

Hobgood Academy Charter School

School Safety

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Hobgood Academy Charter School's policy against bullying or harassing behavior, including cyber bullying, is provided to staff, students, and parents as defined in G.S. 115C-390.1(b)(8). The school is committed to providing an environment in which its employees, volunteers, and students are treated with courtesy, respect, and dignity and are free of harassment, whether sexual, threatening, or discriminatory in nature.

It is illegal and against school policy for anyone to make unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, teasing, jokes, or physical conduct of a sexual nature; to use foul or offensive language; or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment through physical or verbal conduct relative to gender, religion, age, national origin, or disability.

Bullying and Harassment

Hobgood Academy Charter School follows the North Carolina law regarding bullying and harassing behavior. Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

1. Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
2. Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are prohibited at the School and during school-related activities between students, employees, school agents, volunteers, visitors and any other person associated with or under the control of the Hobgood Academy Charter School. Procedures established by the school for reporting suspected discrimination, harassment or bullying shall be followed in any instances involving such conduct.

HACS prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. This policy, however, shall not be used to bring frivolous or malicious complaints. Any HACS employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall report the incident to the appropriate school official. A student or volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior should report

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the incident to the appropriate school official. The Lead Administrator is authorized and expected to establish training and administrative procedures to help eliminate discrimination, harassment, and bullying and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all individuals.

Procedures for Handling Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

1. Any student or staff member who believes s/he is the victim of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination should immediately inform a trusted teacher or school official. Students are also encouraged to inform their parents or guardians.
2. When anyone reports harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination to a school employee, that employee shall notify the Lead Administrator or designee as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
3. If the Lead Administrator is involved in the allegation, then the school employee will immediately inform the Board Chairperson who will conduct the investigation, working in concert with the School's Board of Directors. In all other cases, the Lead Administrator will be immediately informed and will conduct an investigation or appoint a designee to conduct the investigation.
4. In conducting an investigation, a group may be convened to include some of all of the following: the student's homeroom teacher, other teachers or administrators, the school counselor, and any other appropriate personnel. Interviews will be conducted as appropriate. At all times during the investigation, confidentiality will be balanced with the need to gather facts.
5. The Lead Administrator, Board Chair or designated investigator will communicate, as appropriate, with the complainant or complainant's parents or guardians. A confidential report will be prepared and filed. Based upon the outcome of the investigation, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.