

Bullying & Bullying Prevention

Felicity Schools finds that a safe, civil, and healthy school environment is necessary for all students to learn and achieve. Bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students which interferes with this safe, civil, and healthy learning environment. Additionally, bullying has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping, or dropping out of school, fighting, use of drugs/alcohol, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7)

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, academic status, pregnancy, parenting status, homelessness, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policies of Felicity School.

No student shall be subjected to bullying:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the bus, or at school-sponsored or school sanctioned events 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 does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

Nothing in this policy 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 United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.

A. Definitions:

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:

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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.
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 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 non-exhaustive.

Cyber-bullying 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. “Cyber-bullying” 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. “Cyber-bullying” 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.

Restorative Measures

A continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health

needs in order to keep students in school, and (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

School Personnel

Persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school district, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school, including without limitation school and school district administrators, teachers, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

B. Bullying Report Process:

Students, parents, and school personnel are encouraged to immediately report bullying to any administrator within Felicity School . Alternatively, reports may be made orally or in writing to the bullying report manager:

Name: Mr. Mike Nekritz
Address: 550 Lake Cook Road
Deerfield IL 60015
Title: Felicity Founder
Phone Number: (224) 999-3900
E-mail
mnektiz@felicityschool.com

Anonymous reports are accepted by calling the contact listed above and specifically indicating that you would like to remain anonymous. However, formal disciplinary action cannot be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

C. Response to Bullying Reports:

Upon receipt of a report of bullying, Mr. Nekrtiz will investigate whether such reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of its jurisdiction.

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the parents or guardians of all students involved in an alleged incident of bullying will be notified of such, along with threats, suggestions, or instances of self-harm determined to be the result of bullying, within 24 hours after the school's administration is made aware of the student's involvement in the incident. As appropriate, the school's administration shall also discuss the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other

interventions, and restorative measures. The school shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent or legal guardian, utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained by the school within the 24-hour period.

Further, the administrator or report manager will promptly investigate and address the report of bullying by doing the following:

1. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within ten school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received, taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
2. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
3. Notifying the principal, school administrator, or his/her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received (if the principal or administrator is not the person who received the report).
4. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing the parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal, school administrator, or his/her designee to discuss the investigation, its findings, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying. .

The principal, administrator, or his/her designee may implement interventions to address reports of bullying. This includes, but is not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services. Additionally, Mr. Nekritz shall provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the district and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. Such reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for the purpose of determining appropriate consequences. No person will be subject to consequences for making a good-faith report of bullying. However, making a false accusation of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying is prohibited and will be treated as bullying for the purpose of determining appropriate consequences.

D. Policy Evaluation

This policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians. Furthermore, the policy is consistent with the other policies of Felicity School .

This policy will be posted on the Felicity School Website, an existing, publicly accessible Internet website. Additionally, it will be included in the student handbook and where applicable, posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted in the school. The policy will be provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty and will be distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

Last Updated 09/22/2025

Felicity School shall conduct a review and re-evaluation of this policy every two years to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of this policy and shall make any necessary and appropriate revisions. As part of this process, Felicity Staff shall review various factors including, but not limited to:

1. The frequency of victimization.
2. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at school.
3. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs.
4. The types of bullying utilized.
5. Bystander intervention or participation.

Felicity Staff may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation must be made available on the Internet website of Felicity School. If an Internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

No later than September 30 of the subject year, the policy must be filed with the State Board of Education after being updated.

Date of Adoption: 09/17/2021

Date of Most Recent Review/Re-evaluation: 09/22/2025

E. References:

105 ILCS 5/27-23.7 – Bullying Prevention

23 Illinois Administrative Code § 1.295

This Bullying Prevention Policy is created pursuant to and is in compliance with Section 27-23.7 of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7). Felicity School serves a unique population of students with disabilities and, therefore, the policy set forth herein is tailored to address the needs of Felicity School's student population. Bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students which interferes with a safe, civil, and healthy learning environment. Additionally, bullying has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping or dropping out of school, fighting, use of drugs/alcohol, sexual harassment, and sexual violence.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, academic status, pregnancy, parenting status, homelessness, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited at Felicity School. No student shall be subjected to bullying:

- 1) During any school-sponsored education program or activity;
- 2) While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities;
- 3) Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment; or
- 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 the school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the education process or orderly operation of the school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which the school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and does not require the

school to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function or program.

Nothing in this policy 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 United States Constitution under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

DEFINITIONS

"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:

A) Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or

students' person or property;

B) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or

mental health;

C) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or

D) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or

benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

Bullying 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 non-exhaustive.

"Cyber-bullying"

under this policy is defined as 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. "Cyber-bullying" 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 policy. "Cyber-bullying" 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 per this

policy.

"Restorative Measures"

means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school, and (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

"School personnel"

means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in the

school, including without limitation school administrators, teachers, school service providers (e.g., school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses), cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and/or security guards.

BULLYING REPORT PROCESS

Bullying is contrary to Illinois law and the policies of Felicity School.

Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, having knowledge of any incident(s) considered to be acts of bullying as defined in this policy are asked to promptly report the bullying to the Principal or Founder. A report may be made by phone, in person, by e-mail or in writing to the individual(s) named below who is/are responsible for receiving such reports. Anonymous reports may also be made in writing and provided to the address below, however, this shall not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Mr. Mike Nekritz, Founder

Felicity School

550 Lake Cook Road

Deerfield, IL 60015

E-mail address: mnektiz@felicityschool.com

Phone: 224-999-3900

Dr. Susan Barker, Principal

Felicity School

550 Lake Cook Road

Deerfield, IL 60015

E-mail address: sbarker@felicityschool.com

Phone: 224-999-3900

RESPONSE TO BULLYING REPORTS

Upon receipt of a report of bullying, Felicity School will investigate whether such reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of its jurisdiction pursuant to this policy.

Consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, as applicable to Felicity School, and the policies of Felicity School, the parents/guardians

of all students involved in an alleged incident of bullying will be notified of such, along with threats, suggestions, or instances of self-harm determined to be the result of bullying, within 24 hours after the school's administration is made aware of the student's involvement in the incident. As appropriate, the above-named Administrator/Staff shall also discuss the need for

interventions and availability of services, which may include social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, including community-based services, and

restorative measures. Felicity School shall make

diligent efforts to notify a parent/guardian, utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained by the school within the 24-hour period.

Felicity School serves a unique population of students with disabilities, Emotional

Disability, Specific Learning Disability, Speech Language Impairment, Intellectual Disability,

Other Health Impairment, or Autism for students ages 12 to 22. Due to the nature of the population served by

Felicity School and the possibility that certain acts may be manifestations of a

student's disability rather than an intentional act of bullying, as part of determining whether a

reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction, each reported instance of bullying will be reviewed and assessed for the need to investigate on a case-by-case

basis and as determined to be appropriate by Felicity School's Principal, Dr. Susan Barker or Founder, Mr. Mike Nekritz.

If determined to be appropriate for investigation and within the school's jurisdiction, Felicity School will comply with the following procedure for promptly investigating and addressing

the report(s) of bullying:

- Felicity School will make 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.

- Any reports of bullying will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to investigate the reported claim.
- School support personnel and other staff members with relevant knowledge, experience and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, may be involved in the investigation process.
- As soon as possible after a report is received, the Principal or Founder, or his/her designee, will be notified of the report of the incident(s) of bullying.
- Consistent with the federal and state laws, as applicable to Felicity School, and the policies governing student privacy rights and confidentiality, parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation may be provided relevant information regarding the investigation, as deemed appropriate by the Principal or Founder, or his/her designee, and an opportunity to meet with the Principal or Founder, or his/her designee, to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying, as deemed appropriate.

Felicity School may implement interventions to address reports of bullying.

Interventions that may be taken to address findings of incidents of bullying in the school, include, but are not limited to: school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services. Any student who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in an intentional act of bullying will be subject to disciplinary consequences as deemed appropriate and consistent with the school's disciplinary policies, and/or the disciplinary policies of the student's referring school district, as applicable and deemed appropriate.

Felicity School is a nonpublic, therapeutic school and an agent of Illinois placing school districts, as such, Felicity School may share information regarding incidents of bullying with the referring school district(s) of those students involved in a bullying incident, and an individualized education program ("IEP") meeting may be convened to discuss the impact, if any, on the student's current educational program, placement, supports and services. Additional services that are available within the referring school district and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs, should be discussed directly with the student's referring school district by the parent/guardian.

Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying per this policy is a violation of this policy and strictly prohibited. Such reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for the purpose of determining appropriate consequences and anyone engaging in retaliation or reprisal against any person who reports an act of bullying may face consequences and appropriate remedial action as deemed necessary by Felicity School and consistent with the school's disciplinary policies. No person will be subject to consequences for making a good-faith report of bullying. Appropriate consequences and remedial action, which are consistent with the school's disciplinary policies, may also be taken against a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying.

POLICY EVALUATION

Please also note the following related to the development, notification and publication, and evaluation of this policy:

- This policy is based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.
- This policy is consistent with the other policies of Felicity School
- This policy can be found on the school's existing, publicly accessible website, is included in the student handbook, and, where the school's other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. A copy of this policy may also be requested from Mr. Nike Nekrtiz, Founder or Dr. Susan Barker Principal.
- This policy will also be provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty and distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.
- Felicity School will engage in the process of reviewing and re-evaluating this policy every two years to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of this policy and shall make any necessary and appropriate revisions. This review process includes, but may not be limited to, collecting and assessing the following information:
 - 1) the frequency of victimization;
 - 2) student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
 - 3) identification of areas of the school where bullying occurs;
 - 4) the types of bullying utilized; and

5) bystander intervention or participation.

Felicity School may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed or collected as a result of the policy evaluation will be made available on the school's website and if applicable, administrators, school personnel, parents/guardians, and students.

- No later than September 30th of the subject year, the policy must be filed with the State Board of Education after being updated.