Administrative Rule 533 – Bullying

The following statement will be placed in student handbooks and brought to the attention of the student body at the beginning of each school year.

“The Sparta Area School District is committed to creating a safe, caring, respectful learning environment for all students and strictly enforces a prohibition against bullying.

Bullying can include, but is not limited to, intimidation such as name calling or threatening; social alienation such as shunning or spreading rumors; written notes, phone calls or electronic messages that are offensive, hurtful, annoying or worrying; or physical aggression such as assaults on a student or attacks on a student’s property.

All staff members are required to watch for bullying behavior and take appropriate corrective measures when they witness bullying or have reason to suspect that bullying has taken place.

Students are encouraged and expected to report incidents of bullying to any staff member at his or her school, preferably within 24 hours, for proper investigation.

Students participating in bullying activities will be subject to disciplinary action which may range from requiring the offender to work with school personnel to correct the behavior, a recommendation for the provision of school counseling, up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or court involvement.

The Sparta Area School District will not allow retaliation against students who report bullying behavior or assist in an investigation of bullying.”

Individual schools will address the problem of bullying through a variety of methods including:

1. Character education programs that emphasize and reward positive behaviors and relationships.

2. Programs such as Responsive Classroom at the elementary level and Responsive Designs at the middle level which promote community building.

3. Educating students and staff to recognize and respond appropriately to bullying behavior.

4. Developing a plan to increase supervision in areas within the school setting where bullying frequently occurs.
5. Establishment of support groups for students who have been targets of bullying behavior and anger management groups for students who have engaged in bullying other students. 

Individual schools will monitor the effectiveness of their efforts to eliminate bullying through student surveys and data collection related to disciplinary referrals.