

Anti-Bullying Policy

Purpose

The Illinois General Assembly has found that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve and that bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with their ability to learn and participate in school activities. Bullying has been 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 the Knapp School to create and maintain a learning environment where students are protected from bullying, so they feel safe and supported in their efforts to succeed academically and develop emotionally into responsible, caring individuals.

We ask our students, along with the support of their parents/guardians and school staff, to commit to the following principles, which will apply to everyone on school property and at school-related activities:

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

Scope

Bullying is contrary to Illinois law and this Policy is consistent with the Illinois School Code. This Policy is established to protect students against bullying and harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic. The Knapp School recognizes the particular vulnerabilities of students with actual or perceived disabilities and those who identify as or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Nothing in this Policy is intended to infringe upon any expression protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.

This Policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians. The school administration will re-evaluate this policy each year based on an assessment of its outcomes and effectiveness, including, but not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation.

Bullying is prohibited:

1. during any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned program or activity.
2. in school, on school property, on school buses or other provided transportation, and at designated locations for students to wait for buses and / or transportation (i.e., “bus stops”);
3. through the transmission of information from a school computer or computer network, or

- other electronic school equipment.
4. when communicated through any electronic technology or personal electronic device while on school property, on school buses or other Board-provided transportation, at bus stops, and at school sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
 5. when it is conveyed that a threat will be carried out in a school setting, including threats made outside school hours with intent to carry them out during any school-related or sponsored program or activity or on provided transportation.
 6. when off campus and / or outside school hours, a conveyed threat to be carried out in a school setting, after school hours or on provided transportation to the degree it seriously disrupts any student's education.

Definitions

“Bullying” means any severe or pervasive (repeated over time) 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 one or more of the following effects:

1. placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
2. causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
3. substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
4. substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including but not limited to 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.

Bullying behaviors may also qualify as other inappropriate behaviors. When deciding whether inappropriate behavior constitutes bullying, school administrators will consider the student's intent, the frequency or recurrence of the inappropriate behavior, and whether there are power imbalances between the students involved. While bullying is often characterized by repeated acts, sometimes a single incident constitutes bullying depending on the student's intent and power imbalances.

“Cyber-bullying” means using information and communication technologies to bully. This definition includes cyber-bullying by means of technology that is not owned by the school when an administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred.

“Retaliation” means any form of intimidation, including but not limited to the submission of knowingly false bullying allegations, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Retaliation is prohibited and will result in the imposition of appropriate interventions/consequences.

“Peer Conflict” means disagreements and oppositional interactions that are situational,

immediate, and developmentally appropriate. When school employees are aware of peer conflict, they are expected to guide students in developing new skills in social competency, learning personal boundaries, and peaceably resolving conflict, and to model appropriate social interactions. These interventions are designed to prevent Peer Conflict from escalating to Bullying.

“Restorative Measures” means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline that are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, contribute to maintaining school safety, protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students’ behavioral health needs.

Intervening to Address Bullying

Reporting Responsibilities of Knapp School Employees and Contractors

All school employees and volunteers who witness incidents of bullying or school violence or who possess reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying, must:

1. intervene immediately in a manner that is appropriate to the context and ensures the safety of all people involved;
2. report the incident of bullying or retaliation to the Knapp School Principal or Dean or other school administrator as soon as possible, not exceeding 24 hours from knowledge of such a situation and
3. cooperate fully in any investigation of the incident and in implementing any safety plan established by the Knapp School.

Reporting Responsibilities of Students, Parents and Guardians

A student who witnesses bullying should not stand or participate in the bullying. Any student who witnesses bullying must notify an adult at school and / or home as quickly as possible.

Any parent or guardian who witnesses or is notified of bullying has an obligation to advise the Knapp School Principal or other School Administrator as quickly as practicable.

The **Form for Reporting Bullying and Retaliation** (Attachment A included in this policy) can be utilized by Knapp School students and / parents / legal guardians to detail and report an incident of bullying. The completed form should be submitted to the School Principal or other School Personnel.

