AMERICAN ACADEMY ANTI-BULLYING RESOURCE DOCUMENT

DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN ACADEMY ANTI-BULLYING POLICY:

The American Academy Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy was developed by researching and utilizing best practices and frameworks from numerous resources. The organizations utilized in the creation of this document are below:

- National Association of School Psychologists
- Colorado Department of Education
- stopbullying.gov

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS (NASP): A Framework for School-Wide Bullying Prevention

NASP has provided a guiding framework for schools for implementing effective, sustainable school-wide bullying prevention and safety efforts. They suggest the following school-wide approaches to bullying:

- Establish clear practices and policies that emphasize prevention
- Regularly assess and monitor needs and effectiveness of efforts
- Implement timely and consistent prevention and intervention strategies
- Provide social, emotional, and mental health supports for students involved in bullying, including bullies, victims, and bystanders
- Encourage positive discipline
- Elicit engagement and commitment by all members of the school community.

Effects of Bullying on Students: When a student is involved in bullying, whether the bully, victim, or bystander, it creates barriers to learning. Bullying has been associated with increased risk of substance abuse, delinquency, suicide, truancy, mental health problems, physical injury, poor academic performance.

Contributing Factors: One of the reasons that bullying is a community or societal issue is that the contributing factors can involve multiple individual factors and come from multiple settings.

- **Individual factors** include but are not limited to the following:
  - Choice of peer groups
  - Social interaction skills
  - Popularity
  - Attitudes toward violence
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Intelligence
  - Depression
  - Empathy and self-esteem
  - Being part of a marginalized population (e.g., LGBTQ youth, students with disabilities)

https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/school-violence-resources/bullying-prevention

COMPONENTS OF PREVENTION & INTERVENTION:

1. **Assessment of the School Environment**
   - Conduct assessments to determine the perceived safety and supportiveness of the school among students, staff, and parents
   - Identify strengths within the school
   - Identify groups at risk
   - Identify where and how bullying occurs
2. **Identify Existing Resources within the School**
   - Involve members of the mental health team such as school psychologist, school social worker, and school counselors
   - Incorporate bullying prevention strategies into classroom learning (e.g., writing assignments, responsive classrooms, art projects, STEM).

- Determine which school components could be coordinated with bullying prevention (e.g., American Academy Manners & Characters).
- Work and communicate with parent-school organizations such as PTO.
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3. **Create a Safety Team**
   - American Academy's safety team is established and includes members from administration, student support services, facilities, school health providers, mental health providers, and deans.
   - Identify a lead person to deal with bullying prevention and school safety:
   - Roles and Responsibilities: What are the roles & responsibilities for the following:
     i. **Teachers**: incorporate prevention strategies into learning, report bullying, intervene when bullying is observed and/or reported.
     ii. **Support Staff** (e.g., front office staff, instructional assistants): intervene when bullying is observed, report bullying immediately, monitor students
     iii. **Principals**: Responsible for ensuring a positive school climate
     iv. **Deans**: Responsible for investigating reports of bullying and discipline.
     v. **Students**: Responsible for their actions, following the student code of conduct, reporting bullying when observed, and treating others with respect.
     vi. **Parents**: Responsible for reporting bullying when witnessed, encouraging positive student behavior, and modeling appropriate behaviors for children.
   - Provide professional development to all members of American Academy staff
   - Recognize contributing factors that may influence bullying at American Academy and communicate those with staff
   - Ensure that school policies are in compliance with all state laws and school board policies

4. **Incorporate the school safety and bullying prevention efforts into the school's official policy on student and employee conduct**
   - Have clear and defined boundaries for appropriate behavior
   - Methods for reporting concerns, violations, and documenting incidents
   - Guidelines for investigating bullying
   - Guidelines for responding to bullying
   - Access to prevention and intervention services (typically provided by mental health staff) to remediate bullying behaviors and support victims, bullies, and bystanders

5. **Establish positive discipline policies and practices that:**
   - Are fair, clearly understood, and consistent
   - Identify and consider contributing factors to student misbehavior
   - Teach ALL students alternative, prosocial behaviors
   - Incorporate family involvement

