

Dear East Noble Parent:

Schools are intended to be safe and nurturing places for students and faculty. East Noble School Corporation is dedicated to ensuring our schools remain a safe learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors. Bullying is an issue faced by every school in the nation. We must work together to take immediate action, whether a child bullies, is a victim of bullying, or is a witness to bullying. Bullying adversely affects the working, learning, and social environment for staff and students. Bullying of students, staff, or visitors to the building will not be tolerated.

***What is BULLYING?***

Bullying and/or cyber-bullying are repeated harmful acts involving physical, verbal, or psychological attacks or intimidation of a victim. It may include, but is not limited to hitting, kicking, tripping, theft, or destruction of property, demands, spreading of rumors, teasing, name-calling, put-downs, social isolation, threatening looks or gestures, and through internet social networking or text messaging. Bullying can be of a racial or sexual nature and includes hazing. This rule applies when a student is:

- a. On school grounds immediately before or during school hours, immediately after school hours or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group (including summer school);
- b. Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event.
- c. Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event;
- d. Using property or equipment provided by the school; or
- e. Using data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of the school corporation.

***What does the LAW say?***

Indiana Code:

- (a) "Bullying" means overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including (1) verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), (2) physical acts committed, aggression, or (3) any other behaviors, that are committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the other targeted student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:
  - (1) places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student's person or property.
  - (2) has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
  - (3) has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance; or
  - (4) has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school.
- (b) The term may not be interpreted to impose any burden or sanction on, or include in the definition of the term, the following:
  - (1) Participating in a religious event.
  - (2) Acting in an emergency involving the protection of a person or property from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or substantial danger.
  - (3) Participating in an activity consisting of the exercise of a student's rights protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I, Section 31 of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, or both.
  - (4) Participating in an activity conducted by a nonprofit or governmental entity that provides recreation, education, training, or other care under the supervision of one (1) or more adults.
  - (5) Participating in an activity undertaken at the prior written direction of the student's parent.

- (6) Engaging in interstate or international travel from a location outside Indiana to another location outside Indiana.

#### ***What are the EXPECTATIONS from East Noble?***

- **Staff Intervention:** East Noble staff members who observe or become aware of an act of bullying are expected to take immediate action to intervene unless the intervention would be a threat to a staff member's safety. If a staff member believes his or her intervention has not or will not resolve the matter, or if the bullying continues, the staff member will report the incident to a guidance counselor, assistant principal or principal. Students who have been bullied may seek additional support from the school.
- **Student Intervention:** Students who are victims of bullying or observe another student being bullied are expected to report the incident to a staff member. All students have access to school email and are encouraged to use this format as a means of contacting guidance counselors or principals. Once contact with any staff member is made, the investigation process will commence.
- **Investigative Procedures:** Upon learning about a bullying incident, the principal, or designee will investigate the incident. The investigation may include interviews (with the bully, victim, staff, and any witnesses), completing incident reports, and a review of school records.
- **Consequences:** All bullying allegations will be documented. Consequences could range from meeting counseling students for initial acts to expulsion for repeated behaviors. If false reports are deemed to have been done with malice, consequences will be imposed to those parties responsible for making the false allegations.

#### ***What is NOT Bullying?***

When talking about bullying, it is very important for all parties to understand what bullying is not. Many times, a single act or behavior is not appropriate, but it is not considered bullying. Some people think that bullying is any aggressive behavior and although such behaviors are a source of concern and need attention, it is important to separate them from bullying. Bullying is *recurring* and a *deliberate abuse of power*. It is not easy for kids to understand the difference between a deliberate act and an accidental one. Such perception is very dangerous, because every minor act of conflict, done without any intention to harm, can escalate and become a big conflict. Much like in any communication, whether it is verbal or not, there are two sides involved. Bullying is a form of communication and depends not only on the giver but also on the receiver. For an incident to be considered bullying, the aggressor must want to hurt someone, and the victim must perceive the incident as a deliberate act of abuse.

The following are NOT considered bullying:

1. **Not liking someone** - It is very natural that people do not like everyone around them and, as unpleasant as it may be to know someone does not like you, verbal and non-verbal messages of "I don't like you" are not acts of bullying.
2. **Being excluded** - Again, it is very natural for people to gather around a group of friends, and we cannot be friends with everyone, so it is acceptable that when kids have a party or play a game at the playground, they will include their friends and exclude others. It is very important to remind kids they do the same thing sometimes too and, although exclusion is unpleasant, it is not an act of bullying.
3. **Accidentally bumping into someone** - When people bump into others, the reaction depends mostly on the bumped person's mood. If they have had a bad day, they think it was an act of aggressive behavior, but if they are in the good mood, they smile back and attract an apology. This is also relevant when playing a sport, such as kids throwing a ball at each other hit someone on the head. It is very important for teachers and parents to explain that some accidents happen without any bad intention, and it is important not to create a big conflict, because it was NOT an act of bullying.
4. **Making other kids play a certain way** - Again, this is very natural behavior. Wanting things to be done our way is normal and is not an act of bullying. To make sure kids do not fall into considering it as an aggressive or "bossy" behavior, we need to teach them assertiveness. If your kids come home and complains that Jane is very bossy and she always wants things to be done her way, you can show them that they want it too and that Jane is

miserable. She is not flexible enough and she will suffer in life for insisting that things be done her way. Again, although it is not fun or pleasant, this is NOT bullying.

