

# Anti-bullying Policy

The North Dakota Extension Service exists to help youth and adults enhance their lives and communities. To achieve this goal, a safe and positive environment needs to be maintained; thus, bullying behaviors by youth, volunteers and/or staff are prohibited.

## Definition of Bullying

Bullying behavior is defined as unwanted, deliberately negative action by another individual or group of individuals with intent to harm. Bullying may inflict harm or distress, including physical, social, sexual, psychological or educational harm, on the targeted individual or group. Bullying often includes an imbalance of power between individuals/groups.

Cyberbullying is bullying that happens through email, chat rooms, instant messaging, a website, text messages or social media. Bullying may include, but is not limited to, verbal aggression, emotional attacks, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, physical aggression, isolating others or electronic harassment.

## Management

The following protocol will highlight the procedures for staff, volunteers and participants in regard to bullying behavior. Any action that meets the criteria for bullying behavior is strictly prohibited. Should an event that may be defined as bullying behavior be witnessed, the following procedure should be implemented:

1. If you notice a situation that may be characteristic of bullying, make sure the situation is safe before engaging.
2. If the situation is safe and/or appropriate reinforcement is present, proceed to see what is occurring in the situation.
3. If bullying obviously is occurring, immediately stop the bullying.
4. Whether the incident is observed or reported, talk with all individuals involved on a one-on-one basis. This may include the bully, victim, bystanders and the incident reporter.
5. Investigate other aspects of the incident as necessary.
6. Fill out an Incident Report form for documentation of the incident as needed.
7. Attempt to determine the intent of the individual committing the bullying behavior and if further action other than a warning is required.
8. Communicate the incident to necessary individuals, such as co-workers, supervisor and/or parents. This may include sharing the bullying report and verbal communication of the incident with the next course of action.

9. Using a team approach involving necessary individuals, determine the appropriate consequence for the degree of bullying involved.
10. Implement disciplinary action.
11. Follow up with the victim(s) to ensure that the bullying does not continue.

Incident report forms for participants, volunteers, parents and staff will be in all Extension county offices and online. Using good judgment related to each situation, copies of the report may be sent to:

- Parent/guardian of the youth involved in the incident
- Local Extension office
- District Director
- Extension Director
- Also, retain a copy for your use.

The incident report is designed to document who, what, when, why, where and how the situation was handled. It provides documentation to describe the situation.

## Disciplinary Action

Any report of bullying will be taken seriously, with appropriate action taken. However, disciplinary action against a person exhibiting bullying behavior cannot be made based solely on an anonymous report. A named reporter and/or an investigation are required. The response

of the NDSU Extension Service to the bullying will be based on the severity of the bullying.

### Disciplinary action may include:

- A verbal warning
- An apology
- Dismissal from current and/or future activities
- Phone call/meeting with parents
- Restoration of property
- Expulsion
- Criminal charges

NDSU Extension staff are mandatory reporters regarding suspected child abuse. Any individual who is a staff member and witnesses bullying or knows that bullying is occurring but does not report the incident is subject to disciplinary action.

In addition, disciplinary action will be taken against an individual who reports bullying as a joke/prank. Bullying is a serious issue and, therefore, claims made as a joke will not be tolerated.

Any individual reporting an incident of bullying in good faith is protected from retaliation. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination, intimidation and/or demotion. Should an incident of retaliation occur, it should be reported immediately and appropriate remedies will be made.

Visit North Dakota State University Extension Service on-line at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension)

NDSU encourages you to use and share this content, but please do so under the conditions of our Creative Commons license.

You may copy, distribute, transmit and adapt this work as long as you give full attribution, don't use the work for commercial purposes and share your resulting work similarly. For more information, visit [www.ag.ndsu.edu/agcomm/creative-commons](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/agcomm/creative-commons).

North Dakota State University does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, public assistance status, sex, sexual orientation, status as a U.S. veteran, race or religion. Direct inquiries to the Vice President for Equity, Diversity and Global Outreach, 205 Old Main, (701) 231-7708.

County Commissions, NDSU and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating.

This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon request, (701) 231-7881.

web-10/17