

**SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Springfield, New Jersey 07081**

**POLICY: DATING VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL**

**A. Definitions**

1. "At school" means in a classroom, or anywhere on school property, school bus or school-related vehicle, at an official bus stop, or at any school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is on school grounds.
2. "Dating partner" means any person involved in an intimate association with another individual that is primarily characterized by the expectation of affectionate involvement, whether casual, serious, or long-term.
3. "Dating violence" means a pattern of behavior where one person threatens to use, or actually uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to control a dating partner.

**B. Procedures for Reporting Act or Incidents of Dating Violence**

1. School staff members (administrative staff, instructional staff, support staff, and volunteers) shall take all reasonable measures to prevent acts or incidents of teen dating violence and are required to report all acts or incidents of dating violence at school.
2. All acts or incidents of dating violence at school shall be reported to the Principal or designee.
  - a. This report should be made verbally as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the pupil's school day when the staff member witnesses or learns of an act or incident of dating violence at school.
  - b. A written report regarding the act or incident of dating violence at school should be submitted to the Principal or designee by the reporting staff member no later than one day after the staff member witnesses or learns of an act or incident of dating violence at school.
3. These acts or incidents may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Witnessed or receipt of reliable information concerning acts or incidents that are characterized by physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse;
  - b. Digital or electronic acts or incidents of dating violence; and/or
  - c. Patterns of behavior which are threatening or controlling.

**C. Guidelines/Protocols for Responding to At-School Acts or Incidents of Dating Violence**

1. Protocol for All School Staff Members - Any school staff member who witnesses or learns of an act or incident of dating violence at school shall take the following steps:
  - a. Separate the victim from the aggressor;
  - b. Speak with the victim and the aggressor separately;
  - c. Speak with witnesses or bystanders separately;
  - d. Verbally report the act or incident to the Principal or designee no later than the end of the pupil's school day;
  - e. Prepare and submit a written report of the act or incident to the Principal or designee no later than one day after the act or incident occurred; and

- f. Monitor the interactions of the victim and the aggressor with pupil safety being the priority.
2. Protocol for Administrators/Administrative Investigation – The Principal or designee upon receiving a report of a dating violence act or incident at school shall take the following steps:
  - a. Separate the victim from the aggressor, if applicable;
  - b. Meet separately with the victim and the alleged aggressor;
  - c. Take written statements from the victim and alleged aggressor;
  - d. Review the victim's and alleged aggressor's written statements to ascertain an understanding of the act or incident. The administrator may ask questions of either individual for clarification;
  - e. Further investigate the act or incident by speaking with bystanders/witnesses of the act or incident. All statements obtained from bystanders/witnesses shall be written and documented, when possible;
  - f. The school administrator may make a determination to involve the school resource officer or law enforcement, if appropriate;
  - g. Appropriate referrals should be made if after an assessment by a school social worker, counselor, or psychologist determines the victim's or alleged aggressor's mental health has been placed at risk;
  - h. The Principal or designee shall contact the parents/guardians of both the victim and the alleged aggressor. The Principal or designee shall recommend a meeting be held to discuss the act or incident; and
  - i. The Principal or designee will notify both parties in writing of the outcome/determination of the investigation into the act or incident of dating violence at school.
3. Protocol for Working with the Victim of an Act or Incident of Dating Violence at School – The Principal or designee shall implement the following procedures for dealing with victims of a confirmed act or incident of dating violence at school:
  - a. A pupil's safety shall be the first priority in a dating violence act or incident. Interaction between the victim and the aggressor shall be avoided. The burden of any schedule changes (classroom, bus, etc.) should be taken on by the aggressor;
  - b. A conference shall be held with the victim and their parents/guardians;
  - c. Identify any means or actions that should be taken to increase the victim's safety and ability to learn in a safe and civil school environment;
  - d. Alert the victim and their parents/guardians of school and community based resources that may be appropriate, including their right to file charges, if the act or incident violated the law;
  - e. Monitor the victim's safety as needed and assist the victim with any plans needed for the school day and after-school hours (hallway safety, coordination with parents/guardians for transportation to and from school, etc.). The administration may develop a safety plan if deemed necessary;
  - f. The administration may develop a Stay-Away Agreement between the victim and the aggressor if deemed necessary;
  - g. Encourage the victim to self-report any and all further acts or incidents of dating violence that occur at school in writing to the Principal or designee; and
  - h. Document all meetings and action plans that are discussed.
4. Protocol for Working with the Aggressor of an Act or Incident of Dating Violence at School – The Principal or designee shall implement the following procedures for dealing with the aggressor of a confirmed act or incident

of dating violence at school:

