



## AMERICAN ACADEMY ANTI-BULLYING PROTOCOL

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:** 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:** 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 behaviors may be persistently directed at the target based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, physical appearance, sex, or other distinguishing characteristics (NASP Position Statement: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Among School-Age Youth, 2019).

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.

\*Bullying is different than **targeted violence**. Targeted violence refers to violence that is goal-directed, predatory, and focused towards specific individuals (e.g., stalking, terrorism, sexual assault; Deisinger & Scalora, 2016).

**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

\* <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/questions-answered/bullying-harassment.asp>

**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.

### **AMERICAN ACADEMY ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES**

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.

#### **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 to the principal or designee
- 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 & INVESTIGATING:**

#### **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 kids 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, and principal 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 contact if their student was interviewed
- In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to 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.
- 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.

**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](#)