

Bullying Policy

Brehm Preparatory School

Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment

Brehm Preparatory School's mission is to empower students with learning differences to recognize and optimize their potential throughout their lives. To achieve this mission, our students must be in a safe, accepting, and nurturing environment. Bullying is detrimental to the academic, emotional, and physical well-being of all its victims and violates state law and school policy. All forms of bullying are strictly prohibited. Bullying incidents will be treated as a critical offense, regardless of age, sex, race, or, socio-economic status, or role. Brehm's policies fully support the Illinois School Code's anti-bullying policy as outlined in the enactment of Public Acts 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7 and Administrative Code Title 23 Section 1.295 (2022).

A. Definition

"Bullying" including "cyber-bullying" 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
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.

Forms of Bullying

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. The acts can be in person or via "cyber-bullying." This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Examples

- 1) Physical acts, such as inappropriate, unwanted, uninvited, or injurious physical contact with another; stalking, sexual assault, and destruction or damage to the property of another individual
- 2) Written or electronic communication of any type that incorporates language or depictions that would constitute bullying, using any medium (including, but not limited to, cell phones, computers, websites, electronic networks, instant messages, text messages, and e-mails) This includes the creation of blogs or websites impersonating another person, distribution by electronic means any of the examples of bullying listed in this section and that result in any of the negative effects that result from bullying.
- 3) Verbal threats made to another; blackmail, or demands for protection money
- 4) Non-verbal threats or intimidation such as aggressive or menacing gestures, posturing
- 5) Direct or indirect, relationally aggressive behavior such as social isolation, rumor spreading, or damaging someone's reputation
- 6) Any of the above conduct that occurs off school grounds when such conduct creates or reasonably can be expected to create, a substantial disruption in the school setting and/or at school-sponsored activities and events.
- 7) Repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking put-downs, or demeaning humor relating to a student's race, color, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics, whether or not the student possesses them, that could reasonably be expected to result in the disruption of school activities or that results in a hostile educational environment for the student.

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.

B. Stance Statement

Bullying is contrary to Illinois State law and the policy of the non-sectarian nonpublic school and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7 which states: "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.

C. Reporting Procedures

Bullying is much less likely to take place and persist in a setting where the adults have made it explicitly clear that they are paying attention, that they care, that they will not tolerate it, while educating that there are outlets for the victims and consequences for the bullies. Furthermore, bullying is diminished when student "bystanders" are prepared and encouraged to step in quickly and appropriately. Bullying conduct that occurs on school property or at school-sponsored events; while students are being transported or walking to and from school-sponsored events; or when the conduct would substantially interfere with the educational environment, regardless of where the conduct occurs must be reported immediately. The school will exercise due diligence in pursuing the accuracy of all reports while maintaining student confidentiality.

Reporters may be bystanders or those being bullied. No reporters of bullying will be retaliated against for reporting bullying conduct. 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. Reporters may email or call Terri Douglas, Head of School at terri.douglas@brehm.org or Courtney Vincent, Director of Education at courtney.vincent@brehm.org (618-457-0371). The school will do everything in its power to keep reports confidential and the source anonymous. A reporter may elect to make an anonymous report by requesting a confidential report from the Director of Human Resources, Terry Wilson at terry.wilson@brehm.org. Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited and those who engage in such action will be reviewed for corrective action in accordance with those stated for bullying. Any student who falsely and intentionally accuses another of bullying will be subject to appropriate behavioral measures.

D. Privacy Rights

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.

Once a report has been submitted student privacy rights under FERPA will be strictly followed. The Head of School, in coordination with the Director of Education, shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction and requires that the School provides the victim with information regarding services that are available through the school and throughout the community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs. Once a report has been submitted

student privacy rights under FERPA will be strictly followed. Parents or guardians will be notified that school day informing parents or guardians of the student's involvement in the alleged incident of bullying.

E. Investigating and Reporting

All reports will be heard, read, acted upon, processed, and filed with the following protocol:

(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 his or her 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.

F. Intervention

Any student who engages in bullying will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension, expulsion, and referral to local law enforcement. A student's bullying conduct may also be addressed through other behavioral interventions, which may include restitution, counseling, remediation, and/or community service. Any student who is a bystander to any bullying conduct and who fails to take action to discourage bullying may be subject to similar disciplinary actions. Students and parents or guardians, as appropriate, will be apprised of the availability of social work services, counseling, psychological services, and other interventions and restorative measures. We are committed to providing the appropriate Brehm programs and/or services needed to address the trauma that may ensue from bullying related to school functions. When Brehm resources are inadequate, we will help parents or guardians locate and reach out for help from other appropriate agencies.

"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.

G. Education

Education is highly valued by Brehm as a means to alleviate ignorance and prejudice, create understanding and acceptance of diversity, promote higher ethical standards, and knowledge about the world in which we must live cooperatively to survive. The General Assembly finds that "school districts and non-public, non-sectarian elementary and secondary schools should educate students, parents, and school district

personnel with educating others on the behaviors constitute prohibited bullying” 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7. The School’s bullying prevention and response plan is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians. The Head of School, in conjunction with the Director of Education and School Social Worker,, ensures that this policy is posted on the School’s website and it is included in the Student Handbook that is distributed to students, parents, and school personnel, including new hires, annually. The policy is also posted around campus where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. As a part of Campus Collaboration, the students review their handbooks quarterly. Brehm students attend weekly Campus Collaboration meetings aimed at creating a safe and nurturing teen culture. Diversity, bullying, healthy relationships, and teen codes are explored and discussed regularly. Additionally, all staff members address these characteristics during teachable moments across the day.

As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating the policy under subsection (d) of this Section, the Head of School along with school personnel and the Board of Directors will assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy including, but 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.

The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that Brehm already collects for other purposes. The Head of School must post the information developed as a result of the policy evaluation on the Google Drive so that information can be provided to other school administrators, Board members, school personnel, parents/guardians, and students.

This policy Is consistent with the policies of the school board, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school.

LEGAL REF.:

[405 ILCS 49/](#), Children’s Mental Health Act.
[105 ILCS 5/10-20.14/ 5/24-24](#), and [5/27-23.7](#).
[23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.240](#) and [§1.280](#).

January 23, 2024