

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Illinois General Assembly has found that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for scholars to learn and achieve and that bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to scholars and interferes with their ability to learn and participate in school activities. Bullying is linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping, and dropping out of school, fighting, using drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment, and violence. It is the goal of Christopher House Elementary School to create a learning environment where all scholars feel safe and supported, are protected from bullying, and are able to succeed academically and develop socially and emotionally into responsible, caring individuals.

Christopher House Elementary School asks every scholar, with the support of their parent/guardian(s), guardian(s), and the adults at school, to commit to the following principles, which apply to everyone on school property and at school-related events:

- I will not bully others.
- I will try to help anyone I suspect is being bullied.
- I will work to include scholars who are left out.
- If someone is being bullied, I will tell an adult at school.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of the non-sectarian nonpublic school and 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 is consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.”

Definitions

BULLYING means any physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a scholar or scholars, and meets all of the following criteria:

An observed or perceived imbalance of power exists between the person(s) engaging in bullying behavior(s) and the targeted scholar (s); and/or scholar (s) were targeted based on prejudice or bias.

The behaviors are severe or pervasive (repeated over time), or there is a high likelihood that behaviors will be repeated. While bullying is often characterized by repeated act, sometimes a single incident constitutes bullying depending on the severity and if other elements of bullying are present.

The intent of the person(s) engaging in the behavior is to cause physical or emotional harm to the targeted scholar(s). The behavior has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the following effects:

- Placing the scholar in reasonable fear of harm to the scholar’s person or property
- Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the scholar’s physical or mental health
- Substantially interfering with the scholar’s academic performance; or
- Substantially interfering with the scholar’s 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, intimidations, 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, not exhaustive.

CYBERBULLYING means using information and communication technologies to bully. This definition includes cyberbullying by means of technology that is not owned, leased, or used by the school district when an administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred. This policy does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

Retaliation means any form of intimidation, reprisal including but not limited to the submission of knowing false bullying allegations, or harassment directed against a scholar who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation, or witnessed or has reliable information about bullying.

PEER CONFLICT means disagreements and oppositional interactions that are situational, immediate, and developmentally appropriate. Conflicts arise when two or more scholars with relatively similar or perceived power have differences in opinion or perspectives. When school employees are aware of peer conflict, they are expected to guide scholars in developing new skills in social competency, learning personal boundaries, and peaceably resolving conflict, and to model appropriate social interactions.

PREJUDICE OR BIAS means motivation for bullying or harassment based in part or whole by actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or immigration status, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group associated with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics or any other distinguishing characteristic.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline that are:

- Adapted to the needs of the school and community
- Contribute to maintaining school safety
- Protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate
- Teach scholars the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society
- Serve to build and restore relationships among scholars, families, school, and communities, and
- Reduce the likelihood of future disruption of balancing accountability with an understanding of scholars' behavioral health needs.

Preventing Bullying

The principal, associate directors, and all staff shall work to develop safe, supportive school environments that prevent bullying through:

- Developing supportive school climate strategies
- Teaching all scholars social and emotional skills through Responsive Classroom, Positive Discipline, the Second Step Curriculum, and other developmentally appropriate social emotional skill building
- Establish predictable responses and effective disciplinary practices (see code of conduct) that address root cause, teach skills, build empathy, and repair harm.
- Intervening to Address Bullying – all Christopher House employees, including security officers, lunchroom staff, and contractors who witness incidents of bullying or school violence or who possesses reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying must intervene immediately in a manner appropriate to the context and ensure the safety of all people involved. They must also report the incident of bullying or retaliation to the principal or designee as soon as practicable but within 24 hours.

Reporting Bullying

Incidents of bullying may be reported to:

Ashley Patterson

Assistant Principal
apatterson@christopherhouse.org
773-922-7500 ext. 7404

Students are encouraged to report bullying to any Christopher House employee. Anonymous reports of bullying are accepted and may be submitted via Google Form however this shall not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

[Anti-Bullying Report - Google Forms](#)

Addressing Reports of Bullying

Christopher House Elementary School staff will take the following steps when addressing reports of bullying:

- 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.
- Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- 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.

If the report of bullying is determined to be founded interventions that can be taken to address bullying 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.

Any scholar who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in bullying, intimidation, or harassment will be subject to disciplinary consequences as provided in this handbook, including but not limited to, suspension and expulsion consistent with the school discipline policy. Parents/Guardians of scholars who have engaged in the above behavior will be notified.

Any scholar making a knowingly false accusation regarding harassment may also be subject to disciplinary action.

Policy Evaluation

This policy contains a policy evaluation process to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy that includes, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The non-sectarian nonpublic school may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation must be made available on the Internet website of the school. If an Internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

Adapted from Chicago Public Schools Anti-Bullying Policy. This policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians and is consistent with the policies of the school board, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school.