

**Bullying Policy (VABOE Policy 443.8) - Pre-K Sites will be implementing school board policy.**

The Verona Area School District strives to provide a safe, secure and respectful learning environment for all students in school buildings, on school grounds, in school buses and at school-sponsored activities. Bullying has a harmful social, physical, psychological and academic impact on bullies, victims and bystanders. The District shall consistently and vigorously address bullying so that there is no disruption to the learning environment and learning process.

Bullying behavior is prohibited in all schools, buildings, property and educational environments, including any property or vehicle owned, leased or used by the District. This includes public transportation regularly used by students to go to and from school. Educational environments include, but are not limited to, every activity under school supervision.

“Bullying” is defined as deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation or harm. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as, but not limited to: age; national origin; race; ethnicity; religion; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability or disability; and social, economic or family status. Bullying behavior can be:

1. Physical (e.g. assault, hitting or punching, kicking, theft, threatening behavior)
2. Verbal (e.g. threatening or intimidating language, teasing or name-calling, racist remarks)
3. Indirect (e.g. spreading cruel rumors, intimidation through gestures, social exclusion and sending insulting messages or pictures by mobile phone or using the Internet – also known as cyber bullying)

**Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying Incidents (443.8-Rule)**

1. All school staff members and school officials who observe or become aware of acts of bullying are required to report these acts to the building principal or designee in accordance with established procedures. Reports of bullying may be made verbally or in writing and may be made confidentially. All such reports, whether verbal or in writing, will be taken seriously and a clear account of the incident is to be documented. A written record of the report, including all pertinent details, will be made by the director or designee of the report.
2. If either the building director or designee is the alleged bully, the report should be made to the Early Learning Coordinator. Any other person, including a student who is either a victim of the bullying or is aware of the bullying or any other concerned individual, is encouraged to report the conduct to the building director or designee.
3. There shall be no retaliation against individuals making such reports. If it is determined that students participated in bullying behavior or retaliated against anyone due to the reporting of bullying behavior, the students shall be subject to disciplinary action, which may include: suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials for possible legal action as appropriate.

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4. After receiving the report, the building director or designee will immediately undertake an investigation of the report. The investigation shall include interviewing the individual(s) who are victim(s) of the bullying and collecting whatever other information is necessary to determine the facts and the seriousness of the report.
5. Parents and/or guardians of each student involved in the bullying will be notified prior to the conclusion of the investigation. The Pre-K site will maintain the confidentiality of the report and any related student records to the extent required by law.
6. Pupil services staff will provide support as needed for the identified victim(s). When appropriate, pupil services staff will provide behavioral interventions for the bully.
7. Records will be maintained on the number and types of reports made, and sanctions imposed for incidents found to be in violation of the District's bullying policy.
8. Notice of this policy shall be distributed to all schools and departments in the District on an annual basis. This policy will be incorporated in employee and student handbooks and be available on the District Web site and annual publications. It will also be available to all organizations in the community having cooperative agreements with the public schools. Failure to comply with this policy may result in termination of the cooperative agreement.