



AMERICAN ACADEMY
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Anti-Bullying Town Hall

Review of policy & protocol

MARCH 30, 2021



Statement of Purpose

PURPOSE OF ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

- American Academy is committed to providing a safe, caring, and positive environment to maximize the academic and emotional success of all students.
- Every member of our school community must take personal responsibility for the physical and emotional safety of one another to create a positive learning environment.
- Harassment or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment.
- Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior.
- It is a violation of school policy for any student to bully, harass, or intimidate another student. Students that disrupt the operation of the school, interfere with the rights of others, or damage school/personal property, will be held accountable for that behavior.

PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Retaliation against those reporting bullying and/or other behavior prohibited by this policy
- Making knowingly false accusations of bullying behavior

Definitions

DEFINITIONS: American Academy's definition of bullying is unwanted, aggressive, and intimidating behavior, repeated over time that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

- **BULLYING:** Bullying is unwanted, repetitive, and aggressive behavior marked by an imbalance of power. It can take on multiple forms, including physical (e.g., hitting), verbal (e.g., name calling or making threats), relational (e.g., spreading rumors), and electronic (e.g., texting, social networking). ([Framework for School Wide Bullying Prevention and Safety](#), NASP)
- The following types of bullying are the most common among school-age children and adolescents (Wang et al., 2012):
 - **Physical**—includes hitting kicking, pinching, punching, scratching, spitting, other physical aggression, and damage to or theft of someone else's belongings.
 - **Verbal**—includes name-calling; insults; racist, sexist, or homophobic jokes, remarks, or teasing; use of sexually suggestive or abusive language; threats of violence; and offensive remarks.
 - **Relational/social**—includes spreading untrue stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups (social isolation), and being made the subject of malicious rumors.
 - **Cyberbullying**—covers any type of bullying that is carried out via an electronic medium such as text messaging, cell phone calls, pictures or video clips via mobile devices, email, chat rooms, social networking sites and apps, and other websites.

Definitions cont.

HARASSMENT: The definition of harassment outlines that the behavior is similar by its unwanted and hurtful actions. It can include unwelcome conduct such as verbal abuse, graphic or written statements, threats, physical assault, or other conduct that is threatening or humiliating, but the negative behavior is based on a student's race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin. For example, bullying behavior meets the threshold of harassment when a student is being verbally bullied with demeaning language about their disability.

- **What is the Difference Between Bullying and Harassment?**

- Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center explains that "bullying and harassment are often used interchangeably when talking about hurtful or harmful behavior". They are very similar, but in terms of definition, there is an important difference.
- The distinction between bullying and harassment is that when the bullying behavior directed at the target is also based on a protected class, that behavior is then defined as harassment. Protected classes include:
 - Race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, sexual orientation

RETALIATION: The act or communication intended as retribution against an individual who reports an act of bullying. Retaliation can also include knowingly making false accusations of bullying or acting to influence the investigation of, or the response to, a report of bullying.

FALSE ACCUSATIONS: False accusations of bullying are those made knowingly by an individual or group of individuals with the purpose of causing harm to another individual and which are false.

Bullying Vs. Conflict: What's the Difference

CONFLICT	BULLYING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equal power• Happens occasionally• Accidental• Not serious• Not seeking power or attention• Not trying to get something• Remorse-will take responsibility• Effort to solve the problem• Equal emotional reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imbalance of power• Repeated negative actions• Purposeful• Serious; threat of physical or emotional harm• Seeking power, control, or material things• Attempt to gain material things or power• No remorse-blames victim• No effort to solve problem• Strong emotional reaction from victim and little to no emotional reaction from bully

Development of AA Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy

The American Academy Anti-Bullying 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.

Myths, Effects, and Contributing Factors of 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

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.

- 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)

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.

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.
- 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

Components of Prevention & Intervention cont.

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 responding to and investigating 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 and invite input from students, staff, parents, and other stakeholders
 - Have open communication lines for input and feedback and allow for dialogue
 - Provide transparent access to bullying and other safety data

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

Anti-Bullying Interventions Within Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

TIER 1 INTERVENTIONS

- 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.
- 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.

Anti-Bullying Interventions Within Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

TIER 2 INTERVENTIONS:

- 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 INTERVENTIONS:

- 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.



American Academy Anti-Bullying Policy

American Academy believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The district, schools, and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance. American Academy will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate, harass, or bully another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes: Physical, Verbal, Relational/Social, and Cyberbullying (as defined above).

American Academy expects students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal, dean, or designee. Anonymous reporting is also available. Staff who witness such acts take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during the lunch period, whether on or off campus, and during a school-sponsored activity.

To help ensure bullying does not occur on school campuses, American Academy will provide staff development training in bullying prevention and cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff to build each school's capacity to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

Teachers should discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the American Academy Discipline Policy up to and including expulsion.

American Academy Anti-Bullying Policy cont.

The Student Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Any student who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying.
- Students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the compliant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the student or the parent should contact the principal or dean.
- The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, students and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting intimidation and bullying: at the beginning of the school year, as part of the student handbook and/or information packet, as part of new student orientation, and as part of the school system's notification to parents.
- The school will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of investigation confidential.
- Staff who witness acts of bullying shall take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. People witnessing or experiencing bullying are strongly encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the target or witnesses in any way.

