

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

(reviewed and approved by stakeholders 3/9/2023)

Consistent with the policies of Easterseals Central Illinois, the Easterseals Learning Academy is committed to creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. This policy was developed in alignment to other policies of the organization and the non-public school itself. Bullying, intimidation, and harassment are detrimental to the learning environment for both the student and the educator. All students deserve equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment for academic success.

State Law prohibits and the school will not tolerate any bullying, intimidation, or harassment. No person can be harassed, bullied, or intimidated due to their race, color, size, gender, gender-related identity or expression, nationality, 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, sexual orientation, physical/mental disabilities, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, age, 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 characteristics.

Bullying is any severe, pervasive, verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically (on school premises or the threat is related to school), directed toward a student over a period of time that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of; (1) Placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to self or property; (2) Causing effect on the student's physical or mental health; (3) Interferes with the student's academic performance; (4) Interferes with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

Bullying and harassment come in many forms including, without limitation, any use of violence, intimidation, force, noise, coercion, threats, stalking, sexual harassment, public humiliation, theft, or destruction of property, retaliation, hazing, bullying, bullying through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or similar electronic school equipment, or other comparable conduct.

"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 this Section.

Bullying/Harassment is prohibited in each of the following situations:

- A. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
- B. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other vehicles, at designated bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
- C. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
- D. 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 a school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (D) 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 non-school related activity, function, or program.

Any student that is guilty of bullying could be subject to restorative measures, a continuum of school-based alternatives to suspension or expulsion. The measures are (i) 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. Parents of the student will be notified. Any student making a knowingly false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions and may also be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan:

1. The School uses the definition of bullying as provided in this policy.
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this School.
3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Director, Assistant Director, 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 school officials or any staff member. The school officials and all staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anonymous reports are also accepted and may be directed to the complaint manager at the address below.
4. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Director or designee shall 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.
5. The Director 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 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. Notify the School Director 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 an opportunity to meet with the School Director 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.
 - E. The Director or designee shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the Schools jurisdiction and shall require that the School provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the School, home district and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs

- F. Implement 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.
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 consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
 7. Students who believe they are victims of bullying or bystanders of bullying incidents will have the option to discuss the matter with a preferred teacher, administrator, or other school support staff or to complete a bully report form so appropriate action can be taken. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to investigate. Students who make good-faith complaints will not be disciplined, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred.
 8. The Director or designee shall include this policy in the student handbook, existing internet website and, where applicable, post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy is distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel (including new employees when hired), and is also provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty.
 9. The bullying prevention and response plan must be based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.
 10. The Director or designee shall assist in evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. 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 School already collects for other purposes.
 11. The Director or designee shall post this policy on the School's website, include it in the student handbook, and, where applicable, post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The Director or designee must post the information developed as a result of the policy evaluation annually to school administrators, Board members, school personnel, parents/guardians, and students and must also be provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty.

The following school administrator, along with all school staff are available to help with a bully or to make a report about bullying.

Complaint Manager: Andrea L. Hartnett, Program Director, 110 Fandel Road Germantown Hills,
IL 61548, (309)383-3001 ext. 3.