Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, Harassment, Hazing, Retaliation, and Abusive Conduct

Effective Date: 10/20/2026

Purpose

IEA is committed to a safe, civil learning environment in which every member of the school community is treated with dignity and respect. Bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, retaliation, and abusive conduct disrupt a student's ability to learn and IEA's ability to educate. This policy prohibits conduct and sets out how IEA prevents, investigates, and responds to it. Conduct that does not meet these definitions may still violate the Discipline Policy or other IEA rules.

Definitions

- **Abusive conduct:** Verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a parent or student directed toward a school employee that, based on its severity, nature, and frequency, a reasonable person would determine is intended to cause intimidation, humiliation, or unwarranted distress. A single act is not abusive conduct.
- **Accountability practice:** An evidence-based practice that improves academic outcomes, reduces disruptive behavior, and requires students to take responsibility, repair harm, and provide restitution when appropriate (e.g., adapted instruction, behavior engagement plans, restorative practices).
- **Action plan:** A written plan to address a verified incident (Section 6).
- **Allegation:** A claim that an incident occurred that has not been verified through a formal investigation.
- **Bullying:** Student bullying and staff bullying.
- **Civil rights violation:** A violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- **Cyber-bullying:** Using the internet, a cell phone, or another device to send or post text, video, or an image with the intent or knowledge, or with reckless disregard, that it will hurt, embarrass, or threaten an individual, whether or not that individual directed, consented to, or acquiesced in the conduct or voluntarily accessed the communication.
- **Harassment:** Repeatedly communicating to another individual, in an objectively demeaning or disparaging manner, statements that contribute to a hostile learning or work environment.
- **Hazing:** A school employee or student intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly committing, or causing another to commit, an act toward a school employee or student that (a)

endangers mental or physical health or safety, including physical brutality, consumption of any food, alcohol, drug, or other substance, or activity causing extreme mental stress such as sleep deprivation, extended isolation, or extreme embarrassment or humiliation; and (b) is committed for initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or as a condition of membership in a school-sponsored team, organization, program, club, or event, or is directed at a known member or candidate of a group in which the actor also participates. Consent does not excuse hazing.

- **Incident:** A verified incident of bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, or retaliation.
- **Intimidation:** A written, verbal, or physical act intended to create an intimidating or threatening environment.
- **LEA Designee / School Designee:** See Section 3.
- **Parent:** A parent or legal guardian.
- **Restorative justice practice:** A practice that brings together students, school personnel, families, and community members to resolve conflict, address disruptive behavior, and promote healing.
- **Retaliation:** An act or communication intended as retribution against a person for reporting bullying, cyber-bullying, or hazing, or to improperly influence the investigation of or response to such a report.
- **School employee:** A teacher, staff member, administrator, or anyone employed directly or indirectly by IEA or working on the IEA campus.
- **School grounds:** A school building, the property it sits on, property owned, leased, or used by IEA for a school-sponsored activity, and school-related transportation.
- **School-sponsored activity:** An activity, fundraiser, club, camp, clinic, or event authorized by IEA that is managed or supervised by IEA or its employees, uses IEA facilities or resources, or is more than inconsequentially supported by public funds, including preparation for and participation in a performance, contest, athletic competition, or display.
- **Staff bullying:** A school employee, with intent to cause harm, repeatedly committing a written, verbal, or physical act against a student or another employee, or committing a single egregious act toward another employee involving an imbalance of power, that creates an environment a reasonable person would find hostile, threatening, or humiliating and substantially interferes with educational or professional performance, opportunities, or benefits.
- **Student bullying:** One or more students, with intent to cause harm, repeatedly committing a written, verbal, or physical act against another student, or committing a single egregious act involving an imbalance of power, that creates an environment a

reasonable person would find hostile and interferes with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

- Neither form of bullying includes ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict; reasonable correction of behavior by an employee; or reasonable coaching techniques.
- **Verification:** A finding, through a formal investigation, that an alleged incident is substantiated.
- **Volunteer:** A non-employee with significant, unsupervised access to students in connection with a school assignment.