5. **A single act of telling a joke about someone** - Making fun of other people is not fun for them, but the difference between having a sense of humor and making fun of someone is very fine. It is important to teach kids (and grownups) that things they say as jokes should also be amusing for the others. If not, they should stop. Unless it happens repeatedly and done deliberately to hurt someone, telling jokes about people is NOT bullying.
6. **Arguments** - Arguments are just heated disagreements between two (or more) people (or groups). It is natural that people have different interests and disagree on many things. Think about it, most of us have disagreements with ourselves, so it is very understandable to have disagreements with others. The argument itself is NOT a form of bullying, although some people turn arguments into bullying, because they want to win the argument so much. They use every means to get what they want and find a weakness in the other person, abuse knowledge or trust they have gained and use it against the other person. It is very important to distinguish between natural disagreements and bullying during an argument.
7. **Expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others** - Again, communication requires at least two players. Although it may be unpleasant to hear what someone thinks about you, it is NOT a form of bullying but a very natural thing. In every communication, there are disagreements and some form of judgment about each other's attitude and behavior. If someone says to you, "I think this was not a nice gesture" or "You insulted me when you said this", this is NOT bullying but an expression of thoughts and feelings.
8. **Isolated acts of harassment, aggressive behavior, intimidation, or meanness** – The definition of bullying states that there is repetition in the behavior. Bullying is a conscious, repeated, hostile, aggressive behavior of an individual or a group abusing their position with the intention to harm others or gain real or perceived power. Therefore, anything that happens once is NOT an act of bullying. As a parent, it is important that you pay attention to what your kids are telling you and find out if things are happening more than once.

*All behaviors above are unpleasant and need to be addressed, but they are not to be treated as bullying. Many times, labeling a single act of aggression can turn it into bullying just by perceiving it that way.*

#### **What should you do if you or your child were to have any concerns?**

During March of 2018, all buildings in East Noble School Corporation introduced our *#SaySomething* campaign. East Noble is committed to finding proactive means of combating issues that face our students. Having a safe school experience is something that all students should enjoy. The premise of the *#SaySomething* campaign is to make a school official aware of a potential or ongoing issue as soon as possible so that an intervention can take place. Knowing that there is a problem will help us to work towards a solution. We have a variety of ways for students, staff and/or parents to inform us of issues such as, but not limited to, bullying. Please contact the appropriate building principal if you have any safety or student well-being concerns. If you would like an alternative to making a personal phone call, we have created email addresses that are funneled directly to school leaders in each building as well as our *#SaySomething* hotline that allows for anonymous reports. ***#SaySomething***

#### **Alternative Learning Center:**

- Contact Rachel Ruse @ 349-0814 or email [as-saysomething@eastnoble.net](mailto:as-saysomething@eastnoble.net)

#### **Avilla Elementary School:**

- Contact Jeff Harper @ 897-2301 or email [av-saysomething@eastnoble.net](mailto:av-saysomething@eastnoble.net)

#### **East Noble High School:**

- Contact Kathy Longenbaugh @ 347-2032 or email [hs-saysomething@eastnoble.net](mailto:hs-saysomething@eastnoble.net)

#### **East Noble Middle School:**

- Contact Bill Cain @ 347-0100 or email [ms-saysomething@eastnoble.net](mailto:ms-saysomething@eastnoble.net)

#### **North Side Elementary School:**

- Contact Stephanie Leasure @ 347-1534 or email [ns-saysomething@eastnoble.net](mailto:ns-saysomething@eastnoble.net)

#### **Rome City Elementary School:**

- Contact Heather Green @ 854-3241 or email [rc-saysomething@eastnoble.net](mailto:rc-saysomething@eastnoble.net)

**South Side Elementary School:**

- Contact Faith Erexson @ 349-2200 or email [ss-saysomething@eastnoble.net](mailto:ss-saysomething@eastnoble.net)

**Wayne Center Elementary School:**

- Contact Jaime Carroll @ 347-2548 or email [wc-saysomething@eastnoble.net](mailto:wc-saysomething@eastnoble.net)

The East Noble *#SaySomething* tip line is set up for anonymous reporting. The number is 206-347-5512. Callers will be given directions as to how to leave information for any school in the district.

We recognize that communication is essential in dealing with bullying and school safety. Please partner with us as we do all that we can to keep our students and staff as safe as possible.

Sincerely,

*Matt Stinson*

Student Services Director  
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