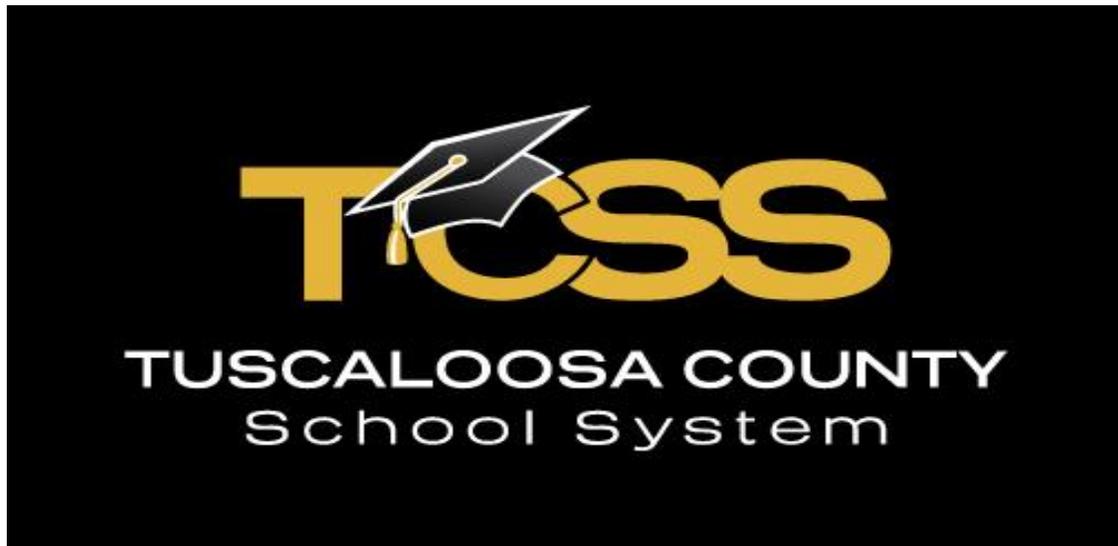


B.R.A.V.E.

Through
Building Responsibility Acceptance Voice Empowerment



B.R.A.V.E. 2019 – 2020

Over 3.2 million students are victims of bullying each year.
Approximately 160,000 teens skip school every day because of bullying.
Physical bullying increases in elementary school, peaks in middle school, and declines in high school. Verbal abuse, on the other hand, remains constant.



Be B.R.A.V.E. Enough to Make a Difference!

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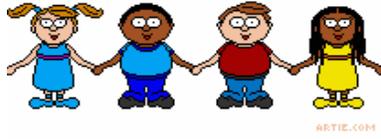
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Through Building Responsibility Acceptance Voice Empowerment

Brave is an **anti-harassment** program designed to eliminate bullying in the Tuscaloosa County School System. **BRAVE** is based on effective collaboration where students are proactive participants and parents, educators, and the communities are involved stakeholders to remove harassment. There is a positive change in culture and climate when all parties become involved stakeholders and take personal responsibility for standing up, speaking out, and eliminating bullying. Giving students a voice and making them, part of the process empowers them to create sustainable change.

MISSION

The mission alerts schools and communities on the attributes of human decency and kindness as the foundation for a bully-free society.

OBJECTIVES

To empower students with the tools necessary to make socially responsible decisions and create sustainable change.

To empower students and stakeholders with the knowledge to address the many issues related to bullying and cyberbullying.

To engage in cross-role and role-alike discussions about best practices to address issues related to bullying and cyberbullying.

JAMARI TERRELL WILLIAMS SUDENT BULLYING PREVENTION ACT POLICY

Section 1: Bullying, Intimidation, Violence, and Threats of Violence Prohibited.

It is the policy of the Board that no student shall engage in nor should any be subjected to bullying, violence, threats of violence or intimidation by any other student based on any of the specific characteristics outlined in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions as specified in the Student Code of Conduct, subject to the investigating school administrator's authority and decision. The mission alerts schools and communities on the attributes of human decency and kindness as the foundation for a bully-free society.

Section 2: Definitions

In this policy, these terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Bullying" means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior on or off of school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function. This behavior includes but not limited to cyberbullying, written, electronic, verbal or physical actions that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular feature, if the aspect falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics contained in this policy. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:

- Place student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
- Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student.
- Have the effect of significantly disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school.
- Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function.
- Have the result of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

(b) "Hostile environment" means the perception by an affected student that the conduct of another student constitutes a threat of violence or bullying and that the behavior is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, would agree that the conduct constitutes bullying, the threat of assault, or assault.

(c) "Violence" means the unjustified infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.

