

<b>POLICY NAME:</b> Bullying of Students Policy	<b>SECTION:</b> Daily Routine #414	<b>Originator:</b> Illinois Abraxas Education Programs Administration
<b>Effective Date:</b> 02/06/2020	<b>Revised:</b> 03/20/2023; 03/22/2023	<b>Review Date:</b> Annual

**Policy:** At the Illinois Abraxas Education Programs, bullying is not acceptable and is strictly prohibited.

**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:

- (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; or
- (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 means 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 Section. 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 in 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of the school district, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7. (a-5) Nothing in this Section 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 State Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

Restorative measures mean 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.

School personnel means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school, including without limitation school administrators, teachers, school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, school nurses, administrative assistants, custodians, and bus drivers.

**Procedure(s):** The Illinois Abraxas Education Programs will adhere to the following standards and principles:

- I. Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important school goals.
- II. Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in each of the following situations:
  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.
  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 educational process or orderly operation of a school.

- III. The principal will develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the school's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan will be consistent with the requirements listed below.
1. Bullying will be promptly reported. A report may be made orally or in writing to the school principal or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the principal. Anonymous reporting is allowed and could be done in writing, by phone, or by email.
    - i. Naperville Bridge School: The School Administrator could be contacted by phone at 630-824-4574 or by email at: [jshellard@abraxasyfs.org](mailto:jshellard@abraxasyfs.org)
    - ii. Meridian North School: The School Administrator could be contacted by phone at 630-824-4554 or by email at: [david.hester@abraxasyfs.org](mailto:david.hester@abraxasyfs.org)
  2. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the principal or designee will promptly inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of every student involved in an alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.
  3. The principal or designee will promptly investigate and address reports of bullying, by, among other things:
    - a. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of a bullying incident was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported bullying incident.
    - 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 school administrator or designee of the reported 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/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and as 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.

4. The school principal or designee will investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction and will require that the school provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the school and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.
5. The school will provide the following interventions to address bullying, including, but not limited to:
  - school social work services,
  - restorative measures,
  - social-emotional skill building,
  - counseling,
  - school psychological services, and
  - community-based services.
6. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as *bullying* for purposes of determining any consequence or other appropriate remedial actions.
7. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
8. The principal or designee will facilitate evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process may include the following:
  - a. The frequency of victimization;
  - b. Student, staff, and family observations or safety at a school;
  - c. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
  - d. The types of bullying utilized; and
  - e. Bystander intervention or participation.
  - f. The cognitive and social emotional abilities of the parties involved.

The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that the school already collects for other purposes. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation will be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

9. This policy will be posted on the school's existing internet website and included in the student handbook, and, where applicable, posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted in the school, and distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

10. This policy will be consistent with the policies of the school board, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school.