

Hyde Park Day School Bullying Policy (Executive Board Approved 10/7/2024)

Bullying

For several decades, research has shown that bullying has serious consequences for the psychological and social lives of all individuals who are targeted. Those consequences have been more apparent recently as school violence escalates across the country. As it is our responsibility to create and maintain a safe environment that fosters healthy physical, psychological and intellectual development for children, we must do all that we can to prevent peer abuse from occurring at school. Therefore, as bullying behaviors are contrary to State law and school policy, HPDS has instituted a zero-tolerance policy regarding bullying.

Bullying is defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that 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 student's 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
- 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 and without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, cyber-bullying, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying.

"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 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 this Section.

Incidents of bullying must be promptly reported to:

- Sarah Scheurich, Principal (Chicago) - sscheurich@hydeparkday.org
- John Stieper, Principal (Northfield) - jstieper@hydeparkday.org
- Sarah Imboden, Principal (Lemont) - simboden@hydeparkday.org

Casey Crnich, Executive Director - wcrnich@hydeparkday.org

Oral or written reports can be submitted anonymously to the building principal or Executive Director. The school director will ensure the investigation is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction and will provide the victim with the appropriate information related to the incident. Within 24 hours all parents or guardians will be informed of an alleged bullying incident utilizing all communications options available. At that time parents or guardians will be informed of school services (Social work, restorative practices) that are available to the student/family. To ensure appropriate follow-up, Hyde Park Day School is committed to:

- 1) Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within ten (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.
- 2) Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- 3) Notifying the building principal or Executive Director of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- 4) Consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights and providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

Once a report has been filed, the building principal or Executive Director will inform families about the incident. In addition, the building principal or the Executive Director will ensure that the school-based staff (special education teacher and integrated staff such as social workers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and so forth) are made aware, and a plan is developed to support the student who was bullied, as well as ensure accountability for the student who was bullying.

Reprisal or retaliation against someone for reporting an act of bullying are prohibited and will be considered an act of bullying and follow the same progression of steps outlined below.

Falsely accusing another person of bullying is likewise prohibited and will follow the same progression of steps outlined below.

If it is discovered that a student is bullying someone, his or her parents will be notified immediately. If the bullying continues, the student may be dismissed.

Below is the progression of steps followed when a behavioral issue or bullying is observed or reported:

- The student is spoken to by the classroom teacher, parents are notified.

- Additional observation/data gathering (FBA) is utilized to determine the antecedent/behavior and the consequence.
- Parent meeting scheduled to discuss behavior and data gathered.
- Behavior plan initiated:
 - Positive Reinforcement (Verbal)
 - Point-based reward system
 - Breaks from classroom activity
 - Additional sessions with school social worker
 - Possible consultation with outside psychologist/therapist
 - Verbal discussion with classroom teacher/administrator
 - Daily communication with parents via email or phone
- School district notified and collaborated with regarding problem behavior.
- Manifestation determination conference.
- Suspension (if behavior unrelated to disability)
- Hyde Park Day will provide students funded by their school district 20 school days prior to termination in order to find another appropriate educational setting.

Preventative measures are also utilized within the Hyde Park Day School community. In addition to our curricular programs of Calm Classroom and Responsive Classroom HPDS utilizes other interventions 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. Prevention is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians.

Hyde Park Day School will use restorative measures when instances of bullying occur. "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. (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act

Behaviors that may impact programmatic fit:

- Bullying
- Physical Aggression
- Verbal Aggression
- Behaviors that disrupt the learning of others
- Behaviors that impact the safety and security of students or staff.

Interventions prohibited by ISBE will not be implemented with any student at Hyde Park Day School. In order to ensure this policy is effective, the leadership team will convene on an annual basis to analyze incidents of bullying (for example, type of bullying and frequency). The leadership team will also take into account the responsiveness of all stakeholders when incidents

occur. A final analysis will be shared with families, students, staff, and Executive Board Members. This policy will be evaluated for factors such as: 1) The frequency of victimization. 2) Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school. 3) Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs. 4) The types of bullying that are common or occurring. 5) Bystander intervention or participation on an annual basis and updated each year to reflect the outcomes and effectiveness of this policy, as well as feedback from students, staff, and families. The evaluation process will be posted on the school website.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of HPDS is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this Section [free exercise of religion]. 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 States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

This policy was adopted with input from staff, students, and parents and can be located in the Parent and Student Handbook, the Faculty and Staff Handbook, and posted on the school website. The policy will be reviewed and distributed to new employees joining the school staff. Both documents are distributed to families and staff at the beginning of each school year. This policy aligns with the other policies as approved by the Executive Board Members on 10/7/2024.