

EXAMPLE

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FHE #1

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Associated Press. "Mukilteo school board may draw up civility rules for kids and parents." The Bellingham Herald, January 16, 2005. B6.

In Washington State several school districts have in the past, or are currently, considering creating civility policies for parents and students. Most recently, Mukilteo School District, near Everett and Marysville, and its school board are thinking about creating a document that outlines what would happen if a student or parent becomes verbally abusive to a teacher or other school staff member. Having a civility policy is becoming a popular idea because there have been cases where a parent threatens coming in their school to shoot a teacher! The whole idea of a civility policy is to ensure a safe, harassment-free workplace and to stop heated conversations before they ever start.

Besides Mukilteo School District, Marysville, Monroe, Mercer Island and Deer Park in Spokane are working toward establishing policies that define progressive steps that will be taken to protect school employees. Steps, which increase in harshness if the problem continues, include the harasser being asked to leave the campus, staff refusing to continue a conflicting conference, calling the police and having restraining orders against harassers. The school districts are only looking to protect the rights of its employees, but desire to do so without denying parents and students their right to free speech.

Since the use of civility plans in Washington state is growing, maybe this idea will grow throughout the nation. After the Columbine and Virginia Tech travesties, obviously school campuses are not immune from violence. To establish a more safe and civil environment on school campuses it is likely that civility policies will be considered. Yet, it seems that school staff would need training on the new rules and how to deal with harassers; this will cost districts money and impact their budgets.

As I was reading this article I thought of several questions: "Does Ferndale have a civility policy in place that I am not aware of? If not, has it ever been considered? Is one being looked at or created currently?" And, "Has any teacher at Horizon experienced a very angry, abusive student or parent? If so, what happened? Due to his/her experience, does that teacher see a need and support such a policy?"