Policy

1. Scope

This policy applies to students, employees, contractors, visitors, and volunteers. It covers conduct on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, on school transportation, at bus stops, while traveling to or from these, and through technology. Hazing and cyber-bullying are prohibited at any time and in any location.

This policy does not restrict expression protected by the First Amendment. IEA may discipline off-campus or online speech that causes or threatens a substantial disruption to school operations, including violent altercations or significant interference with a student's educational performance or participation.

2. Prohibitions

1. No school employee or student shall engage in bullying, harassment, or intimidation within the scope in Section 1.
2. No school employee or student shall engage in hazing or cyber-bullying at any time or in any location.
3. No school employee or student shall retaliate against a student, employee, investigator, or witness.
4. No school employee or student shall make a false allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, or retaliation.
5. No student or parent shall engage in abusive conduct.
6. No student shall share a recording of bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, abusive conduct, or retaliation to impact or encourage future incidents. Sharing a recording with a teacher or administrator to report an incident, or on request, is permitted.

7. No school employee or student shall create or distribute sexually explicit or nonconsensual intimate images.

8. Conduct targeting a federally protected class is also prohibited by federal anti-discrimination law and subject to U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) oversight.

3. Designees

The Board designates:

- **School Designee and investigator: the employee who serves in IEA's human resources and safety role.** Receives allegations, investigates under Section 4, notifies parents, determines whether an incident is verified, and oversees action plans.
- **LEA Designee and state board liaison: the Executive Director.** Trains investigators, oversees and monitors action plans, assists with case-specific needs, assesses where additional supervision is needed, serves as IEA's liaison to USBE, and decides appeals under Section 7.

In a matter addressed under Title IX procedures, the investigator does not determine the outcome. The Executive Director makes that determination, and any appeal goes to the Board Chair under Section 7.7. The current names of both designees are posted with this policy.

4. Reporting and investigation

1. Students who experience or witness bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, retaliation, or abusive conduct are strongly encouraged to report it promptly to any school employee. Employees who receive a report must forward it to the School Designee.

2. Reports may be made in person, in writing, anonymously, through SafeUT, or through the Utah Public Education Hotline. A reporter may ask that their identity be kept anonymous, and IEA will take reasonable steps to protect it. IEA posts its reporting procedures with this policy.

3. A complaint should include the complainant's name (unless anonymous), the targeted individual, the alleged perpetrator if known, the date and location, and a description including witnesses.

4. The School Designee, with at least one other trained employee, promptly investigates each complaint. At minimum, the investigation interviews the alleged target and alleged perpetrator; it may include parents, witnesses, staff, and physical or digital evidence (recordings, notes, email, texts, social media, graffiti). Interviewees are told details will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and that any further reports become part of the investigation.

5. Complaint information is kept confidential to the extent possible. The complainant is notified before their name is revealed. No formal discipline is based solely on an anonymous report.
6. Employees take preventive measures against retaliation, including helping targeted students and their parents report new incidents.
7. The investigator keeps a written record of each interview (date, time, and person, unless anonymous) and of the evidence reviewed and how.
8. Civil rights: When conduct may be based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability, IEA investigates promptly, ends the conduct, eliminates any hostile environment, and prevents recurrence. The School or LEA Designee reports any conduct reasonably determined to be a possible civil rights violation to OCR.
9. Law enforcement: The School Designee promptly refers suspected criminal activity to law enforcement, including physical assault, threats of violence, and creation or distribution of sexually explicit images of a minor.
10. At-risk students: An employee, agent, or school resource officer who believes a student is at risk of harming themselves or others may ask the student about those thoughts in order to refer the student to prevention services and inform the parent.
11. Students have a limited expectation of privacy on IEA devices and networks. IEA may monitor them and conduct targeted searches on reasonable belief. Personal devices may be confiscated for investigation and turned over to law enforcement.

