

1 Great Falls School District

2  
3 **STUDENTS**

3226

4  
5 Hazing/Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying

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7 The District is committed to providing a safe, productive, and positive learning environment. A  
8 safe and accepting school environment is conducive to, and necessary for optimal academic  
9 achievement. Like other disruptive behaviors, bullying, harassment, intimidation and hazing  
10 negatively impact the learning environment. Bullying, harassment, intimidating and hazing  
11 behaviors will not be tolerated. Students, staff and third parties are strictly prohibited from  
12 bullying, harassment, intimidation, hazing, or retaliation for reporting such action.

13  
14 Definitions

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16 “Bullying” means any harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening, insulting, or demeaning  
17 gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal, or electronic  
18 communication (“cyberbullying”) or threat directed against a student that is persistent, severe, or  
19 repeated, and that substantially interferes with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or  
20 performance, that takes place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-  
21 sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation, at any official school bus stop, or  
22 anywhere conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a  
23 student or staff member or an interference with school purposes or an educational function, and  
24 that has the effect of:

- 25
- 26 • Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property;
  - 27 • Knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage  
28 to the student’s property;
  - 29 • Creating a hostile educational environment; or
  - 30 • Substantially and materially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

31 “Harassment” includes, but is not limited to, any act which subjects an individual or group to  
32 unwanted, abusive behavior of a nonverbal, verbal, written (electronic or otherwise), physical  
33 nature, or the use of Artificial Intelligence to impersonate, misrepresent, or harass an individual  
34 on the basis of any protected class as defined under federal and/or Montana state law.

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36 “Hazing” includes but is not limited to any act that recklessly or intentionally endangers the  
37 mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or as a condition or  
38 precondition of attaining membership in or affiliation with any District-sponsored activity or  
39 grade-level attainment, including but not limited to forced consumption of any drink, alcoholic  
40 beverage, drug, or controlled substance, forced exposure to the elements, forced prolonged  
41 exclusion from social contact, sleep deprivation, or any forced activity that could adversely  
42 affect the mental or physical health or safety of a student; requires, encourages, authorizes, or  
43 permits another to be subject to wearing or carrying any obscene or physically burdensome  
44 article, assignment of pranks to be performed, or other such activities intended to degrade or  
45 humiliate.

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1 “Intimidation” includes, but is not limited to, any threat or act intended to tamper with,  
 2 substantially damage, or interfere with another person or their property, cause substantial  
 3 inconvenience, subject another to offensive physical contact, or inflict serious physical injury.  
 4

5 “Electronic Communication” is defined in 45-8-213, MCA, and includes any communication by  
 6 any electronic device including but not limited to text messaging, email, use of social  
 7 networking, or the use of Artificial Intelligence to impersonate, misrepresent, or harass an  
 8 individual.  
 9

10 “Retaliation” means an intentional act or communication intended as revenge against a person  
 11 who has reported or participated in an investigation of bullying, harassment, hazing or  
 12 intimidation; or to improperly influence the reporting, investigation, or discipline that result from  
 13 an incidence of bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation. False charges shall also be regarded  
 14 as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.  
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16 “Third Parties” include, but are not limited to, coaches, school volunteers, parents, school  
 17 visitors, service contractors or others engaged in District business, such as employees of  
 18 businesses or organizations participating in cooperative work programs with the District and  
 19 others not directly subject to District control at inter-District athletic competitions or other school  
 20 events.  
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22 “District” includes District facilities, District premises, and non-District property in the student  
 23 or employee is at any District-sponsored, District-approved, or District-related activity or  
 24 function, such as field trips or athletic events, where students are under the control of the District  
 25 or where the employees is engaged in District business.  
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27 “Designated Investigator” is the principal of the school, the designated Title IX coordinator, or a  
 28 staff member appointed by the principal responsible for receiving and investigating reports of,  
 29 bullying, harassment, hazing, and intimidation. An independent investigator may be designated  
 30 by the Superintendent or designee.  
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### 32 Prohibitions

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 34 No student, staff member, or third parties will engage in any of the following:  
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- 36 • Bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation of a student;
- 37 • Retaliation against a student or staff member for reporting or thought to have reported an  
 38 incident of bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation; or
- 39 • Coercion of another person to commit bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation.  
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41 Bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation is strictly prohibited in person or electronically (as  
 42 defined in 45-8-213, MCA) where the school is responsible for the student:  
 43

- 44 • On school premises; or

- During any school sponsored program, activity, or function including on a school bus or other school-related vehicle.

