Policy 5138: Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation

Status: ADOPTED

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To promote student safety and contribute to the maintenance of a positive school climate, the Governing Board encourages the development of school-based conflict resolution programs designed to help students learn constructive ways of handling conflict. The Board believes that such programs can reduce violence and promote communication, personal responsibility and problem-solving skills among students.

Conflict resolution strategies shall be considered as part of each school's comprehensive safety plan and incorporated into other district discipline procedures as appropriate. Conflict resolution programs shall not supplant the authority of staff to take appropriate action as necessary to prevent violence, ensure student safety, maintain order in the school, and institute disciplinary measures.

Schoolwide programs may include curriculum in conflict resolution, including, but not limited to, instruction in effective communication and listening, critical thinking, problem-solving processes and the use of negotiation to find mutually acceptable solutions. In addition, the curriculum may address students' ethical and social development, respect for diversity, and interpersonal and behavioral skills.

Conflict resolution programs may incorporate peer mediation strategies in which selected students are specially trained to work with their peers in resolving conflicts.

Students' participation in any peer mediation program shall be voluntary and kept confidential by all parties involved.

In developing a conflict resolution and/or peer mediation program, school-site teams shall address, as appropriate:

1. The grade levels and courses in which the conflict resolution curriculum shall be delivered
2. Staff development related to the implementation of the curriculum and modeling of appropriate behaviors and communication skills
3. The selection of peer mediators involving, to the extent possible, a cross-section of students in terms of grade, gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, and including some students who exhibit negative leadership among peers
4. Training and support for peer mediators, including training in mediation processes and in the skills related to understanding conflict, communicating effectively and listening
5. The process for identifying and referring students to the peer mediation program
6. The types of conflicts suitable for peer mediation
7. Scheduling and location of peer mediation sessions

8. Methods of obtaining and recording agreement from all disputants
9. The appropriate involvement of parents/guardians, the community and staff, including counseling/guidance and security staff
10. Communications to students, parents/guardians and staff regarding the availability of the program
11. Methods of following up with students to determine the effectiveness of the process
12. Development of assessment tools to periodically evaluate the success of the program including, but not limited to, measurements of whether there has been a reduction in violence at the school and whether the school's suspension rates have fallen since the program has been introduced

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Policy Reference Disclaimer:
These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State	Description
CA Constitution Article 1, Section 28	Right to Safe Schools
Ed. Code 32280-32289.5	School safety plans
Ed. Code 32295.5	Teen court programs
Ed. Code 35291-35291.5	Rules
Ed. Code 44807	Teachers' duty concerning conduct of students

Management Resources	Description
Website	CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services
Website	California Department of Education, Safe Schools
Website	U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students

Cross References

Code	Description
0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
1313	Civility
3515	Campus Security
3515	Campus Security

4131	Staff Development
4231	Staff Development
5116.2	Involuntary Student Transfers
5125	Student Records
5125	Student Records
5131	Conduct
5131.1	Bus Conduct
5131.1	Bus Conduct
5131.2	Bullying
5131.2	Bullying
5131.4	Student Disturbances
5131.4	Student Disturbances
5131.5	Vandalism And Graffiti
5131.7	Weapons And Dangerous Instruments
5131.7	Weapons And Dangerous Instruments
5136	Gangs
5136	Gangs
5137	Positive School Climate
5141.52	Suicide Prevention
5141.52	Suicide Prevention
5142	Safety
5142	Safety
5144	Discipline
5144	Discipline
5144.1	Suspension And Expulsion/Due Process
5144.1	Suspension And Expulsion/Due Process
5144.2	Suspension And Expulsion/Due Process (Students With Disabilities)
5145.3	Nondiscrimination/Harassment
5145.3	Nondiscrimination/Harassment

5145.7	Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment
5145.7	Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment
5145.9	Hate-Motivated Behavior
6142.8	Comprehensive Health Education
6142.8	Comprehensive Health Education
6143	Courses Of Study
6143	Courses Of Study
6164.2	Guidance/Counseling Services
6173.1	Education For Foster Youth
6173.1	Education For Foster Youth
6184	Continuation Education
6184	Continuation Education