

CYBERBULLYING AND CYBERTHREATS

The Bethlehem Central School District Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment within the school district free from cyberbullying and cyberthreats. The increasing frequency of internet predatory practices necessitates that the District take proactive measures to secure the educational process.

Cyberbullying means being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful materials using the Internet or a cellular phone.

Cyberthreat means online material that threatens or raises concerns about violence to others, or to one's self. There are two (2) kinds of cyberthreats: direct threats or distressing material. Direct threats are actual threats to hurt another person. Distressing material is online material that provides clues indicating that the person is emotionally upset, and that the person is contemplating hurting another person, one's self or committing suicide.

Cyberbullying or cyberthreatening material, either in the form of text or images, posted on personal web sites, blogs or transmitted via email, discussion groups, message boards, chat rooms, instant messages, or via cellular phones is prohibited.

The use of the District's internet system, cellular devices on school district property, cellular devices not on district property or the use of an internet system not owned or operated by the District to bully or harass other students, faculty and staff is prohibited.

Off-campus cyberbullying or cyberthreats – regardless of the form in which the message is transmitted – endangering the health, welfare or safety of students, faculty or staff within the District or adversely affecting the educational process is prohibited. Students engaging in this type of conduct will be disciplined according to the District's Code of Conduct or as outlined within this policy.

Any student or anyone who believes a student has been subjected to cyberbullying or to cyberthreats within the meaning of this policy shall report the bullying or threats to a teacher or an administrator immediately. The building principal shall immediately take the appropriate disciplinary actions pursuant to the District's Code of Conduct, or as outlined within this policy.

CONSEQUENCES

1. Disciplinary actions regarding cyberbullying or cyberthreats shall be consistent with the District's Code of Conduct.
2. Violations can result in, but may not be limited to, loss of District internet/email access privileges, restitution for expenses incurred by the District to investigate and/or suspension.

3. If a suicide threat is included, appropriate support services will be implemented by school administrators.
4. When applicable, law enforcement agencies may be contacted.

Cross-Ref: Computer Use Policy 4526
Instructional Technology 4526.1
Instructional Technology Regulations 4526.1-R
Code of Conduct 5300

Ref: Education Law §3214.
Appeal of A.R., Decision No. 14,477 (October 19, 2000).
Appeal of K.S., Decision No. 15,063 (June 18, 2004).
Appeal of S.W., Decision No. 15,226 (May 12, 2005).
In the Matter of Ann Coghlan, 262 A.D.2d 949 (4th Dept. 1999).
www.cyberbully.org

Adopted: March 5, 2008