#### Consequences

Any student disciplined will be afforded due process as required by District policy for action taken by school administration or the Board of Trustees.

Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion. Staff whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. Third parties whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate sanctions as determined and imposed by the Superintendent or designee, or the Board. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

#### Intervention

All staff members shall intervene when witnessing potential bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidating behavior. If the staff member witnesses or receives a report of unresolved bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation the staff member will report the matter pursuant to Reporting below.

If it is determined that staff was aware of bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation and did nothing to intervene; discipline or remedial action may be invoked.

#### Reporting

All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. Any student or third party who has knowledge of conduct in violations of this policy or feels he/she has been a victim of hazing, harassment, intimidation, or bullying in violation of this policy is encouraged to immediately report his/her concerns to the building principal or the Superintendent or designee who have overall responsibility for such investigations. All employees are required to immediately report to their direct supervisor. A student may also report concerns to a teacher or counselor, who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate District official. Complaints against the building principal shall be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent or designee shall be filed with the Board.

All parties shall be notified of the findings of the investigation and, as appropriate, that remedial action has been taken.

#### Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies

A person alleging violation of any form of harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening, insulting, or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication, as stated above, may seek redress under any available law, after exhausting all administrative remedies.

1 Responsibilities

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 3 The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for ensuring notice of this policy is provided  
 4 to students, staff, and third parties and for the development of administrative regulations,  
 5 including reporting and investigative procedures, as needed.  
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7 When an employee has actual knowledge that behavior in violation of this policy is sexual  
 8 harassment, the employee must contact the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX sexual harassment  
 9 grievance process will be followed, if applicable, prior to imposing any discipline that cannot be  
 10 imposed without resolution of the Title IX process.  
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12 Retaliation and Reprisal

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 14 Retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports or is thought to have reported a  
 15 violation, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry. Such  
 16 retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy, whether or not a complaint is  
 17 substantiated. False charges shall also be regarded as a serious offense and will result in  
 18 disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.  
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20 Notification and Training

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 22 The District policy and procedures will be included in the student handbook for all grade levels  
 23 and posted on the District/school webpages.  
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25 Staff and students will be educated on the policy and procedures, including recognizing  
 26 inappropriate behaviors; using appropriate intervention and remediation; and possible  
 27 consequences and discipline.  
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29 Cross References:

30 Policy 3215	Students: Uniform Complaint Procedure
31 Policy 3225	Sexual Harassment of Students
32 Policy 3225F	Sexual Harassment Reporting – Intake Form for Students
33 Policy 3310	Student Discipline
34 Policy 4226	Community Relations: Hazing, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying
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36 Policy 5226	Personnel: Hazing, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying
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38 Legal References:

39 § 20-5-207, MCA	“Bully-Free Montana Act”
40 § 20-5-208, MCA	Definition
41 § 20-5-209, MCA	Bullying of Student Prohibited
42 § 20-5-210, MCA	Enforcement – Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies
43 § 45-2-307, MCA	Discrimination in Education
44 § 45-8-213, MCA	Privacy and Communications
45 10.55.701(2)(f)	ARM Board of Trustees
46 10.55.719, ARM	Student Protection Procedures

1	10.55.801(1)(d), ARM	School Climate
2	Title 20, Chapter 1, Part 2, MCA	Certain District Policies Prohibited
3	Chapter 256 (2023)	Discrimination in Education
4		
5	<u>Policy History:</u>	
6	Adopted on:	May 9, 2005
7	Revised on:	April 24, 2006
8	Revised on:	January 22, 2007
9	Revised on:	February 24, 2014
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12	Revised on:	January 11, 2021
13	Revised on:	April 26, 2021
14	Revised on:	September 11, 2023