(d) "Threat" means a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action to cause fear or harm. The plan may be communicated through an electronic, written, verbal, or physical activity to cause anxiety, mental distress, or interference in the school environment. The intention may be expressly stated or implied, and the person communicating the threat can carry out the threat.

(e) "Threat of violence" means an unjustified expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student.

(f) "Intimidation" means an unfounded threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student.

(g) "Student" as used in this policy means a person who enrolled in Tuscaloosa County School System.

Section 3: Description of Behavior Expected of Students

(a) Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting bullying, violence, or intimidation; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student, and (3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that identified in this policy.

(b) Bullying, intimidation, violence, or threats of violence are prohibited and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences and/or sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited activity on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the student:

- Race
- Sex
- Religion
- National origin
- Disability

Section 4: Consequences for Violations

A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under the authority of this policy.

DESCRIPTION OF BEHAVIOR EXPECTED OF STUDENTS

(1) Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required (a) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting harassment, violence, or intimidation; (b) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student; and (c) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student identified in this policy.

(2) Violence, threats of violence, harassment, and intimidation are prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary consequences and sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the victim of such conduct:

- The student's race
- The student's sex
- The student's sexual orientation
- The student's religion
- The student's national origin
- The student's disability

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATIONS

A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under the authority of this policy.

Section 5: Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedures

(a) Complaints may be made alleging violations of this policy on a Board-approved complaint form available in the handbook, on the website, or at the school's office. The complaint must be delivered to the principal or the principal's designee either by mail or personal delivery. Incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally.

The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee is authorized to inform the student's parent or guardian of the report unless at the discretion of the school principal or the principal's designee the apparent cause of the threat of suicide is child abuse or other significant harm from a parent or guardian.

(b) Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal's designee will determine if the complaint alleges a severe violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the complaint alleges a violation, the principal or the principal's designee will undertake a reasonably prompt investigation of the claim. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence considering the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions may be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violations(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system.

(c) Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any penalty or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

Section 6: Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms

This policy and any procedures, rules, and forms developed and approved unto implementation will be published on the website of each local board of education and school, shall be available at each school office, and included in the student handbook as distributed to each student at the beginning of each school year.

PROMULGATION OF POLICY AND RELATED PROCEDURES, RULES, AND FORMS

This policy and any procedures, rules, and forms developed and approved unto implementation will be published, disseminated, and made available to students, parents and legal guardians, and employees by such means and methods as are customarily used for such purposes, including publication in the Tuscaloosa County School System's Student/Parent Information Guide.

TRAINING

The most effective programs to reduce bullying start with training, educating, and taking a comprehensive approach involving collaboration between educators, students, parents, and community. Documenting such practices is critical to a school's compliance. The following training methods should be presented to all stakeholders listed below. The list includes but is not limited to, how to report bullying, options during investigation, chain of command, significant areas for bullying, anti-harassment forms, investigation procedures, key people to involve in the said investigation, and how to report the results of that investigation.

TRAINING PROCEDURES

1. Office of Student Services will train principals and Director of Transportation.
2. Principal will train faculty and staff.
3. Director of Transportation will train bus drivers.
4. Teachers will train students.
5. Students - Will be trained on the above training procedures by the faculty and staff.
6. Parents – Will be informed on how to report bullying and the definition of bullying.

SAMPLE MONTHLY PROGRAMS

The Tuscaloosa County School System must make a consistent effort to train all students on how to identify strategies concerning harassment and bullying. Documenting such pieces of training is essential to a school's compliance.

- August - What is Bullying/How to report
- September - How to Report
- October - National Bullying Awareness Month
- November - Bullying survey
- December - Review data from survey
- January - Revisit What is Bullying/How to report
- February - Defining Friendship/Bystanders
- March- Video- Everyone will make a school wide video that addresses bullying- We are marching against bullying!
- April - Spring into healthy relationships/how to be a friend campaign
- May - Counselors or students share tips for anti-bullying/character traits on intercom, pep rallies, etc.

**Schedule activities throughout the school year for parents that focus on awareness of bullying.*

MAJOR AREAS FOR BULLYING

Most bullying occurs when adults are not present. We need to break the code of silence. The major areas for bullying are the bus, bus area, gym, physical education, hallway, classroom, locker room, lunchroom, parking lot, and extracurricular activities.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Students and stakeholders should feel comfortable reporting a bullying incident. No one wants to be labeled a tattler. Students need to know that reporting an incident will be handled properly, and their confidentiality respected. Everyone needs to be educated and trained to accomplish this. Training should include administrators, teachers, parents, students, bus drivers, and the community.

