

Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment

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 Charter High School goals.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the 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, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, 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 nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and it does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

Definitions from Section 27-23.7 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7)

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.

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, photo-electronic 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*. *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*.

Restorative measures means 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, and (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 district, including without limitation school and school district administrators, teachers, school guidance counselors, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

The Principal or designee shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the Charter High School's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan must be consistent with the following requirements:

1. Using the definition of *bullying* as provided in this policy, the Principal or designee shall emphasize to the school community that: (1) the Charter High School prohibits bullying, and (2) all students should conduct themselves with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students. This may include a process for commending or acknowledging students for demonstrating appropriate behavior.
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this Charter High School. However, nothing in the Charter High School's bullying prevention and response plan 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 U.S. Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.
3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Charter High School Complaint Manager 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 a Charter High School Complaint Manager or any staff member. Anonymous reports are also accepted.

Complaint Managers:

SIUE East St. Louis Charter High School 601 James R. Thompson Boulevard East St. Louis, IL 62201-1129			
Name	Title	Phone	Email
Natasha Flowers, PhD	Interim Director/Principal	(618) 650-5393	nflower@siue.edu
Liza Cummings, PhD	Assistant Director/Assistant Principal	(618)482-8376	wiyoung@siue.edu

4. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the parents/guardians of all students involved in an alleged incident of bullying will be notified of such, along with threats, suggestions, or instances of self-harm determined to be the result of bullying, within 24 hours after the school's administration is made aware of the student's

involvement in the incident. As appropriate, the school's administration shall also discuss the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. The school shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent or legal guardian, utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained within the 24-hour period.

5. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Principal or designee shall promptly inform parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students 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.
6. The Principal or designee shall 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 the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of 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 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.

The Principal or designee shall investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the Charter High School's jurisdiction and shall require that the Charter High School provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the Charter High School and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

7. The Principal or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.
8. 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 consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
9. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the Charter High 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.
10. The Charter High School's bullying prevention and response plan must be based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians. This plan is consistent with the policies of the school board and the charter school.
11. The Principal or designee shall post this policy on the Charter High School's publicly accessible website, if any, and include it in the student handbook, and, where applicable, post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy must

also be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

12. The Principal or designee shall assist the Board with its evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. The policy is consistent with the policies of the school board, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school.

This process shall include, without limitation:

- a. The frequency of victimization;
- b. Student, staff, and family observations of 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.

The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that the Charter High School already collects for other purposes. The Principal or designee must post the information developed as a result of the policy evaluation on the Charter High School's website, or if a website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, Board members, school personnel, parents/guardians, and students. All individual instances of bullying, as well as all threats, suggestions, or instances of self-harm determined to be the result of bullying, to be reported to the parents or legal guardians of those involved under the guidelines provided in item 4 of this policy.

13. The Principal or designee shall fully inform staff members of the Charter High School's goal to prevent students from engaging in bullying and the measures being used to accomplish it. This includes each of the following:

- a. Communicating the Charter High School's expectation and State law requirement that teachers and other certificated or licensed employees maintain discipline.
- b. Continue training with SIUE Title IX office and East St. Louis School District as needed.
- c. Establishing the expectation that staff members: (1) intervene immediately to stop a bullying incident that they witness or immediately contact building security and/or law enforcement if the incident involves a weapon or other illegal activity, (2) report bullying, whether they witness it or not, to an administrator, and (3) inform the administration of locations on school grounds where additional supervision or monitoring may be needed to prevent bullying.
- d. Where appropriate in the staff development program, providing strategies to staff members to effectively prevent bullying and intervene when it occurs.
- e. Establishing a process for staff members to fulfill their obligation to report alleged acts of bullying.

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/10-20.14, 5/24-24, and 5/27-23.7.

23 Ill. Admin. Code §§1.240 and §1.280.

ADOPTED: October 1, 2024