

**Connecticut Technical High School System**  
**Policy on Bullying**  
**(revised 11/1/2009)**

In order for teaching and learning to occur there must be a positive climate in which students are appreciative and accepting of individual differences and behave responsibly toward others. Therefore, it is the policy of the State Board of Education that any form of bullying behavior on school property or at school-sponsored events, is expressly forbidden.

For purposes of this policy, "bullying" means any overt act(s) by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity or on a school bus, which act(s) are committed more than once against any student during the school year. This policy may include provisions addressing bullying outside of the school setting if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

In the event of an alleged act of discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), age, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, and/or disability, (including, but not limited to, mental retardation, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws, the Connecticut Technical High School System will use the procedures outlined in its Student Grievance Procedures for Alleged Illegal Discrimination, which can be found in the pages following this section.

In accordance with Connecticut anti-bullying statutes, the Connecticut Technical High School System's anti-bullying policy seeks to afford students a safe and healthy learning environment by prohibiting bullying conduct and establishing a system for reporting and investigating allegations of bullying. To this end, the CTHSS anti-bullying includes the following provisions:

- (1) Students may anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators;
- (2) Parents or guardians of students may file written reports of suspected bullying;
- (3) Teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying or receive student reports of bullying must notify school administrators in writing;
- (4) School administration must investigate any written report filed pursuant to this policy and to review any anonymous reports except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. However an anonymous report will trigger an investigation, and where supported, after adequate investigation, the imposition of appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective action;
- (5) The CTHSS has developed a prevention and an intervention strategy for school staff to deal with bullying. This strategy can be found on the CTHSS website at \_\_\_\_\_ ;

- (6) The student codes of conduct includes language concerning bullying;
- (7) School administration must notify both the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed, and invite those to attend at least one meeting concerning the bullying conduct. The notification to the involved parents will include a description of the response of school staff to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Any information provided under this policy shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) and the district's Education Records policy and regulations; and
- (8) Each school within the CTHSS must maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the respective school and make such list available for public inspection and report such number to the Department of Education, annually and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

**Reports of bullying acts in violation of this Policy should be reported to faculty and school administration. Such reports will be investigated by school administrators.**

Students who engage in bullying behavior in violation of this policy shall be subject to school discipline up to and including expulsion. **Students are encouraged to report bullying to any faculty member or administrator and may request anonymity.**

Students or other persons (e.g., parents or guardians) who believe that a student has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, and/or disability are encouraged to promptly report any such alleged act or incident by using the CTHSS Student Grievance Procedure, whether it occurs once or more than once. Under that procedure, the report does not have to be in writing.

Teachers, other school staff and CTHSS employees who become aware of, witness acts of or receive a student report relating to a student experiencing harassment or discrimination are required to promptly notify the school principal in writing, using the CTHSS Student Grievance Procedure.

The Connecticut Technical High School System Student Grievance Procedures for Alleged Discrimination and Harassment can be found in the pages following this section - or by referring to the Table of Contents of this manual.

## **Bullying Through the Use of Technology**

An emerging form of bullying is the use of technology to threaten, intimidate, ridicule, humiliate, insult, or harass. Technology enables aggressive expression toward others and does not rely on physical strength or physical contact. By using a cell phone or the Internet, a student can quickly and aggressively spread rumors, threats, hate mail, or embarrassing photos through text messages, emails, or instant messages.

There are a number of social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook, Twitter etc) available to our students that can be misused and/or abused for bullying purposes. Any alleged misuse or abuse must be reported to the school principal.

Please note that the Discipline Policy states that misuse of electronic devices, threatening/bullying/hazing or harassment is a violation and can be the basis for discipline on or off campus. When you receive information that a student or students are involved in bullying through the use of technology either as the actor or a member of a group, or the victim, please consider the following:

- If it takes place on campus or at a school sponsored event disciplinary action will be taken.
- If it takes place off campus a school may take disciplinary action if the incident poses a likelihood of substantial disruption to the educational process or the orderly day to day operations of the school.

Additional steps that may be taken by a school official include the following:

- MySpace provides a guide for school administrators, advising them to contact the site about false or offensive user profiles or to report threats or bullying. There is a hotline, fax and email address for the exclusive use of school officials.

A copy of the Official School Administrator's Guide to understanding MySpace and resolving Social Networking Issues is available on the CTHSS internal website: Internet Abuse Prevention Administrator Resources: <http://sde-cthsi/IAPAdminResources>

MySpace also maintains a page for law enforcement to download forms, obtain information and request removal of offending pages.