- Student or stakeholder will report a bullying incident to an administrator, faculty/ staff member, or other personnel at the school.
- The concern will be reported to the school principal or his/her designee, and an investigation will begin within 24 hours.
- The report should be documented on a Tuscaloosa County School System form. The principal will create a timeline detailing specific incidents during the investigation.
- At an appropriate time during the investigation, parents of all parties shall be notified with information that does not breach federal confidentiality laws.
- If found in violation, age appropriated consequences shall be given to the accused student(s).
- At an appropriate time after the investigation, the parents of the aggressor shall be notified with information that does not breach federal confidentiality laws.
- After the investigation is over, the principal or his/her designee will inform the reporting person the results of the investigation without breaching federal confidentiality laws.
- The reporting person has no further concerns, and the incident is closed.
- The reporting person feels the school did not take appropriate steps to address concerns.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

The reporting person has the option to follow the chain of command if he/she is not satisfied with the response from the local school. The chain of command is the following:

1. Teacher
2. Assistant Principal
3. Principal
4. Office of Student Services
5. Region Director
6. Deputy Superintendent
7. Superintendent
8. Board
9. Ongoing pattern intended to intimidate, harass or shame a student

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying, as defined, is, “the process of using the Internet, cell phones or other devices to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.

- Intimidating text messages or e-mails
- Rumors by email or social networking sites
- Embarrassing pictures and videos

Common Forms of Bullying

[Please note this does not constitute an exhaustive list]

Verbal Bullying

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm
- Other pervasive, ongoing pattern intended to intimidate, harass or shame a student

Social Bullying

- Exclusion – intentionally excluding a student
- Telling other students not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public
- Other pervasive, ongoing pattern intended to intimidate, harass or shame a student

Physical Bullying – the victim’s personal boundaries are violated

- Hitting/kicking/pinching

- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures
- Other pervasive,
- Trolling
- Other pervasive, ongoing pattern intended to intimidate, harass or shame a student

SIGNS A STUDENT/CHILD MAY BE THE VICTIM OF CYBERBULLYING

- Hesitant to be online; nervous when an instant message, text message or e-mail appears
- Visibly upset after using the computer or cell phone, or suddenly avoids it
- Hides or clears the computer screen, or closes their cellphone when you enter the room
- Spends unusual and/or longer hours online in a more tense pensive tone
- Withdraws from friends, falls behind in schoolwork or wants to avoid school
- Suddenly sullen, evasive, or withdrawn in personality or behavior
- Trouble sleeping, loss of appetite, excessively moody or crying
- Suspicious phone calls, e-mails and packages arrives at your home
- Possible drop in academic performance

Students may receive discipline for actions taken off-campus if the intent affects a student, or they adversely affect the safety and well-being of student while in school. This makes it a contractual, not a constitutional issue.

SIGNS A CHILD/STUDENT IS BEING BULLIED

Look for changes in the child. However, be aware that not all children who are bullied exhibit warning signs.

Some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

If you know someone in serious distress or danger, don't ignore the problem. Get help right away.

SIGNS A CHILD/STUDENT IS BULLYING OTHERS

Child/Student may be bullying others if they:

- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Are increasingly aggressive
- Get sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently
- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blame others for their problems
- Don't accept responsibility for their actions
- Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

PARENT TIPS CONCERNING BULLYING

Listen to your child's worries and convey that they're perfectly understandable and that it's OK for him to feel that way. Offer assurance without making him/her feel like you're trying to talk him out of feeling that way or dismissing his feelings.

As he tells you how he feels, be sure to repeat back his thoughts and feelings using phrases like, "I know you're feeling worried." When he feels understood by you, he'll be more receptive to your help and any advice on coping that you offer.

Let him know that everyone worries even adults, at one time or another. But also make sure he knows that there are ways he/she can feel better and less fearful. Go over some strategies that he can use if someone teases him. Ignoring the bully and simply walking away or using humor to combat aggressiveness might get the bully to stop. Bullies often give up when they don't get a response from their target.

Try to get your child to talk about what has been going on at school — just listening can be helpful.

Although kids can resolve many incidents of bullying on their own, do keep an eye on the situation. If it persists, get involved by talking to your child's teacher or school counselor.

- Find out pertinent and detailed information about what the bullies are doing, dates, times, places, actions, etc. Document everything.
- Inquire about any threats made toward your child, and if it pertains to outside of school; contact the police.
- Contact the school during hours of operation and make an appointment with the principal for an in-person meeting.
- Outline details, not in an angry rant, but as if you were telling a friend what occurred.
- Obtain a copy of the school's anti-bullying policy (**harassment**) to determine violation of school policy.
- When you meet with the school principal, tell your child's story, and ask for help.
- Relate the facts and leave your emotions out of it. If you feel the bully has violated the school's anti-bullying policy, bring this up calmly into the conversation.

