



Anti-Bullying, Hazing, and Harassment policy

The Academy is required by law to distribute to you each year a copy of these regulations and to certify that you have received same. We take student safety very seriously at The Academy: one cannot learn and grow if one does not feel safe, physically and emotionally. So it stands to reason that we all must strive to make each child feel safe to live, learn, take risks, and be themselves as vibrant members of this community.

I. PURPOSE

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying, hazing, and harassment, like other violent or disruptive behaviors, are forms of conduct that interfere with students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to educate students in a safe environment. The Academy cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under the direct supervision of school personnel. However, to the extent such conduct affects the educational environment at The Academy and the rights and welfare of its students and is within the control of The Academy in its normal operations, it is The Academy's intent to prevent bullying, hazing, and harassment and to take action to investigate, respond, remediate, and discipline those acts of bullying which have not been successfully prevented. The purpose of this policy is to assist The Academy in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, hazing, harassment, and other similar disruptive behavior.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. An act of bullying, hazing, or harassment, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on The Academy's property or at school-related functions. This policy applies not only to students and school personnel who directly engage in an act of bullying but also to students and school personnel who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support an act of bullying. This policy also applies to any student or school personnel whose conduct at any time or in any place constitutes bullying that interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of The Academy or the safety or welfare of the student, other students, or employees. The misuse of technology including, but not limited to, teasing, intimidating, defaming, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of The Academy by sending or posting e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including blogs, also may constitute an act of bullying regardless of whether such acts are committed on or off Academy property and/or with or without the use of school resources.

- B. No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of The Academy shall permit, condone, or tolerate bullying, hazing, or harassment.
- C. Apparent permission or consent by a student or school personnel being bullied does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- D. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of bullying, hazing, or harassment is prohibited.
- E. False accusations or reports of bullying, hazing, or harassment against another student are prohibited.
- F. A person who engages in an act of bullying, reprisal, or false reporting of bullying or permits, condones, or tolerates bullying, hazing, or harassment shall be subject to discipline for that act in accordance with The Academy's policies and procedures. The Academy may take into account the following factors:
 - 1. The developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved;
 - 2. The level of harm, surrounding circumstances, and nature of the behavior;
 - 3. Past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior;
 - 4. The relationship between the parties involved; and
 - 5. The context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

Consequences for students or school personnel who commit prohibited acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. Consequences for school personnel who permit, condone, or tolerate bullying or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of bullying may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of bullying may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from Academy property and events and/or termination of services and/or contracts.

- G. The Academy will act to investigate all complaints of bullying, hazing, or harassment and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of The Academy who is found to have violated this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the definitions included in this section apply.

- A. “Bullying” means any written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture, or pattern thereof, including without limitation the misuse of technology as set forth in Section II.A. above, by a student or school personnel that is intended to cause or is perceived as causing distress to a student, group of students, employee, or group of employees, and which substantially interferes with another person’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, conduct by a party against another party or a group that a reasonable person under the circumstances knows or should know has the effect of:
1. harming a student or a group of students or adults;
 2. damaging a person or a group of person’s property;
 3. placing a person or group of people in reasonable fear of harm to person or property;
 4. creating a hostile educational environment for a person or group of people; or
 5. intimidating a student, school personnel, or group of people.
- B. “Immediately” means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.
- C. “On Academy property or at school-related functions” means all Academy buildings, school grounds, and school property or property immediately adjacent to school grounds, school bus stops, school buses, school vehicles, school contracted vehicles, or any other vehicles approved for school purposes, the area of entrance or departure from school grounds, premises, or events, and all school-related functions, school-sponsored activities, events, or trips. Academy property also may mean a student’s walking route to or from school for purposes of attending school or school-related functions, activities, or events. While prohibiting bullying at these locations and events, The Academy does not represent that it will provide supervision or assume liability at these locations and events.

IV. REPORTING PROCEDURE

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall report the alleged acts immediately to the Dean of Students or Head of School. A person may report bullying anonymously. However, The Academy’s ability to take action against an alleged perpetrator based solely on an anonymous report may be limited.

- B. The persons designated above (IV.A) (hereinafter “report taker”) is the person responsible for receiving reports of bullying at the building level. If the complaint involves the report taker, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the Head of School by the reporting party or complainant; in the absence or disqualification of the Head of School, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
- C. A teacher, school administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other school employee shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include bullying, hazing, or harassment. Any such person who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall inform a report taker immediately. Academy personnel who fail to inform the report taker of conduct that may constitute bullying, hazing, or harassment in a timely manner may be subject to disciplinary action.
- D. Reports of bullying, hazing, or harassment are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law.
- E. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying will not affect the complainant’s or reporter’s future employment, grades, or work assignments, or educational or work environment.
- F. The Academy will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with The Academy’s obligation to investigate, take appropriate action, and comply with any legal disclosure obligations.

V. SCHOOL ACTION

- A. Upon receipt of a complaint or report of bullying, The Academy shall undertake or authorize an investigation by Academy officials or a third party designated by The Academy.
- B. The Academy may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, reporter, students, or others pending completion of an investigation of bullying, hazing, or harassment consistent with applicable law.
- C. Upon completion of the investigation, The Academy will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. Academy action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements; applicable statutory authority, including the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Pupil Fair Dismissal Act and Academy policies.

- D. The Academy is not authorized to disclose to a victim private educational or personnel data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of The Academy. School officials will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students involved in a bullying incident and the remedial action taken, to the extent permitted by law, based on a confirmed report

VI. REPRISAL

The Academy will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of The Academy who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment.

VII. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- A. The Academy annually will provide information and any applicable training to staff regarding this policy.
- B. The Academy annually will provide education and information to students regarding bullying, including information regarding this policy prohibiting bullying, hazing, and harassment, the harmful effects thereof, and other applicable initiatives to prevent bullying, hazing, and harassment.
- C. The administration of The Academy is directed to implement programs and other initiatives to prevent bullying, hazing, and harassment, to respond to bullying, hazing, and harassment, in a manner that does not stigmatize the victim, and to make resources or referrals to resources available to victims of bullying, hazing, and harassment.

VIII. NOTICE

The Academy will give annual notice of this policy to students, parents or guardians, and staff, and mention of policy shall appear in the Student and Parent Handbook.

Legal references:

Commonwealth of Mass. Law I.XII.71.37O

Commonwealth of Mass. Law IV.I.269.17-19