

Gate City Charter School for the Arts Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Policy

Purpose

Gate City Charter School for the Arts (GCCSA) is committed to providing all pupils with a safe school environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and violence. The purpose of this policy is to comply with **RSA 193-F, the Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Act**, and to outline procedures for prevention, reporting, and response.

Definitions (per RSA 193-F)

1. **Bullying**: Written, verbal, electronic, or physical conduct directed at a pupil that:
 - Physically harms or endangers a student;
 - Causes emotional distress;
 - Interferes with educational opportunities;
 - Creates a hostile educational environment; or
 - Disrupts school operations.
2. **Cyberbullying**: Bullying through electronic means (e.g., email, text, social media, or online platforms).
3. **Harassment**: Unwelcome conduct based on protected categories such as race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, or other protected status.
4. **Retaliation**: Any adverse action taken against a student or staff member for reporting or participating in an investigation of bullying or harassment.

Policy Statement

- Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and retaliation are prohibited on school property, school buses, school-sponsored events, and through the use of electronic devices that impact the school environment.
- All members of the school community are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect.
- Students who engage in bullying or harassment are subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.
- Reports will be investigated promptly, and corrective action will be taken as needed.
- Bullying includes acts motivated by an imbalance of power (physical strength, social standing, etc.).

Prevention & Education

- GCCSA will provide age-appropriate education to students on safe and respectful behavior, digital citizenship, and the impact of bullying.
- Staff will receive annual training on identifying, responding to, and reporting bullying.
- Positive school climate initiatives (Responsive Classroom, Choose Love, arts integration practices) will be integrated to foster respect and inclusion.

Reporting Procedures

1. **Who Can Report**: Students, parents, staff, volunteers, or community members.
2. **How to Report**:
 - Verbally or in writing to any staff member or the Director.

- Anonymous reports are permitted, though no disciplinary action will be based solely on an anonymous report.
- 3. **Obligation of Staff:** Any staff member who witnesses or receives information about suspected bullying must report it to the Director or designee immediately.

Investigation & Response

- The Director (or designee) will investigate reports within **5 school days** of receipt.
- Investigations will include interviews with the victim, alleged aggressor, and witnesses, and will be documented.
- Parents/guardians of all parties will be notified of the outcome (consistent with privacy laws).
- Verified acts of bullying will result in disciplinary action and support measures for both victim and aggressor.

Retaliation

Retaliation against anyone who reports bullying or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Confidentiality

All records of bullying reports and investigations will be maintained in accordance with **FERPA** and NH record retention laws.

Annual Notice

This policy will be:

- Distributed annually to students, parents/guardians, and staff.
- Included in the student and staff handbooks.
- Posted on the school's website within the Handbook

Oversight

The Director is responsible for implementing this policy, training staff, and reporting annually to the Board of Trustees and NH DOE on bullying incidents, responses, and prevention efforts.