

Walton Central School District

Telephone: (607) 865-4116 ext. 6130

Website: www.waltoncsd.org

Thomas P. Austin, Superintendent of Schools



MISSION: Teaching, Learning, Caring, and Growing ...Together.

Townsend Elementary School
42-66 North Street
Walton, NY 13856
Telephone: (607) 865-5220
Fax: (607) 865-9211
Principal – *Michael Snider*

Dr. George F. Mack Middle School
47-49 Stockton Ave.
Walton, NY 13856
Telephone (607) 865-4116 ext. 5113
Fax: (607) 865-8568
Principal – *Michael A. MacDonald*

O'Neill High School
47-49 Stockton Ave.
Walton, NY 13856
Telephone: (607) 865-4116 ext. 6155
Fax: (607) 865-8568
Principal – *Michael A. MacDonald*

May 4, 2011

Dear Parents and Guardians:

There is an increased awareness at the Federal, State and local levels regarding bullying issues. We have heard numerous times in the last few years confusion, complaints and have sensed anger regarding real and perceived bullying. This letter is meant to clarify the District's policy, expectations of conduct and our commitment to investigate all allegations that affect the school system. This letter also asks for all to help in improving the safety of our schools and our community through your participation.

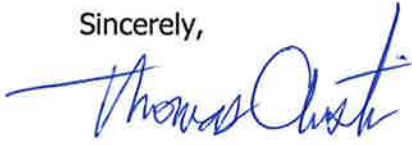
Attached is the school policy 5415 Hazing/Bullying Policy, which defines hazing and bullying. It speaks of the Board who "condemns and strictly prohibits all forms of hazing/bullying." The policy also states on Page -2- " In order for the Board to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it is essential that all victims of hazing/bullying, and persons with knowledge of hazing/bullying report the harassment immediately. The District will promptly investigate all complaints of hazing/bullying, either formal or informal, verbal or written. To the extent possible, all complaints will be treated in a confidential manner. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. There shall be no retaliation against any individual making a good faith report of hazing/bullying to school authorities."

The underlined portions are emphasized, as it is very important that the school authorities be notified of any incident so that they may properly and promptly investigate and reach a determination. Here is where the confusion, frustration and anger can enter in. Each alleged incident, once reported, is investigated by staff. When the school completes its investigation, certain information about another person's discipline, should the investigation show that hazing or bullying did occur, cannot be shared, thus protecting the individual rights of all students. The District uses its Code of Conduct to determine the level of consequences for violations of the hazing/bullying policy. Since we do not share disciplinary information, only the parents or guardians and the student being disciplined will know the disciplinary response from the District. This has sometimes led people to believe that "nothing was done."

We are concerned about the safety of our school community and will investigate all allegations of bullying. We will communicate with students, parents/guardians and staff as allowed. We will cooperate with the police when appropriate and encourage any incidents outside of school to be reported to the police to get their assistance.

If you have any comments or questions regarding this issue, please contact anyone of us or the school guidance counselor.

Sincerely,



Thomas Austin
Superintendent of Schools
ext. 6130



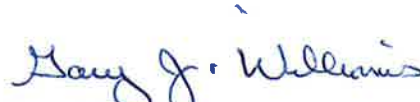
Michael MacDonald
Principal Grades 6-12
ext. 6155



Michael Snider
Elementary Principal
ext. 4076



Mark Lamoreaux
Assistant Principal
ext. 6155



Gary Williams
Assistant Principal/Athletic Director
ext. 5113

TPA:scp

c: Walton Central School District Staff
Board of Education

STUDENTS

HAZING/BULLYING POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that hazing/bullying is abusive behavior that harms victims and negatively impacts the school culture by creating an environment of fear, distrust, intimidation and intolerance. The Board further recognizes that preventing hazing/bullying in schools is essential to ensure a healthy, nondiscriminatory environment in which all students can learn.

The Board is committed to providing an educational environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality and that is free from all forms of hazing/bullying. To this end, the Board condemns and strictly prohibits all forms of hazing/bullying on school grounds, school buses and at all school sponsored activities, programs and events, including those that take place at locations outside the district, including any incidents involving electronic transmission.

- I. "Hazing", means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act that creates a risk of emotional, physical or psychological harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose.

Hazing includes, but is not limited to:

1. Any humiliating, degrading or dangerous activity demanded of a student to join a group, regardless of the student's willingness to participate (conduct has the potential to endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student).
2. Any hurtful, aggressive, destructive or disruptive behavior or other activity that subjects a student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of that student.
3. Any coercion to force the use or abuse of any type of tobacco, alcohol or other drug.
4. Any inappropriate activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects a student to emotional, physical or psychological stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation that adversely affects the health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school or participating in any student organization.
5. Any inappropriate activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task or act that involves violation of state or federal law or of school district policies or regulations.

- II. "Bullying" is defined as the repeated intimidation of others by the real or threatened infliction of physical, verbal, written, electronically transmitted, or emotional/

psychological abuse, or through attacks on the property of another that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or that takes place off school grounds but that is designed to or has the effect of interfering with one's ability to attend school and/or to be educated in a safe, non-hostile environment.

Bullying may include, but is not limited to, actions such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs, extortion of money or possessions, exclusion from peer groups within school or any emotional/psychological act which is harmful to a student. Such conduct is disruptive to a conducive educational environment and therefore, is not acceptable behavior in this District, and is prohibited.

In order for the Board to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it is essential that all victims of hazing/bullying, and persons with knowledge of hazing/bullying report the harassment immediately. The District will promptly investigate all complaints of hazing/bullying, either formal or informal, verbal or written. To the extent possible, all complaints will be treated in a confidential manner. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. There shall be no retaliation taken against any individual making a good faith report of hazing/bullying to school authorities.

If, after appropriate investigation, the District finds that a student has violated this policy, prompt disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the District's Code of Conduct.

The Board prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed towards any person who reports an act of hazing as well as against anyone who participates in the investigation of a complaint of bullying.

Policy Adopted: January 3, 2006
Policy Amended:

Walton Central School District
Walton, New York