- Ask what you can do together to stop the bullying. Document the meeting.
- Please complete the anti-harassment form if the school is in violation of the anti-bullying policy.
- The principal should investigate the situation by interviewing all involved before determining if bullying occurred. The principal will contact you after the investigation.
- Follow up with your child to see if the bullying stops, and follow up with the principal.
- If the harassment continues, document it and contact the school. If you are not satisfied, please follow the chain of command. The chain of command is the following members, Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, Director of Student Services, Region Director, Deputy Superintendent, Superintendent, and Board Members.

SUICIDE: BULLYING AND OTHER RISK FACTORS

There is mounting evidence of increased self-harm behaviors (such as cutting), suicidal ideation, and prior suicide attempts among victims of bullying. According to a 2011 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), among middle school students, bully-victims were 6.6 times more likely to report seriously considering suicide compared with youths who were neither bullied nor victims.

Odds were lower for bullies (4.1 times) and victims (three times) but still significantly higher than youths who did not bully or were not victims. Rates were similar among high school students, though victims in this age group fared worse than bullies.

The small number of research studies to date that has examined the links between bullying and suicide have shown that teens who complete suicide upon bullying had other serious suicide risk factors. These included mental health or substance abuse problems, a family history of suicide, or a previous suicide attempt.

To this end, it is so important to be alert to preexisting suicide risk factors when dealing with a youth who may be a victim of bullying. These vulnerabilities may be compounded by the bullying incident, which can be the final straw or trigger an event that pushes an already at-risk youth to attempt suicide.

OPTIONS: DURING INVESTIGATION

- Allow Student to Visit Counselor.
- Allow Student to Visit Administrator.
- Allow Student to Visit Resource Office (if criminal, seek parental permission).

KEY PEOPLE TO INCLUDE DURING INVESTIGATION

- Principal/Assistant Principal
- Teachers/TCSS Personnel
- Students
- Counselors
- Resource Officer
- Office of Student Services (if criminal, seek parental permission)

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

The administrative actions are a verbal warning, student conference, guidance referral, parent conference, after-school detention, Saturday detention, in-school intervention, suspension, and law enforcement.

STRATEGIES

- Change lunch schedule
- Change class schedule
- Leave class early/late
- Change seating
- Contact Parents
- Resource Officer (if criminal, seek parental permission)
- Visit the counselor or administrator

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE COMPLAINT STUDENT

- What was your reaction?
- How do you feel about what happened?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- How did your family and friends react? Summary
- What are the main issues?
- What do you want as a result of this meeting?

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT AGGRESSOR

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since the incident?
- Who do you think has been affected by your actions?
- How have they been affected?

RESULTS/CLOSURE LETTER

- Gather as much info as possible
- Include Key People in Your Decision
- Provide Parents with the results of the investigation without breaching federal confidentiality laws

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HARASSMENT - AGGRESSOR

The purpose of this letter is the resolution to an anti-harassment complaint we received on August 10, 2019, concerning your child, Bubba “Ray Ray” Ledbetter. The nature of the investigation centered on allegations that your child committed an act(s) of harassment or intimidation toward another student. Based on our findings, evidence supports your child committed an act of harassment or intimidation toward another student.

The following consequences were imposed, along with remedial measures to eliminate this behavior in the future.

- One-day suspension and a follow-up meeting with our school counselor/administrator.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Principal/Assistant Principal

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HARASSMENT COMPLAINT

The purpose of this letter is the resolution to an anti-harassment complaint we received on March 10, 2013, concerning possible harassment toward your child. With that knowledge and information in mind, our investigation found evidence to support the claim of harassment. We have taken measures to address the situation and consider it resolved. However, we will continue to monitor the situation. If you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Principal/Assistant Principal

NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HARASSMENT AGGRESSOR

The purpose of this letter is the resolution to an anti-bullying complaint we received on August 10, 2019, concerning your child, Bubba “Ray Ray” Ledbetter. The nature of the investigation centered on allegations that your child committed an act(s) of harassment or intimidation toward another student. Based on current information, we did not find evidence to support your child committed an act of harassment or bullying toward another student. However, we will continue to monitor the situation. Thank you for your time and patience during this investigation.

Sincerely,

Principal/Assistant Principal

NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HARASSMENT COMPLAINT

The purpose of this letter is the resolution to an anti-harassment complaint we received on March 10, 2013, concerning possible harassment toward your child. With that knowledge and information in mind, our investigation found no evidence to support the claim of harassment toward your child. However, we will continue to monitor the situation. If you have any further concerns or additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Principal/Assistant Principal

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/>

<http://www.nea.org/home/72595.htm>

<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/bullying>

<https://www.ncab.org.au/bullying-advice/bullying-for-parents/how-to-stop-bullying/>