

Walsh Academy Anti-Bullying and Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment.

This Bullying Prevention Policy is created pursuant to and complies with Section 27-23.7 of the *Illinois School Code* (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7). Walsh Academy serves a unique population of students with disabilities; therefore, the Policy set forth herein is tailored to address the needs of Walsh Academy's student population.

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Therefore, preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are essential to Walsh Academy's goals.

Bullying based on actual or perceived academic abilities, 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, the 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 those mentioned above real 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, buses, or other school vehicles.
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 a school Walsh Academy or home 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 the home school Walsh Academy staff or School to staff or monitor any non-school-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 student's academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from a school's services, activities, or privileges.

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. 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7

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. In addition, Cyber-bullying includes creating a web page or weblog in which the creator assumes another person's identity 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. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that one or more persons may access if the distribution or postings create any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Restorative measures mean a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary disciplines, such as suspensions and expulsions in cooperation with the student's home school, Walsh Academy, 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 to keep students in school.

School personnel means persons employed by, on contract with, or volunteer at Walsh Academy, including, without limitation, school administrators, teachers, school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, school nurses, related services staff, school chefs, and paraprofessionals.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

The principal or designee shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the goal of Walsh Academy of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. Walsh Academy uses the definition of bullying as provided in this Policy. In addition, this plan must be consistent with the requirements listed below; each numbered requirement, 1-12, corresponds with the same number in the list of required policy components in 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7(b) 1-11.

1. Bullying is contrary to State law and the Policy of this school. However, nothing in the Walsh Academy'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.
2. Students are encouraged to report bullying immediately. A report may be made orally or in writing to that student's Principal, Assistant Principal, or designated school social worker. In addition, anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who have information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the Walsh Academy Principal or Assistant Principal. The Walsh Academy named officials and all staff members available for help with a bully or to make a bullying report. Anonymous reports can be made to either Ann M. Craig at craiga@walshacademy.org or Heather Lischett at lischetth@walshacademy.org. The following staff have been identified as resources.

3.

Complaint Coordinator:

Ann M. Craig
6935 W. Touhy Ave., Niles IL 60714
847-390-3030
craiga@walshacademy.org

Complaint Investigator:

Heather Lischett
6935 W. Touhy Ave., Niles IL 60714
847-294-1744
lischetth@walshacademy.org

Complaint Investigator:

Kathleen Samuelson
6935 W. Touhy Ave., Niles IL 60714
847-390-3020
samuelsonk@walshacademy.org

Complaint Investigator:

Kristina Seidelman-Nickels
6935 W. Touhy Ave., Niles IL 60714
847-390-3020
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4. Consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Principal or Designee shall promptly inform the 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.

Notification should occur within 24 hours without compromising the investigation.

5. All reasonable efforts will be made to complete the bullying investigation within ten school days after the date the report of bullying was received. If the bullying investigation cannot be completed within ten school days, the investigator must promptly notify the Building Principal or designee, identify the reasons why the bullying investigation cannot be completed within ten school days, and establish a timeframe for completing the investigation.
6. When investigating a report of bullying, the investigator will involve, if necessary, appropriate school support personnel and other staff with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention. The principal or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying by, among other things:
 - a. Make all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within ten school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and consider additional relevant information obtained during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
 - b. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
 - c. Notifying the appropriate school staff of the report 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 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 Walsh Academy's jurisdiction and shall require that the Walsh Academy provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the Walsh Academy and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

7. The principal or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, including, but not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and referrals for community-based services.

8. Any reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student's reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying to determine consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
9. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the Walsh Academy's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing false information will be treated as bullying to determine any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
10. Walsh Academy's bullying prevention and response plan must involve various school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.
11. The Principal or Designee or designee shall post this Policy on the Walsh Academy's website under District information and included in the student handbook, and, where applicable, post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. In addition, the Policy must be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel (including new employees when hired). It must also be provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty.
12. The principal or designee shall assist the Board with evaluating and assessing 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 Walsh Academy has already collected for other purposes. However, the Principal or designee must post the information developed as a result of the policy evaluation on the Walsh Academy's website, or if a website is not available, the data must be provided to school administrators, Walsh Academy Advisory Council members, school personnel, parents/guardians, and students.

13. The principal or designee shall fully implement the following procedures, including, without limitation, the following:
 - a. Uniform Grievance Procedure. A student may use this Policy to complain about bullying.
 - b. Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure. Any person may use this Policy to complain about sexual harassment in violation of Title IX of the Education Act of 1972.
 - c. Curriculum Content. Bullying prevention and character instruction are provided in all grades in accordance with State law.

- d. Student Social and Emotional Development. As required by state law, student social and emotional development is incorporated into Walsh Academy's educational program. Each classroom has a certified school social worker or school counselor assigned as part of the teaching team.
- e. Access to Electronic Networks/Internet use policy. This Policy states that using the Walsh Academy's electronic networks is limited to (1) support of education and/or research or (2) a legitimate business use.
- f. Harassment of Students Prohibited. This Policy prohibits any person from harassing, intimidating, or bullying a student based on identified actual or perceived characteristics as outlined in this document.
- g. Teen Dating Violence prohibits teen dating violence on school property, school-sponsored activities, and vehicles used for school-provided transportation.

Any reports of bullying, intimidation, or harassment will be kept confidential to the extent possible, given the need to investigate the reported complaint. Students who make good-faith complaints will not be disciplined. However, after an investigation, any student determined to have engaged in bullying, intimidation, or harassment will be subject to disciplinary consequences as provided in this handbook, including suspension and expulsion consistent with the school and Walsh Academy's discipline policy. Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students who have engaged in the above behavior will be notified.

Any student making a knowingly false accusation regarding harassment may also be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Assigning Interventions and/or Consequences

Walsh Academy will respond to bullying in a manner tailored to the individual incident, considering the nature of the behavior, the student's developmental age, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Staff will avoid using punitive discipline (suspensions) if any other method of consequence can be used with fidelity. Staff will review and follow protocols for students with Behavior Intervention Plans.

If bullying is determined to have occurred, the Principal/Designee shall explain the consequences in a non-hostile manner and shall impose any consequence immediately and consistently. The Principal/Designee shall keep communicating and working with all parties involved until the situation is resolved. Walsh Academy, will not solicit an apology from the perpetrator to the target by any means or try to use any form of mediation that puts the perpetrator and target in contact with one another in an immediate attempt to resolve the bullying. Restorative measures may be helpful to repair relationships between the perpetrator and target, but only if used after other interventions have balanced the power differential between the perpetrator and target.

1. No Retaliation or reprisal will be tolerated against any person who reports an act of bullying.

2. Immediate disciplinary action will be instituted against a student/staff who engages in reprisal or retaliation. This includes a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying.
3. Any student determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in bullying, intimidation, or harassment will be subject to disciplinary consequences, including suspension.
4. Any student making a knowingly false accusation regarding harassment may also be subject to disciplinary consequences.
5. Possible termination of employment or placement at Walsh Academy could occur for staff and students involved in bullying.

Parents/Guardians of students who have engaged in the above behavior will be notified. Professional development will be offered to all staff to implement this, Policy. Internet safety will be addressed as part of the school curriculum for all students.

References:

105ILCS - 5/27-23.7- Bullying Prevention
23 Illinois Administrative Code 1.295

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