



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Board Approved: 8-18-20

Board Reviewed: 6-20-23

Purpose

The Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of a safe school environment to the educational process of Gillingham Charter School. The Board has determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and to achieve high academic standards. Bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors that disrupt both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment, is prohibited at GCS. Because students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, students and volunteers are directed to demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate bullying.

Definitions

Bullying is defined as an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a "school setting" or occurs outside of school.

1. conduct materially and substantially interferes with the educational process or program in the school, as allowed by law;
2. that is severe, persistent or pervasive;
3. and has the effect of doing any of the following:
 - a. substantially interfering with a student's education;
 - b. creating a threatening environment; or
 - c. substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

School setting shall mean:

1. in the school, on school grounds, on school property, at any school testing sites or other sites used by the school, including remote schooling,
2. on the school's server or school's electronic, web-based, Internet or on-line programs,
3. in school vehicles, at designated bus stops
4. any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school
5. any time spent necessarily traveling to and from these locations

Additionally, any student whose out-of-school conduct interferes materially and substantially with the educational process in the school is also subject to this Policy.

Authority

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by Gillingham students. The Board encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the Student Coach or Director of Education.

The Board directs that complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with Gillingham's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.

Delegation of Responsibility

Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying.

The DOE/Student Coach shall ensure that this policy and administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students.

The Board directs the DOE/Student Coach or designee to develop:

1. procedures and administrative regulations necessary to implement this Policy
2. procedures for investigating reports of bullying incidents
3. prevention, intervention and education strategies related to bullying.

Guidelines

Standards for Student Behavior

The Board believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents and guardians, staff and community members of the school, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school and community property on the part of students, staff and community members.

Students shall conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school staff, volunteers, and contractors.

Bystander Inaction

Because bystander support of bullying can bolster these behaviors, the school prohibits both active and passive support for acts of bullying.

1. The staff should encourage all students to refuse to engage in these acts and to report them immediately to an Administrator of the school.
2. All acts of bullying will be addressed by the Student Coach and an incident report shall be provided, documenting the occurrence and outcome.

Consequences of Bullying

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student who commits an act of bullying:

1. shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to:
 - a. the nature of the behavior
 - b. the developmental age of the student
 - c. the student's history of problem behaviors and performance
2. may range from:
 - a. Restorative Practices and other positive behavioral interventions
 - b. assignment to the Reflection Room for Restorative Work
 - c. in-school or out-of-school suspension from the charter school
 - d. and/or expulsion or other disciplinary removal from the charter school
3. must be consistent with the school's approved code of student conduct
4. remedial measures shall:
 - a. be designed to correct the poor choice
 - b. prevent another occurrence of the behavior
 - c. protect the victim of the act
 - d. restore relationship

Employee Bullying

In the case of an employee who commits one or more acts of bullying, consequences and appropriate remedial actions may range from Restorative Practices and other interventions, up to and including suspension, and/or termination, as set forth in the school's approved code of conduct in the employee handbook. Any alleged act committed by an employee will be handled by the DOD.

Reporting Bullying Incidents

The Board requires the DOE or Student Coach to be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this Policy.

1. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this Policy to the DOE or Student Coach.
2. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this Policy.
3. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report without further investigation.

Determination of Violation

The Board requires the Student Coach/designee to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this Policy.

1. The SC/designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident.
2. An investigation is to be conducted within three school days after a report or complaint is made known to the SC.
3. The SC/designee shall make a report to the DOE regarding the incident and subsequent consequences.

Retaliation Prohibited

The Board prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the SC after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

1. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying may range from Restorative Practices and other positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.
2. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another of bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures and agreements.

Annual Dissemination and Review of Policy

1. The Board requires GCS to annually disseminate this Policy to all school staff, students and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all applicable acts of bullying that occur in school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions, or in a school vehicle.
2. The Board further requires school officials to ensure that this Policy and procedures for reporting bullying incidents are reviewed with the students within ninety (90) days after the Policy is adopted, and at least once each school year thereafter.

Compliance with State and Federal Statutes

1. Gillingham Charter School will comply with applicable federal and state laws relating to bullying, including but not limited to those requirements delineated in the Charter School Law, Chapter 12 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code and the applicable House Bill 1067 Public School Code amendments relating to bullying.
2. Gillingham Charter School will comply with applicable federal and state laws, including Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code and applicable provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) and its applicable implementing regulations regarding the discipline of special education students and thought-to-be eligible students who engage in an act of

bullying.

3. Gillingham Charter School will further comply with applicable federal and state laws, regarding protected handicapped students and applicable sections of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and its applicable implementing regulations.

TO REPORT AN ACT OF BULLYING

Student Coach
Gillingham Charter School
915 Howard Avenue
Pottsville, PA 17901.
TELEPHONE: 570.955.3830, ext. 125
FAX: 570.955.3831
EMAIL: swoodruff@gillingham.school

Written Policies

Charter School's written policy on Anti-Bullying is public record and shall be posted to the GCS website.

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER OR APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS AND/OR CHARTER CONTROL.

Adopted this _____ day of _____,

Board President

Board Secretary