



Science Academy of Chicago's BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

Original Policy Created: 2017 Reviewed and Updated: 9/2025

Bullying/Cyberbullying Definition

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important SAC goals.

Bullying" includes "cyber-bullying" and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following: (1) placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property; (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health; (3) substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or (4) substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

- ❖ Bullying, as defined in 105 ILCS 5/27- 23.7, may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and nonexhaustive.
 - Bullying may include
 - 1) Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property; 2) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health; 3) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or 4) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.
- ❖ Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of the school
- ❖ Cyberbullying, as defined in 105 ILCS 5/27- 23.7, is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyberbullying" includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.
- ❖ "Cyberbullying" also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in [105 ILCS 5/27- 23.7(b)]. i. Prohibition on Cyberbullying. Bullying is prohibited through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

- ❖ Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in each of the following situations:
 - 1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
 - 2. While in school, on school property, on other school vehicles, at school-sponsored or school sanctioned events, trips and/ or activities.
 - 3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
 - 4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and it does not require a school to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

This plan will provide all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan is consistent with the following requirements:

- ❖ 1. Using the definition of bullying as provided in this policy; the Principal or designee shall emphasize to the school community that: (1) the school prohibits bullying, and (2) all students should conduct themselves with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students. This may include a process for commending or acknowledging students for demonstrating appropriate behavior.
- ❖ 2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this school. However, nothing in the school's bullying prevention and response plan is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.
- ❖ 3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the School Complaint Manager or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the School Complaint Manager or any staff member.
- ❖ 4. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Principal or designee shall promptly inform parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students involved in an alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.
- ❖ 5. The Principal or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying, by, among other things: a. **Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received** and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying. b. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process. c. Notifying the Building Principal or school administrator or designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received. d. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

Procedure for promptly reporting bullying:

- ❖ Student may report anonymously via www.saoc.org under "Student" > "Bullying Report"
- ❖ Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the School Complaint Manager or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the School Complaint Manager or any staff member.
- ❖ Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Principal or designee shall promptly inform parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students involved in an alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

Interventions taken to address bullying:

- ❖ may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services
- ❖ Daily SEL classes are provided
- ❖ Students are assigned a mentor or teacher to report any incidents
- ❖ Anonymous surveys are completed by students during SEL classes

SAC prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying and the consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.

A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions. The following are consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying. Examples of Consequences: Admonishment; Temporary removal from the classroom; Deprivation of privileges; Classroom or administrative detention; Referral to disciplinarian; In-school suspension during the school week or the weekend; After-school programs; Out-of-school suspension (short-term or long-term); Reports to law enforcement or other legal action; Expulsion; and Bans from providing services, participating in school sponsored programs, or being in school buildings or on school grounds.

Evaluating the effectiveness of this policy

School personnel will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy based on the following:

1) The frequency of victimization. 2) Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school. 3) Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs. 4) The types of bullying that are common or occurring. 5) Bystander intervention or participation. 6) The information developed as part of the evaluation process must be posted on the district website. If the internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

This bullying policy aligns with the other policies of the school board. This policy and implementing procedure includes a process to investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction. Furthermore, the school will provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the district and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

School personnel shall fully implement the Board policies, including without limitation, the following:

- a. Uniform Grievance Procedure. A student may use this policy to complain about bullying.
- b. Curriculum Content. Bullying prevention and character instruction is provided in all grades in accordance with State law.
- c. Student Social and Emotional Development. Student social and emotional development is incorporated into the School's educational program as required by State law.
- d. Access to Electronic Networks. This policy states that the use of the school's electronic networks is limited to: (1) support of education and/or research, or (2) a legitimate business use.
- e. Harassment of Students Prohibited. This policy prohibits any person from harassing, intimidating, or bullying a student based on an identified actual or perceived characteristic as the list in this policy).
- f. Teen Dating Violence Prohibited. This policy prohibits teen dating violence on school property, at school sponsored activities, and in vehicles used for school provided transportation.
- g. Student Discipline. This policy prohibits, and provides consequences for, hazing, bullying, or other aggressive behaviors, or urging other students to engage in such conduct.
- h. Restrictions on Publications. This policy prohibits students from and provides consequences for: (1) accessing and/or distributing at school any written, printed, or electronic material, including material from the Internet, that will cause substantial disruption of the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the school or school activities, and (2) creating and/or distributing written, printed, or electronic material, including photographic material and blogs, that causes substantial disruption to school operations or interferes with the rights of other students or staff members.

- ❖ The Principal or designee shall fully inform staff members of the School's goal to prevent students from engaging in bullying

and the measures being used to accomplish it.

- a. Communicating the School's expectation and State law requirement that teachers and other certificated or licensed employees maintain discipline.
- b. Establishing the expectation that staff members: (1) intervene immediately to stop a bullying incident that they witness or immediately
- contact building security and/or law enforcement in the incident involves a weapon or other illegal activity, (2) report bullying, whether they witness it or not, to an administrator, and (3) inform the administration of locations on school grounds where additional supervision or monitoring may be needed to prevent bullying.
- c. Where appropriate in the staff development program, providing strategies to staff members to effectively prevent bullying and intervene when it occurs.
- d. Establishing a process for staff members to fulfill their obligation to report alleged acts of bullying

Development, Notification, and Posting

This policy on bullying is based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians. This policy is posted on www.saoc.org, included in the school's handbook and distributed annually to all stakeholders.

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Anonymous reports are also accepted.

Point of Contact Person

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Anonymous Reporting: www.saoc.org
> click on the Students tab and Bullying Report to complete the Google Form