Students and Parent/Guardians served by the Knapp School who are Chicago Public School students may also report an incident of bullying directly to the Chicago Public School District by calling the CPS Violence Prevention Hotline at 1-888-881-0606, or by emailing BullyingReport@cps.edu.

Anonymous reports can be made but no disciplinary action will be taken on the sole basis of an

anonymous report.

Investigation

1. The Knapp School shall perform an investigation upon knowledge or receipt of a possible bullying incident.
2. Investigation of a bullying incident shall be initiated within two school days of receipt of a report and completed as soon as practicable, but within 10 school days, unless the Knapp School Principal grants in writing an additional 5-day extension due to extenuating circumstances. The school shall document the extension in the investigation report and shall notify the parties involved.
3. The investigation shall include:
 - a. Identifying the perpetrator(s), target(s), and bystander(s), as well as any adult who witnessed the incident or may have reliable information about it.
 - b. Conducting an individual interview in a private setting with the alleged perpetrator and target. The alleged perpetrator and target should never be interviewed together or in public. Individual interviews shall also be conducted in private with student and adult bystanders.
 - c. Determining how often the conduct occurred, any past incident or continuing pattern of behavior, and whether the target's education was affected.
 - d. Assessing the individual and school-wide effects of the incident relating to safety and assigning school staff to create and implement a safety plan that will restore a sense of safety for the target and other students who have been impacted.
 - e. As needed, reporting the incident to the students' home public school district
 - f. Comprehensively documenting the details of the investigation.
4. When the investigation is complete, the Knapp School Principal or other staff shall ensure the incident and investigation details and outcome are documented in the Knapp School Client Information System.

On the same day, the investigation is initiated, the principal and/ or other school personnel shall report to the parent/legal guardian of all involved students, via telephone, personal conference and/or in writing, the occurrence of any alleged incident of bullying, and shall document these notifications in the Knapp School Client Information System. School personnel must adhere to federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy when reporting any alleged incident of bullying. During this reporting, school personnel may discuss availability of additional supportive resources for involved students, including social work or counseling services, school psychological services, restorative measures, and/or other interventions.

When the investigation is complete, the Principal/Designee shall notify the parents/legal guardians of all students involved of the outcome of the investigation. Parents/legal guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation may request a personal conference with the Principal/Designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying, and any resources available in or outside the school to help the students address the underlying reasons for the bullying.

If the investigation results in the imposition of consequences, the Principal/School Personnel

may advise the parent/legal guardian of students other than the perpetrator that appropriate consequences were imposed but cannot share the details of the specific consequence imposed. Doing so is a violation of confidentiality of school-record information required by

When communicating incidents of bullying to the target's parent/guardian, the Principal/School Personnel are to consider whether the student may want to keep certain information confidential. For example, if a student is bullied after identifying as gay or homosexual, the school shall not disclose the student's sexual orientation to the parent/guardian without the student's permission, unless there is a legitimate, school or safety related reason for doing so.

In extreme circumstances, the school shall determine whether it is necessary to convene the IEP Team to assess whether additional or different special education or related services are needed to address the student's individual needs and revise the IEP accordingly. For example, if the student's disability affects social skill development or makes the student vulnerable to bullying, the Knapp School Personnel should consider whether the IEP should include provisions to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying. For any student initiating and/ or engaging in repeated or extreme bullying behavior, the school shall assess whether to convene the IEP Team to determine if additional supports and services are needed to address the inappropriate behavior and consider examining the environment in which the bullying occurred to determine if changes to the environment are warranted. For example, the IEP Team should consider a behavior intervention plan for the student or review a current behavior intervention plan and revise if necessary.

The Knapp School Personnel shall comply with the Procedural Safeguards for Discipline of Students with Disabilities/Impairments when considering interventions and consequences for students with disabilities.

Assigning Interventions and/or Consequences

Many Peer Conflicts can be resolved immediately and do not require more than standard Incident Reporting. If, however, a conflict is ongoing and meets the definition of bullying, the investigation procedures set forth in this Policy must be followed.

Knapp School and Personnel are obligated to respond to bullying in a manner tailored to the individual incident, consider the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Knapp School will refrain from using punitive discipline (out of school suspension) if any other method or consequence can be used with fidelity.