6. **Engage the ENTIRE school community:**
   - Communicate policies with students, staff, parents, and other stakeholders
   - Invite input from all of the above. Provide the following:
     i. Open communication lines for input and feedback
     ii. Transparent access to bullying and other safety data
     iii. Allow for dialogue

7. **Regularly assess the school climate to determine effectiveness and additional needs**

ANTI-BULLYING INTERVENTIONS WITHIN MUTLI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS
American Academy Multitiered System of Support:

Tier 1
- Support school-wide prevention activities (e.g., Characters & Manners).
- Utilize a proactive approach to anti-bullying in the classroom with the implementation of Responsive Classroom.
- [Responsive Classroom](#) is a student-centered, social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline. It is comprised of a set of research, and evidence-based practices designed to create safe, joyful, and engaging classrooms and school communities for both students and teachers.
- Incorporate restorative practices and/or reflection systems with our discipline matrix to balance discipline and remediation.
- For minor discipline/behaviors, teachers use think sheets or reflection forms along with logical consequences in their classroom.

- The entire school staff is trained in developing and implementing positive behavioral interventions that prevent bullying, reduce bystander involvement, and promote students' social–emotional development using discipline-related incidents as potential learning opportunities (i.e., teachable moments).
- Provide consultation to help schools form effective school safety and crisis response teams (e.g., NASP's PREPaRE curriculum). Several administrators and the mental health coordinator are trained on PREPaRE.
- Reference federal and state policies to help educate district and school professionals on antibullying policies that can provide clear and consistent guidelines for bullying behaviors.
- Consult with school staff in implementing social skills programs and other programs that teach peaceful ways to resolve conflicts.
- Participate in and facilitate evidence-based procedures to respond to bullying behavior.
- American Academy has a school safety and crisis team to help implement and evaluate comprehensive safety initiatives.
- Participate in conducting a needs assessment and program evaluation regarding aggression, violence, and crisis needs at the school and district levels.
- Systematically identify internalizing/externalizing behaviors (i.e., universal screening) to facilitate identify students in need of intervention. A universal screener is a possible additional component being considered for American Academy.

Tier 2
- Offer targeted prevention activities to help students develop appropriate social skills.
- Provide consultation to the parents/guardians of bullies and targets to offer them effective resources, supportive interventions, and strategies for managing behavior.

Tier 3
- Provide individualized mental health intervention and supports as necessary, such as counseling. Bullying occurs along a continuum—victim, bully-victim, bully, and bystander.
- Conduct informative social–emotional assessments of student perpetrators of bullying behavior at school.
- Develop interventions to help eliminate bullying behaviors and replace these with positive, prosocial behaviors.

MYTHS ABOUT BULLYING:
The following is a list of myths about bullying from stopbullying.gov
- Bullying is the same thing as conflict.
- Most bullying is physical (involves hitting, shoving, kicking).
- Bullying isn't serious. It's just a matter of "kids being kids."
- Bullying doesn't happen at my child's school.
- Bullying is mostly a problem in urban schools.
- Bullying is more likely to happen on the bus than at school.
- Children and youth who are bullied will almost always tell an adult.
- Children and youth who bully are mostly loners with few social skills.
- Bullied kids need to learn how to deal with bullying on their own.
- Most children and youth who observe bullying don't want to get involved.

Source: US Department of Health: Stopbullying.gov website.

Avoid these common mistakes:
- Don't ignore it. Don't think kids can work it out without adult help.
- Don't immediately try to sort out the facts.
- Don't force other kids to say publicly what they saw.
- Don't question the children involved in front of other kids.
- Don't talk to the kids involved together, only separately.
- Don't make the kids involved apologize or patch up relations on the spot.

CDE Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Evidence-Based Best Practices
Research demonstrates that in addition to having a positive school climate and culture, schools must also address bullying prevention and intervention efforts specifically (Ross & Horner, 2009). In order to effectively combat bullying in schools, three primary strategies appear to be the most promising:

- Schools can shift their culture so that students feel safe and empowered to stand up to for each other.
- Schools can teach specific strategies for peer recognition and the peer-based reinforcement of positive, stand-up behavior.
- In addition to creating peer-based recognition, all students (perpetrators, victims, and bystanders) can learn simple strategies for standing up to bullying that effectively removes, rather than providing more, peer attention (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008).

