

ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Ensuring a Safe and Effective School for All

Founder & Director Karen Elliott Revised 2024

Cory Douglas Scholastic Academy recognizes that a school that is physically and emotionally safe and secure for all students promotes good citizenship, increases student attendance and engagement, and supports academic achievement. To protect the rights of all students and groups for a safe and secure learning environment, the board of Cory Douglas Scholastic Academy prohibits bullying, harassment, and other forms of aggression and violence. Bullying or harassment, like other forms of aggressive and violent behaviors, interferes with a school's ability to educate its students and a student's ability to learn. Therefore, all administrators, faculty, staff, parents, volunteers, and students are expected not to tolerate bullying and harassment and to demonstrate respectful behavior. Adults must always model these behaviors to provide positive examples of student behavior. This document presents the Cory Douglas Scholastic Academy Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy, which is meant to be readily accessible to administrators, students, teachers, and parents.

1. 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 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 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 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 means bullying using 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, photoelectric 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 Section. Cyber-bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that one or more persons may access if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.” 2

2. Criteria

“Bullying or Harassment” is conduct that meets all of the following criteria: • is reasonably perceived as dehumanizing, intimidating, hostile, humiliating, threatening, or otherwise likely to evoke fear of physical harm or emotional distress; • is directed at one or more pupils; • is conveyed through physical, verbal, technological or emotional means; • substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more pupils; • adversely affects the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the school district’s or public school’s educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing emotional distress; and, • is based on a pupil’s actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above), or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

3. Scope

This policy covers conduct in the school, on school property, and at school-sponsored functions and activities. On school buses, this policy also pertains to the usage of electronic technology and electronic communication that occurs in the school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, on school buses or vehicles, and on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists. “Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of the school district, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school.”

This policy applies to the entire school community, including the board, educators, school staff, students, parents, and volunteers.

The investigator will provide a report on the results of the investigation with recommendations for the principal to decide if an act of bullying or harassment falls within the scope of the school’s authority. If the action is outside the scope of the Academy, and believed to be a criminal act, the action shall be referred to the appropriate law enforcement

agency. If the action is outside the scope of the Academy and believed not to be a criminal act, the principal shall inform parents/guardians of all minor parties.

4. Notice

The Cory Douglas Scholastic Academy board of Directors will publish this policy annually. The policy may be publicized by the following means:

- • Inclusion in the student handbook
- • Inclusion in the employee handbook
- • Inclusion in the registration materials
- • Inclusion on the school website
- • Inclusion on student and employee display boards

- • Inclusion in volunteer registration materials and information

5. Reporting Bullying and Harassment

All allegations of bullying or harassment shall be reported to the principal or a designated staff member. Before notification of any parent or guardian regarding any incident of bullying, harassment, or cyber-bullying, school authorities must consider the issue of notice as they would any other educationally relevant decision, considering the health, well-being, and safety of any students involved in the incident. Whoever is designated to accept complaints will also be responsible for investigating the allegations in a timely manner and determining appropriate disciplinary action. The principal or designated staff member will be held accountable for doing everything possible, within reason, to resolve the situation.

Address: Director at 1500 Sunset Ave Suite B, Waukegan, IL 60087 Phone: 224-342-5296

6. Anonymous Reports

Reports may be filed anonymously. However, disciplinary action cannot be taken solely based on an anonymous account. Anonymous reports will be investigated with the same procedure, timeliness, and vigor as other reports, and disciplinary action can occur based on the investigation results.

Contains procedures for promptly investigating and addressing reports of bullying, including the following:

(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 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 principal or school administrator or his or her 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.

7. Privacy/Confidentiality

The Academy will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative procedures shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to abridge the rights of students or school employees that are protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. 4

8. Interventions

Interventions are designed to remediate the impact on the targeted student(s) and others impacted by the violation, to change the perpetrator's behavior, and to restore a positive school climate.

The Academy will consider the frequency of incidents, the developmental age of the student, and the severity of the conduct in determining intervention strategies. Interventions will range from counseling, correcting behavior, and discipline to law enforcement referrals.

9. Retaliation/False Charges

Retaliation against any person who is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry under this policy is prohibited. Such retaliation shall be considered a severe violation of Board policy and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. False charges shall also be regarded as a severe offense and result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as aggressive behavior and/or bullying.

10. Parental Reports

The Director shall report the occurrence of an incident of bullying as defined by this policy to the parent/guardian of all students known to be involved in the incident on the same day an investigation of the incident has been initiated. The notification shall be by telephone or personal conference or in writing by first-class mail and shall be consistent with the student privacy rights under applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The notice shall advise the individuals involved of their due process rights including the right to appeal any resulting determination or action to the Lions' Mathematics & Science Christian Academy Board of Education.