- a. Schedule a conference with the aggressor and their parents/guardians;
  - b. Give the aggressor the opportunity to respond in a written statement to the allegations and the outcome/determination of an act or incident of dating violence at school;
  - c. Alert the aggressor and their parents/guardians to both school and community-based support and counseling resources that are available;
  - d. Identify and implement counseling, intervention, and disciplinary methods that are consistent with school policy for acts or incidents of this nature;
  - e. Review the seriousness of any type of retaliation (verbal, emotional, physical, sexual, electronic/digital) towards the victim who reported the act or incident of dating violence. Address that consequences will be issued consistent with the school's pupil code of conduct and procedures for any type of retaliation or intimidation towards the victim; and
  - f. Document all meetings and action plans that are discussed.
5. Protocol for the Documentation and Reporting of an Act or Incident of Dating Violence at School - School districts shall implement the following procedures for documenting and reporting acts or incidents of dating violence that occur at school:
- a. Dating violence statements and investigations shall be kept in files separate from pupil academic and discipline records to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of confidential information.
  - b. Every act or incident of dating violence at school that is reported shall be documented in an appropriate manner. This documentation shall include all written statements, planning actions, consequences, and disciplinary measures as well as counseling and other support resources that were offered, prescribed, and/or provided to the victim or the aggressor.

#### D. Discipline Procedures Specific to At School Acts or Incidents of Dating Violence

1. The Board of Education requires its school administrators to implement discipline and remedial procedures to address acts or incidents of dating violence at school that are consistent with the school's pupil code of conduct.
2. The policies and procedures specific to acts or incidents of dating violence at school should be used to address the act or incident as well as serve as remediation, intervention, education, and prevention for all individuals involved.
3. The responses shall be tiered with consideration given to the seriousness and the number of previous occurrences of acts or incidents in which both the victim and alleged aggressor have been involved.
4. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Admonishment;
  - b. Temporary removal from the classroom;
  - c. Classroom or administrative detention;
  - d. In-school suspension;
  - e. Out-of-school suspension;
  - f. Reports to law enforcement; and
  - g. Expulsion.
5. Retaliation toward the victim of any act or incident of dating violence shall be considered when administering consequences to the aggressor based on the severity of the act or incident.

6. Remedial procedures/interventions may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Parent conferences;
  - b. Pupil counseling (all pupils involved in the act or incident);
  - c. Peer support group;
  - d. Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experiences;
  - e. Supportive pupil intervention (Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS));
  - f. Behavioral management plan; and
  - g. Alternative placements.

#### E. Warning Signs of Dating Violence

1. A pattern of behaviors may be an important sign that a pupil is involved in an unhealthy or abusive dating relationship. Many warning signs make a connection to one pupil in the relationship asserting control and power over the other. Recognizing one or more signs of teen dating violence plays an important role in preventing, educating, and intervening in acts or incidents of dating violence.
2. The warning signs listed below are to educate the school community on the characteristics a pupil in an unhealthy or abusive relationship might exhibit. Warning signs may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Name-calling and putdowns - Does one pupil in the relationship use name-calling or putdowns to belittle or intimidate the other pupil?
  - b. Extreme jealousy - Does one pupil in the relationship appear jealous when the other talks with peers?
  - c. Making excuses - Does one pupil in the relationship make excuses for the other?
  - d. Canceling or changing plans - Does one pupil cancel plans often, and at the last minute? Do the reasons make sense or sound untrue?
  - e. Monitoring - Does one pupil call, text, or check up on the other pupil constantly? Does one pupil demand to know the other's whereabouts or plans?
  - f. Uncontrolled anger - Does one of the pupils in the relationship lose his or her temper or throw and break things in anger?
  - g. Isolation - Has one pupil in the relationship given up spending time with family and friends? Has the pupil stopped participating in activities that were once very important?
  - h. Dramatic changes - Has the appearance of the pupil in the relationships changed? Has the pupil in the relationship lost or gained weight? Does the pupil seem depressed?
  - i. Injuries - Does the pupil in the relationship have unexplained injuries? Does the pupil give explanations that seem untrue?
  - j. Quick Progression - Did the pupil's relationship get serious very quickly?

F. The Principal or designee will provide to the parents/guardians of a victim or aggressor information on safe, appropriate school, family, peer, and community resources available to address dating violence.

Reviewed: March 19, 2012