

# Board Policy

Code No. 503.6

## CRIMINAL GANGS WITHIN THE SCHOOL SETTING

The Board of Education believes that a safe and orderly environment is essential to effective teaching and learning. Since the presence of criminal gangs within the school setting represents a substantial disruption of the physical and psychological environment and a threat to the well being of students and staff alike, the Board of Education prohibits students from participating in open gang activity and gang related behavior within the school setting. A "gang" as defined in this policy and under Iowa Code 723A means any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having one of its primary activities the commission of one or more criminal acts, which has an identifiable name or identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal activity.

Individuals who initiate, advocate, or promote gang activities that threaten the safety or well-being of persons or property on school grounds or at school related activities or which disrupt the school environment are harmful to the educational process. Actions such as the use of hand signals, graffiti, or the presence of any apparel, jewelry accessory, or manner of grooming which, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, symbol, or any other attribute which indicates or implies membership or affiliation with a gang will not be tolerated. These actions/behaviors are contrary to the school environment and educational objective by creating an atmosphere where unlawful acts or violations of school regulations may occur.

Conduct involving initiations, hazing, intimidations and/or related activities or criminal gangs which are likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm or personal degradation, disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to students; or, intimidations that affect the attendance of another student are prohibited.

Furthermore, no student on or about school property or at any school activity:

1. Shall wear, possess, use, distribute, display or sell any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign or other things which is evidence of membership or affiliation in any gang.
2. Shall commit any act or omission or use any speech, either verbal or non-verbal (gestures, handshakes, etc.) showing membership or affiliation in a gang.
3. Shall use any speech or commit any act or omission in furtherance of the interests of any gang or gang activity, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Soliciting others for membership in any gangs;
  - b. Requesting any person to pay protection or otherwise intimidating or threatening any person;
  - c. Committing any other illegal act or other violation of school district policies; and
  - d. Inciting other students to act with physical violence upon any other person.

Students shall conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to their age and maturity levels and with respect and consideration for the rights of others while on school premises, while on school owned and/or operated or chartered busses, while attending or engaging in school activities, and/or while away from school grounds if misconduct will directly affect the good order, efficient management and welfare to the school.

Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action which shall include parental notification and which may include notification of the Bettendorf Police Department and may result in suspension or expulsion, depending upon the nature and degree of the offense.

The District will establish procedures and regulations to ensure district-wide consistency.

The District will provide inservice training for staff and community on gang behavior and characteristic which facilitate identification of students at-risk (in relationship to gang activity) and will promote membership in authorized school groups and/or activities as an alternative.

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