If the bullying incident results in the perpetrator being charged with a crime, the Director shall inform by first class mail or by telephone the parent/guardian of the identified victim(s) involved in the bullying incident about the Unsafe Schools Choice Option (No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Title IX, Part E, Subpart 2, Section 9532) that states, in pertinent part, as follows:

"....a student attending a persistently dangerous public elementary school or secondary school, as determined by the State in consultation with a representative sample of local educational agencies, or who becomes a victim of a violent criminal offense, as determined by State law, while in or on the grounds of a public elementary school or secondary school that the student attends, be allowed to attend a safe public elementary school or secondary school within the local educational agency, including a public charter school."

Upon the completion of the investigation and if criminal charges are to be pursued against the perpetrator, the appropriate law enforcement agencies shall be notified by telephone and/or in writing. 5

11. Responsibility of Students

Any student who observes an act of bullying or harassment should report the bullying or harassment to the director, principal and/or the designated staff member.

12. Responsibility of Staff

All staff members will take reasonable measures to prevent bullying and harassment and are obligated to report any such acts that come to their attention.

13. Investigation of Bullying and Harassment

Once reported, any allegation of bullying or harassment will be promptly investigated by the principal or a designated staff member. Proper disciplinary action will be taken immediately following the conclusion of the investigation.

13a. Procedure for Investigation

The investigation of a reported act of bullying or harassment is deemed a school-related activity and begins with a report of such an act. All complaints about bullying and/or harassment that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated by an individual, designated by the principal, who is trained in investigative procedures. Documented interviews of the victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses shall be conducted privately and confidentially. The investigator may not be the accused perpetrator or victim. At no time shall the accused perpetrator and victim be interviewed together. The investigator shall collect and evaluate the facts including, but not limited to, the following:

A. a description of the incident, the nature of the behavior, and the context in which the incident occurred; B. how often the conduct occurred; C. whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior; D. the relationship between the parties involved; E. the characteristics of the parties involved; F. the identity of the alleged perpetrator, including whether the individual was in a position of power over the individual allegedly subjected to bullying or harassment; G. the number of alleged bullies/harassers; H. the age of the alleged bully/harasser; I. where the bullying and/or harassment occurred; J. whether there have been other incidents in the school involving the same or other students; K. whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or educational environment; L. the date, time, and method in which the parent(s) of all parties involved were contacted.

In accordance with State law, the Academy's staff may monitor as part of any bullying or harassment investigation any non-school-related activity, function, or program. 6

If, during an investigation of reported acts of bullying and/or harassment, the principal or his/her designee believes that the reported misconduct may have created a hostile learning

environment and may have constituted unlawful discriminatory harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation, transgender status, or gender identity), disability (including HIV, AIDS, or sickle cell trait), pregnancy, marital status, age (except as authorized by law), religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information which are classes protected by State and/or Federal law (collectively "protected classes"), the principal or his/her designee will report the act of bullying and/or harassment to the Cory Douglas Scholastic Academy Board

Upon the completion of the investigation to determine whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of the policy, the designated individual who has conducted the investigation shall decide based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances and shall include:

A. a recommendation of remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying and/or harassing behavior, B. a written report to the principal.

A maximum of ten (10) days should be the limit for the completion of the investigative procedural steps and submission of the incident report. While ten (10) days is the expectation for completing the investigative procedural steps, more time may be needed based on the nature of the investigation and the circumstances affecting that investigation. The investigator shall document in his/her report the reasons for needing additional time beyond ten (10) days. The highest level of confidentiality possible shall be provided regarding the submission of a complaint or a report of bullying and/or harassment and for the investigative procedures that are employed. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action initiated pursuant to this policy.

14. Discipline and Remediation

Disciplinary actions for bullying and harassment may include but are not limited to the following: warnings.

counseling: loss of opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, school social events, or graduation exercises; community service; in-school suspension, short-term suspension, or transfer to another school.

The specific consequences should be consistent, reasonable, fair, age-appropriate, and match the severity of the incident. If necessary, counseling will be recommended for the targeted and the student perpetrating bullying or harassment.

15. Training and Prevention

Students and staff will be given instructions on preventing bullying and harassment. This will also include instructions on the process for filing complaints and the process/ consequences that will result from the protest. 7

16. Reevaluation and Submission to the Illinois State Board of Education

The Cory Douglas Scholastic Academy's Harassment and Anti-bullying Policy must be filed with ISBE by September 30 each year.

In accordance with the Illinois School Board, this policy will also be reviewed and re-evaluated every two (2) years and be updated to reflect any necessary and appropriate revisions. Acceptable documentation to satisfy the re-evaluated policy submission will also be provided:

- I. An updated version of the policy with the amendment/modification date included in the reference portion of the policy.
- II. If no revisions are deemed necessary, a copy of board minutes indicating that the policy was reevaluated and no changes were necessary, or a signed statement from the board president indicating that the policy was re-evaluated, and no changes were deemed to be necessary.

Adoption Date: 01.01.24

The Cory Douglas Scholastic Academy School Board

Revised: 01. 01.24