5. Parent notification and documentation

1. The School Designee notifies the parents of every student involved in an allegation or incident of bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, abusive conduct, or retaliation, including when a student threatens suicide or expresses suicidal ideation. If a situation presents a serious threat to a student's well-being, the parent is notified without delay, before the end of the school day.
2. Notification is by phone with a follow-up email; if the parent cannot be reached, by voicemail with a follow-up email.
3. With notification, the School Designee provides the parent: (a) USBE-recommended suicide prevention materials under § 53G-9-604(2)(b); (b) information on limiting a student's access to fatal means, including firearms and medication; and (c) resources on healthy social media and online practices under R277-613.
4. The notifying administrator keeps an incident record of the date, time, and manner of notification and the type of incident. It may be shared with the involved parents and

students, but otherwise only under a valid court order. It is retained at least while the student is enrolled and handled under § 53G-9-604.

5. After an investigation, IEA informs the parents of all parties of the outcome, provides information consistent with FERPA, and explains appeal options. If an incident is verified, IEA explains the safety measures in place and updates parents on the action plan at least every 30 calendar days until it closes.

6. Responses and action plans

1. Factors. In responding to a verified incident, IEA considers the parties' development and maturity, the impact of harm, surrounding circumstances, past incidents or patterns, the relationship between the parties, and the level of disruption.
2. Consequences. Students may be disciplined up to and including suspension or expulsion under § 53G-8-205 and the Discipline Policy, and removal from school activities. Responses may also include a discipline plan under R277-609, restorative justice or accountability practices under R277-613, and supportive services. Employees may be disciplined up to and including termination or reassignment.
3. Action plan. For each verified incident, IEA creates a written action plan that includes:
    a. A communication plan to keep each parent updated.
    b. For the targeted student, developed with the parent: a tailored response; a way to reduce exposure to the student who caused the incident; notice of consequences and the plan to address the behavior; supportive measures to preserve access to education; and, to the extent available, other resources the parent requests.
    c. For the student who caused the incident, developed with the parent: tailored consequences that make reasonable effort to preserve access to education and activities; a process to identify and address underlying causes; supportive measures that protect other students; and an emergency removal process.
    d. Restorative practices where appropriate. A targeted student is never required to participate with the student who caused the incident, and the parent's consent is required first.
    e. Monitoring of effectiveness and a timeline for review and adjustment.
    f. A fair and timely opportunity for the accused to respond before discipline, with due process throughout the investigation and findings.
4. Records. A verified incident is documented in the file of the student who caused it. The School Designee maintains a record tracking action plan implementation.

5. Emergency removal. An emergency is an imminent threat to the safety of a student or employee, or a substantial disruption that in-school supports cannot manage. The Executive Director or School Designee may remove the student under § 53G-8-205 and the Discipline Policy and notifies the parent the same day.

6. Limits. An action plan may not require the targeted student to change their schedule, placement, or participation in a school-sponsored sport, club, or activity. If a parent declines to participate after IEA attempts to involve them, IEA may proceed without them.

7. Appeals

1. Who may appeal. The targeted student or their parent, and the student who caused the incident or their parent, may appeal.

2. Appeal of a finding. An appeal of a finding must show that the investigative procedures in this policy were not followed, that new evidence not reasonably available during the investigation exists, or that the investigator or decision-maker had a conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome. Disagreement with the outcome or the investigator's reading of the facts is not grounds for appeal.

3. Appeal of consequences. An appeal of consequences or an action plan must show that the consequences are disproportionate under the factors in Section 6.1, or that the action plan does not meet the requirements of Section 6.

4. Filing. The appeal is submitted in writing to the Executive Director within ten (10) school days after receipt of the outcome notice. It includes the date of the outcome notice, the finding or consequence being appealed, the grounds for the appeal, and the signature of the student's parent.

5. Meeting. Within fifteen (15) school days of receiving the appeal, the Executive Director offers to meet with the appealing student and parent, in person, by phone, or by video, to discuss the appeal and possible resolutions.

