that has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment or cause long term damage, cause discomfort or humiliation; or reasonably interfere with the individual’s school performance or participation is carried out repeatedly and is often characterized by an imbalance of power.”

That is a lot of info, but to keep it simple, we can help determine if a behavior is bullying by using this acronym, is it...?

**R**epeated  
**I**mbalance of Power  
**P**urposeful

### **What are the procedures for reporting an incident?**

Employees are *required* to report incidents. Employees, students, parents, and visitors, however, are strongly encouraged to report suspected incidents to their principal and/or appropriate area/district administrator either verbally or in writing. A report may be made anonymously, using the anonymous reporting procedures in your school’s main entry area or at our District Office located at 700 S.W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Okeechobee, FL 34974. Anonymous reports can also occur by calling the office of the Director of Student Services at 863-462-5000, ext. 260.

### **How do investigations occur?**

The principal/designee or the appropriate area/district administrator will take specific steps to investigate all complaints of bullying. The principal/designee or the appropriate area/district administrator will initiate an investigation of all reports of bullying and every investigation will be completed within 10 days after its initiation.

### **What are the consequences?**

Consequences for confirmed bullying will include referrals, interventions, and/or disciplinary action as outlined by the Student Code of Conduct, School Board Policies and any collective bargaining agreements.

If you are interested in getting help more informally, you have an option: You can make a request for an informal consultation with school staff (e.g., school social worker, counselor, psychologist, etc.).

**What if I don't agree with the administrator's decision?**

If the resolution is not satisfactory to the parent/guardian, the student, or the employee, they have the right to appeal according to applicable provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, Board Policies and collective bargaining agreements. Please refer to these documents for specific guidance or call your school office for more information.

**How will we learn more about the Anti-Bullying Policy and Initiatives?**

Training is part of the process!

Training for students, parents, teachers, administrators, staff and volunteers is provided as an integral part of our schools to ensure that everyone knows the bullying policies and procedures, as well as how to intervene and help when issues of bullying arise. If you would like more information regarding training, contact your local school or the district office at 863-462-5000, ext. 261.

**We all deserve safe and respectful school environments!**

Need to know more? See the Code of Student Conduct, Employee Handbook or our website: [www.okee.k12.fl.us](http://www.okee.k12.fl.us)