

# POLICY Queen Anne's County Public Schools

<b>Responsible Office:</b>	Student Support Services
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## **Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation**

### **I. PURPOSE**

All students have the right to be free from bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Queen Anne's County Public Schools (QACPS) is committed to providing a safe, productive, and inclusive learning environment. Bullying problems are symptomatic of relationship problems best addressed holistically by students, schools, parents/caregivers, and the entire community. Maryland schools should be places where students are surrounded by caring adults who encourage students to treat others with kindness and empathy, while helping to build a relationship-focused, welcoming, supportive school environment fostering academic and personal growth for every student.

### **II. POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of QACPS to prohibit bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior of any person on school property, at school sponsored functions or by the use of electronic technology at a public school. It is also the policy of QACPS to prohibit reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing and bias behavior or who are targets, witnesses, bystanders or others with reliable information about an act of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behavior.

In accordance with the statute, a school employee who reports an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation under the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 7-424.1 in accordance with the QACPS policy is not civilly liable for an act or omission in reporting or failing to report an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation under this section.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. *Bullying* – is unwanted, demeaning behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or is highly likely to be repeated, over time. To be considered bullying, the behavior must be intentional and include: 1) *an imbalance of power* (students who bully use their physical, emotional, social, or academic power to control, exclude, or harm others), and 2) *repetition* (bullying behaviors happen more than once or are highly likely to be repeated based on evidence gathered).
- B. *Cyberbullying* – is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through texting, apps, or online via social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate

in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or hurtful content about another student. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.

C. *Harassment* – includes actual or perceived negative actions that offend, ridicule, or demean another student with regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, family/parental or marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, or disability.

D. *Intimidation* – is any communication or action directed against another student that threatens or induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority. Retaliation may be considered a form of intimidation.

**IV. POLICY ELEMENTS**

**V. IMPLEMENTATION**

The Board directs the Superintendent to implement this policy.

**VI. POLICY REVIEW**

The Superintendent will provide the Board of Education a review of this policy every four years after its initial adoption and/or last revision. The focus of this review will be the effectiveness of the elements of this policy in assisting the Board in fulfilling its mission.

**VII. SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO TITLES, DEPARTMENTS, OR LAWS**

A. Education Art., Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 7-424.1

**VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE**

Date: May 4, 2022

Patricia W. Saelens, Ed.D.  
 Superintendent, Queen Anne’s County Public Schools

**HISTORY:**

<b>Initial Adoption</b>	5/4/2022	<b>Revised</b>	--/--/----	<b>Reviewed</b>	--/--/----	<b>Next Review</b>	5/4/2026
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