

Rutland Windsor Supervisory Union Ludlow Elementary School District Mount Holly Elementary School District Plymouth School District Union #39 School District	<b>BULLYING PREVENTION</b>	<b>Policy F35</b>
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**Policy**

It is the policy of the Rutland Windsor Supervisory Union, Ludlow Elementary School District, Mount Holly Elementary School District, Plymouth School District and Union #39 School District (hereinafter “District”) to prevent the occurrence of bullying in their school(s). Bullying is a form of dangerous and disrespectful behavior that will not be permitted or tolerated.

**I. Definitions**

**A. Bullying:** means any overt act or combination of such acts directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:

1. occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school sponsored activity;
2. is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and
3. is repeated over time.

Bullying may involve a range of misconduct that, based on the severity, will warrant a measured response of corrective action and/or discipline. Behaviors that do not rise to the level of bullying, as defined above, still may be subject to intervention and/or discipline under another section of a school’s disciplinary code of conduct.

**B. Complaint:** means an oral or written report by a student or any person to an employee alleging that a person has been subjected to conduct that may meet the definitions of bullying.

**C. Complainant:** means a student who has filed an oral or written complaint to an employee or is the alleged victim in a report made by another alleging conduct and/or incident(s) that may meet the definitions of bullying.

**D. Employee:** includes any person employed directly by or retained through a contract with the District, an agent of the school, a school board member, a student teacher, an intern or a school volunteer. For purposes of this policy, “agent of the school” includes supervisory union staff.

**E. Designated Employee:** means an employee who has been designated by the District to receive complaints of bullying pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §565(c).

**F. Principal:** means the building level administrator at a public school designated by a school governing board to be a school principal, or his/her designee. Conduct that might otherwise be considered bullying but does not occur during the school day, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school sponsored even still may be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §§1161(a) and 1162;

**G. Retaliation:** is any adverse action by any person against a person who has filed a complaint of bullying or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the bullying complaint. Such adverse action may include conduct by a school employee directed at a student in the form of intimidation or reprisal such as diminishment of grades, suspension, expulsion, change in education conditions, loss of privileges or benefits, or other unwarranted disciplinary action. Retaliation may also include conduct by a student directed at another student in the form of further bullying, intimidation, and reprisal.

## II. Notice of Prohibition Against Bullying

The District recognizes that students should have a safe, orderly, civil and positive learning environment and that bullying has no place and will not be tolerated in its schools. The District shall:

1. include the prohibition against bullying in the student or school handbook and in other ways make students aware of the prohibition against bullying, the penalties for engaging in bullying, and the procedures for reporting bullying.
2. develop strategies for school staff to prevent and intervene in bullying.

## III. Reporting, Investigating, and Notifying Parents of Bullying Reports

To address bullying, the District shall:

1. encourage students to report personally or anonymously to teachers and school administrators acts of bullying. The district will establish methods for reporting acts of bullying.
  - a. Anonymous Reporting: The district shall communicate to the school community the means to make anonymous reports of bullying.
  - b. Personal Reporting: The district shall designate a person to whom reports of bullying shall be made, and will make that person's identity known throughout the school community.
2. encourage parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying through the processes described above.
3. require teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying or receive student reports of bullying to promptly notify the designated employee for the district.
4. require the designated employee to accept and review all reports of bullying, including anonymous reports. If after initial inquiry, an anonymous or oral report appears to warrant further investigation, the district shall promptly continue with an investigation. School administrators shall investigate any written reports.
5. as with any other disciplinary action, require school staff to notify the parent or guardian of a student who commits a verified act of bullying, of the disciplinary response of the school staff and consequences that may result from further acts of bullying.
6. to the extent permitted under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, [FERPA], require school staff to notify the parent or guardian of a student who is a target of bullying of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying.
7. require the taking of appropriate disciplinary action against any student who knowingly makes a false accusation regarding bullying.
8. prohibit any person to retaliate against a person who has filed a complaint of bullying or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the bullying complaint. A person may violate this anti-retaliation provision regardless of whether the underlying complaint of bullying is substantiated.

## IV. Data Gathering

The District delegate the responsibility of data collection to the Principal or his/her designee. He/she shall collect data on the number of reported incidents of bullying and the number of incidents that have been verified and to make such data available to the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Education and to the public. The Department's Safe Schools Web page has further information on data gathered and on data gathering.

Legal References: 16 V.S.A. §§165, 1161(a), 1162

District:	Reviewed only	Date Warned	Date Adopted	Replaces Policy
Rutland Windsor Supervisory Union		February 22, 2008	April 3, 2008	D12
Ludlow Elementary School District		December 21, 2007	January 2, 2008	CL
Mount Holly School District		November 23, 2007	December 17, 2008	CL
Plymouth School District		December 6, 2007	January 7, 2008	CL
Union #39 School District		December 6, 2008	December 19, 2008	CL