6. Decision. Within fifteen (15) school days after the meeting, or after the parent declines or does not respond to the offer to meet, the Executive Director responds in writing, upholding, modifying, or returning the matter for further investigation, and explaining the reasons. The written response is the final administrative action in the matter.

7. When the Executive Director is involved. If the Executive Director served as investigator, School Designee, or decision-maker in the matter, including a determination made under Title IX procedures, the appeal goes to the Board Chair, who follows the same steps with twenty (20) school days for the meeting and twenty (20) school days for the decision. If the Board Chair is also involved, the appeal goes to another board member with no involvement in the matter, designated by the Board Chair.

8. During an appeal. The action plan and all safety measures remain in effect while an appeal is pending. The person deciding the appeal may extend any deadline in this section for good cause by written notice to the parties.

9. Other procedures. Suspension and expulsion are appealed under the Student Conduct and Discipline Policy. Conduct addressed under Title IX procedures is appealed under those procedures, applying this section to the extent consistent with them. Employee complaints of abusive conduct follow Section 10.

8. Training and acknowledgment

1. IEA provides training, by qualified individuals and meeting USBE standards, on: bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, retaliation, and abusive conduct; Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, and ADA Title II; how these behaviors differ from discrimination and may occur separately or together; the prohibition of these behaviors based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability; free-speech rights for students, employees, and parents; safe digital citizenship; and when R277-613 issues may lead to discipline. Training complements the student suicide prevention program (R277-620) and educator suicide prevention training (§ 53G-9-704(1)).

2. New employees, coaches, and volunteers are trained in their first year; all are retrained at least every three years. All students are trained at a frequency set by the LEA Designee.

3. Students, employees, and volunteer coaches in athletic or extracurricular programs are trained before participating, annually for new participants and at least every three years for all, and are informed of prohibited conduct under R277-613 and its consequences.

4. IEA keeps training participant lists or signatures with dates and provides them to USBE on request.

5. Each year, employees, parents, and students age eight and older sign a statement that they received this policy (Appendix A).

9. Assessment and annual reporting

The LEA Designee periodically assesses the prevalence of bullying, cyber-bullying, and hazing, including locations such as playgrounds, hallways, and lunch areas where more supervision may be needed.

By June 30 each year, IEA reports to the State Superintendent under § 53E-3-401(3) and R277-613: (a) this policy; (b) implementation of the signed-statement requirement; (c) verification of employee training; and (d) the number and type of incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, and retaliation, including incidents alleged to be based on actual or perceived disability, race, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation, and federal civil rights reporting.

10. Employee grievance for abusive conduct

An employee who experiences abusive conduct reports it in writing to the School or LEA Designee. If unsatisfied with the investigation or resulting action, the employee may use the Employee Grievance Policy:

1. Level 1, informal: Good-faith resolution with the parties, unless inappropriate.
2. Level 2, Executive Director or HR Coordinator: Written grievance within 10 working days of the incident; written response within 15 working days. If either is involved, go to Level 3.
3. Level 3, Board: Written appeal to the Board Chair within 10 working days of the Level 2 response. The Board reviews consistent with the Open and Public Meetings Act and issues a final resolution within 30 days.

Retaliation for filing a grievance is prohibited.

11. Publication

This policy and its procedures are posted on IEA's public website and included in the student and employee handbooks, and are provided to students, parents, volunteers, and staff.

IEA reviews this policy regularly with input from students, parents, and employees, as required by § 53G-9-605(2)(a).

References

Utah Code §§ 53G-9-601 through 53G-9-607, 53G-8-205; Utah Admin. Code R277-609, R277-613, R277-620; USBE LEA Model Bullying Policy (May 2026)

Revisions

- Originally approved May 8, 2018
- July 11, 2024: Revised under § 53G-9-605
- September 16, 2025: Added recording-sharing discipline, employee grievance process, individualized action plan, and parent communication process
- [Adoption date]: Rewritten to align with R277-613 (effective October 8, 2025) and the USBE LEA Model Bullying Policy (May 2026), in response to USBE's August 31, 2026 notice