When an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the Knapp Principal/Personnel shall explain the consequences in a non-hostile manner and shall impose any consequence immediately and consistently.

The Knapp School Personnel shall keep communicating and working with all parties involved until the situation is resolved. Some key indicators of resolution include:

- The perpetrator is no longer bullying and is interacting civilly with the target.

- The target reports feeling safe and interacting civilly with the perpetrator.
- School staff members notice an increase in positive behavior and social-emotional competency in the perpetrator and/or the target.
- School staff members notice a more positive climate in the areas where bullying incidents were high.

What Not to Do

Knapp School Personnel will not solicit or force an apology from the perpetrator to the target, use victim/offender conferences, or any form of mediation (i.e., peace circles) that puts the perpetrator and target in contact with one another in an immediate attempt to resolve the bullying. Restorative measures will only be considered and implemented to repair the relationship between the perpetrator and target after other interventions have balanced the power differential between the perpetrator and target.

Under no circumstance will Knapp School Administration or Personnel dismiss bullying as typical student behavior or assume it is not serious. Doing so could result in disciplinary action.

Referrals

Interventions with bullies should not focus only on perpetrator feelings but work to develop and change thinking. Knapp School Personnel will, as deemed appropriate, utilize school-based services to reinforce appropriate behavioral expectations and increase the youth's social-emotional competency. When necessary and / or beneficial, Knapp School Personnel may also provide information to parents/ guardians for outside, community-based services for additional support for the youth.

The targets of bullying need protection from bullies but may also need support and help in changing their own behavior. When appropriate or beneficial, Knapp School Personnel may provide information to parents/ guardians for outside, community-based services for additional support for the youth. For example, community-based individual or group therapy where the youth can openly express their feelings about their bullying experience, social-skills training and/or groups where they can practice assertiveness and coping mechanisms.

Obligations and Consequences for the Knapp School Personnel and Volunteers

The Knapp School, School Personnel and Volunteers are obligated to the reporting and investigation guidelines set forth in this policy. In the event it is discovered or determined that any School Personnel or Volunteer had knowledge or awareness of a bullying incident or possibility, but failed to report it, the employee / volunteer will be considered to have violated this, Policy. In such circumstances, the principal will consider appropriate disciplinary action for failure to adhere to and uphold School Policy.

Notice and Dissemination of Requirements

Knapp School Administration shall follow the requirements established to post this Anti-Bullying Policy on the school's website, in the school building, disseminating, and presenting this Policy to school staff as part of pre-school-year professional development, distributing to all Knapp School students and parent/ legal guardians.

Student Internet Safety Education

Information about Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying is to be part of Knapp School curriculum and shall be taught at least once each school year to all students. The scope and duration of this of instruction and topics covered shall, at minimum, address: (a) safety on the Internet; (b) appropriate behavior while online, on social networking Web sites, and in chat rooms; and (c) cyber-bullying awareness and response. The age-appropriate unit of instruction may be incorporated into the current courses of study regularly taught.

ATTACHMENT A - Form for Reporting Bullying and Retaliation

NOTE: *The reporter may remain anonymous, but no discipline will be imposed based solely upon an anonymous report.*

Anybody who witnesses an incident of bullying or school violence or possesses reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying, must: (1) intervene immediately in a manner that is appropriate to the context and ensures the safety of all people involved; (2) report the incident of bullying or retaliation to the Knapp School Principal or Director of Student Support Services or other school administrator as soon as possible, not exceeding 24 hours from knowledge of such a situation and (3) cooperate fully in any investigation of the incident and in implementing any safety plan established by the Knapp School.

Today's Date: _____

Name(s) and grade(s) of Victim/Target: _____

Reporting Information (Required for Employees; optional for students/parents/guardians)

Name & Title of Reporter: _____

Relationship to Victim/Target: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Incident Information

Name(s) of student(s) suspected of engaging in bullying/retaliatory behaviors OR description (if name(s) unknown):

Location of incident: _____

Date and time of incident: _____

Approximate dates, times, and frequency of prior incident(s):

Describe what happened and who was present in as much detail as possible (*Required Information):