Reporting Bullying

All staff should receive training to recognize what constitutes bullying under the American Academy definition. If there is any doubt on the part of the employee about whether a reported or observed action constitutes “bullying” under the definition, the incident should be reported to the dean, principal, and/or mental health staff. In that way, reports of bullying will receive the appropriate and proper attention.

How students can report bullying:

- Report directly to a staff member. The staff member will file a bullying report to be investigated
- Leave a note in the school counselor’s mailbox
- Leave a note in the front office box
- Use the Report Bullying Link on the American Academy Website
- Use Safe2Tell to report bullying

How parents can report bullying:

- Contact your student’s teacher(s)
- Use the Report Bullying Link
- Safe2Tell

How staff can report bullying:

- Use the staff bullying reporting link
- Report to Mental Health staff or Dean

Responding & Reporting

Immediate Action:

- Ensure the safety of students and environment
- Intervene immediately when safe to do so. It is ok to get another adult to help.
- Separate the students involved.
- Make sure everyone is safe.
- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
- Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
- Model respectful behavior when you intervene

Investigating a Report:

- Once a report is received, staff will investigate the report. A mental health staff member, dean, the principal (when appropriate) will work collaboratively to investigate the report. The purpose of the multi-faceted approach is to address both mental health, discipline requirements, and to keep the principal informed of all bullying situations and concerns for the school's climate.
- Staff will interview the students involved and any reported witnesses or bystanders. Staff may also interview staff or parents as needed.
- Do not meet with the “bully” and the victim together.
- Parents will be contacted if their student was interviewed
- In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem
- After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Responding & Reporting cont:

Investigating a Report:

- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behavior
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted in extreme cases
- Repeated offenders may have consequences such as meeting with the dean, participating in peer mediation, or participating in small group or individual counseling.
- In serious cases, ISS or OSS will be considered
- Take interim action to prevent bullying or retaliation during the course of the investigation.
- Dean and mental health staff member will work in collaboration to determine remediation and consequences in cases of severe or repeated incidents.
- Alert other teachers to the bullying behavior to ensure the safety of, and support for, the students involved.

Responding & Reporting cont:

Engage the target first:

- Focus on their safety.
- Reassure them that the bullying behavior will not be tolerated and that all possible steps will be taken to prevent a reoccurrence.
- Ask what happened and how they feel about it, and if anyone else has been targeted.
- Advise using HA-HA-SO strategies if appropriate.
- Suggest seeing the school counselor if appropriate.
- Ask student to report any future bullying.
- Contact and inform parents of the incident.

For the bully:

- Have the student identify the problem using an “I statement.” If they are unable to admit to a problem, say “I’ve been hearing that...” or “I have observed you...”
- Ask, “What was wrong with what you did?” Praise honesty.
- Ask, “What problem were you trying to solve?” (Not “Why did you do it?”)
- Ask, “Next time you have that problem, how will you solve it?”
- Remind the student of school rules and expectations for behavior.
- Contact parents and inform them of the incident and any discipline or consequences given.

Discipline & Remediation

American Academy has a Student Discipline Policy that was approved by the American Academy Board of Directors on October 16, 2018. There is also an American Academy consequence Matrix, updated June 10, 2020. Instances of bullying are addressed by utilizing the Student Discipline Policy and the American Academy Consequence Matrix.

Discipline and consequences for bullying are dependent on multiple variables including, but not limited to: age, intent, type, repeated, severity, harm caused, disruption to the school environment, etc. Parents of the student engaging in bullying will be notified of the incident and consequences given.

[American Academy Student Discipline Policy](#)

[American Academy Consequence Matrix](#)

[DCSD Student Rights and Responsibilities: Code of Conduct & Discipline](#)



Common Questions You Asked Us

1. Why are we pushing resiliency? Why do you put more value on resilience instead of focusing on the bullying behavior?
2. Do we notify parents every time there is a report involving their child?
3. When bullying is reported, is there a formal meeting with parents and student together?
4. How is the school addressing systemic racism and cultural sensitivity within the culture of American Academy?
5. How does race & ethnicity tie into bullying?
6. How are consequences determined? What are the disciplinary actions taken? What are the consequences of bullying?
7. Why can't a student be expelled?
8. What discussions are staff having with students? Are students reminded of the AA mission and character on a continuing basis?
9. What role do teachers play in anti-bullying?
10. Is notification truly anonymous?
11. How do you prevent retaliation?
12. Are AA staff members informed of bullying issues so they can watch for the behavior?
13. How can we team with parents?

Contact Information

Deputy Executive Director of Schools

- [Steve Colella](#), All Campuses

School Mental Health Coordinator & School Psychologist

- [Nichole Guthrie](#), All Campuses

Dean of Students:

- [Shannen Major](#), Castle Pines Dean of Students
- [Sarah Miller](#), Lincoln Meadows Dean of Students
- [Robyn Hunt](#), Motsenbocker Dean of Students

School Counselors:

- [Audrey Miller](#), Castle Pines Elementary School Counselor
- [Tammy Velasco](#), Castle Pines Middle School Counselor
- [Madhuri Deshmukh](#), Lincoln Meadows School Counselor
- [Victoria Krause](#), Motsenbocker School Counselor

School Social Workers:

- [Sally Seiffer](#), Castle Pines & Motsenbocker Social Worker
- [Ginny Rattner](#), Lincoln Meadows Social Worker

Thank you!

