

**158.148 Definition of "bullying" -- discipline guidelines and model policy -- Local code of acceptable behavior and discipline -- Required contents of code.**

- (1) (a) As used in this section, "bullying" means any unwanted verbal, physical, or social behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to be repeated:
  1. That occurs on school premises, on school-sponsored transportation, or at a school-sponsored event; or
  2. That disrupts the education process.
- (b) This definition shall not be interpreted to prohibit civil exchange of opinions or debate or cultural practices protected under the state or federal Constitution where the opinion expressed does not otherwise materially or substantially disrupt the education process.
- (2) In cooperation with the Kentucky Education Association, the Kentucky School Boards Association, the Kentucky Association of School Administrators, the Kentucky Association of Professional Educators, the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, the Parent-Teachers Association, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, the Farm Bureau, members of the Interim Joint Committee on Education, and other interested groups, and in collaboration with the Center for School Safety, the Department of Education shall develop or update as needed and distribute to all districts by August 31 of each even-numbered year, beginning August 31, 2008:
  - (a) Statewide student discipline guidelines to ensure safe schools, including the definition of serious incident for the reporting purposes as identified in KRS 158.444;
  - (b) Recommendations designed to improve the learning environment and school climate, parental and community involvement in the schools, and student achievement; and
  - (c) A model policy to implement the provisions of this section and KRS 158.156, 158.444, 525.070, and 525.080.
- (3) The department shall obtain statewide data on major discipline problems and reasons why students drop out of school. In addition, the department, in collaboration with the Center for School Safety, shall identify successful strategies currently being used in programs in Kentucky and in other states and shall incorporate those strategies into the statewide guidelines and the recommendations under subsection (2) of this section.
- (4) Copies of the discipline guidelines shall be distributed to all school districts. The statewide guidelines shall contain broad principles and legal requirements to guide local districts in developing their own discipline code and school councils in the selection of discipline and classroom management techniques under KRS 158.154; and in the development of the district-wide safety plan.
- (5) (a) Each local board of education shall be responsible for formulating a code of acceptable behavior and discipline to apply to the students in each school operated by the board. The code shall be updated no less frequently than every

two (2) years, with the first update being completed by November 30, 2008.

- (b) The superintendent, or designee, shall be responsible for overall implementation and supervision, and each school principal shall be responsible for administration and implementation within each school. Each school council shall select and implement the appropriate discipline and classroom management techniques necessary to carry out the code. The board shall establish a process for a two-way communication system for teachers and other employees to notify a principal, supervisor, or other administrator of an existing emergency.
- (c) The code shall prohibit bullying.
- (d) The code shall contain the type of behavior expected from each student, the consequences of failure to obey the standards, and the importance of the standards to the maintenance of a safe learning environment where orderly learning is possible and encouraged.
- (e) The code shall contain:
  1. Procedures for identifying, documenting, and reporting incidents of bullying, incidents of violations of the code, and incidents for which reporting is required under KRS 158.156;
  2. Procedures for investigating and responding to a complaint or a report of bullying or a violation of the code, or of an incident for which reporting is required under KRS 158.156, including reporting incidents to the parents, legal guardians, or other persons exercising custodial control or supervision of the students involved;
  3. A strategy or method of protecting from retaliation a complainant or person reporting an incident of bullying, a violation of the code, or an incident for which reporting is required under KRS 158.156;
  4. A process for informing students, parents, legal guardians, or other persons exercising custodial control or supervision, and school employees of the requirements of the code and the provisions of this section and KRS 158.156, 158.444, 525.070, and 525.080, including training for school employees; and
  5. Information regarding the consequences of bullying and violating the code and violations reportable under KRS 158.154, 158.156, or 158.444.
- (f) The principal of each school shall apply the code of behavior and discipline uniformly and fairly to each student at the school without partiality or discrimination.
- (g) A copy of the code of behavior and discipline adopted by the board of education shall be posted at each school. Guidance counselors shall be provided copies for discussion with students. The code shall be referenced in all school handbooks. All school employees and parents, legal guardians, or other persons exercising custodial control or supervision shall be provided copies of the code.

**Effective:** July 15, 2016

**History:** Amended 2016 Ky. Acts ch. 81, sec. 1, effective July 15, 2016. -- Amended 2014 Ky. Acts ch. 132, sec. 12, effective July 15, 2014. -- Amended 2008 Ky. Acts ch. 125, sec. 3, effective July 15, 2008. -- Amended 2000 Ky. Acts ch. 452, sec. 4, effective July 14, 2000. -- Amended 1998 Ky. Acts ch. 493, sec. 11, effective April 10, 1998. -- Amended 1996 Ky. Acts ch. 8, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1996; and ch. 362, sec. 6, effective July 15, 1996. -- Amended 1990 Ky. Acts ch. 476, Pt. IV, sec. 204, effective July 13, 1990. -- Amended 1985 (1st Extra. Sess.) Ky. Acts ch. 10, sec. 13, effective October 18, 1985. -- Created 1984 Ky. Acts ch. 397, sec. 3, effective July 13, 1984.

**Legislative Research Commission Note (7/15/2016).** In codification, the Reviser of Statutes has altered the internal numbering of subsection (5) of this statute from the way it appeared in 2016 Ky. Acts ch. 81, sec. 1 under the authority of KRS 7.136(1)(a).