[CDE Best Practices in Bullying Prevention & Intervention](#)

[Colorado Department of Education Information](#): **Information below is taken directly from CDE Website**

Family, School, and Community Partnering
Although bullying prevention commonly includes teachers and students, research suggests that including families and the community in these efforts is an effective method for reducing bullying[14]. In their 2011 study, Ttofi and Farrington completed a comprehensive review of bullying prevention studies in an attempt to determine the effectiveness of school-based bullying prevention programs. Results from the study found that one of the most significant factors associated with reducing bullying in schools was the inclusion of parent specific supports. When bullying prevention programs included parent supports as part of their approach, it significantly decreases the percentage of students reporting engaging in bullying behavior and being the target of bullying behavior.

When schools are able to forge partnerships with their surrounding community, additional resources for prevention and intervention can also be found. For example, schools can partner with licensed counselors or therapists to provide intensive supports for students who have experienced bullying. This approach is also shown through research to be an effective intervention for both students who have been targeted for bullying[15] and students who have engaged in bullying[16]. Moreover, these community members can be included in the bullying prevention teams that Colorado law encourages schools to develop to lead the bullying prevention work. For more information on family, school, and community partnering, please visit the CDE website[17].

Student Voice
Often, bullying is a covert act that may escape the immediate notice of teachers or other adults in the school. Students themselves are the ones who experience bullying and thus may have the best understanding of its nuances within the unique context of each school. When students are able to become part of the solution by influencing peer norms, they can have a strong impact. Indeed, researchers show that, especially at the secondary level, bullying rates may decrease when students are given greater autonomy[18] related to bullying prevention efforts and it is suggested that fewer reductions in bullying for students at the secondary level may be due to the adult-facilitated approach of many bullying prevention programs[19]. Much research is devoted to the importance of students who witness bullying because they can either reinforce bullying behaviors or counter them. Studies also show that bystanders are more likely to provide help in situations where the norm among students is to support those targeted by bullying[20].

Policy
Since 2001, all school districts in Colorado have been required to have a bullying prevention and education policy as part of their safe school plan. Research on bullying prevention policies suggest that certain inclusions have a greater impact on reducing bullying. One of these inclusions relates to enumerating federally protected groups of students (e.g., students with disabilities, LGBTQ students, racial/ethnic minorities) within the bullying prevention policy itself. At the state level, several components are suggested as important inclusions in bullying prevention laws and policies from the federal government. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education published their Analysis of State Bullying Laws and Policies[21,22], which outlined 11 key components in bullying laws and policies that may encourage greater school district implementation fidelity to state laws and policies. The Colorado Bullying Prevention Best Practices document is designed to meet all 11 key components.

Data-Based Decision Making

Collecting and using data on bullying is one of the most effective ways a school can be precise in their prevention and intervention efforts. Additionally, surveying students on their experiences with bullying is encouraged in Colorado law. In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed a free compendium of bullying surveys[25] that can be utilized by any school and measures a myriad of different factors[26]. In addition to the standard questions regarding the frequency of bullying, other items allow schools to analyze their data to pinpoint problems and determine ideal solutions. By including questions about the location (e.g., hallways, classroom), type (e.g., physical, verbal, spreading rumors), and time (e.g., before school, second period) of incidents, schools are able to attain the information necessary to be both effective and efficient in their prevention of bullying. For example, a school could administer a student survey and find that 8th grade students report the most bullying in the hallways during passing times after 2nd period. The school could use this specific information to respond by having teachers stand outside of their classrooms during this time, increasing staff presence, thereby reducing the likelihood of bullying. Collecting these data over the course of several years will also allow schools to show families, the community, and other stakeholders how their efforts have reduced bullying over time. For more information and resources on data-based problem solving and decision making, please visit the CDE website[27].

[CDE Model Bullying Prevention Policy](#)

[DCSD Bullying Prevention Webpage](#)

[Colorado Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies](#)