

American School Anti-Bullying Policy Effective September 1, 2024

American School (the School) finds that a safe, civil and healthy school environment is necessary for all students to learn and achieve. Bullying causes physical, psychological and emotional harm to students which interferes with this safe, civil and healthy learning environment. Additionally, bullying has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping or dropping out of school, fighting, use of drugs/alcohol, sexual harassment and sexual violence. (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7)

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, academic status, pregnancy, parenting status, homelessness, 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 with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited.

Bullying is contrary to state law and the policies of American School. No student should be subjected to bullying:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
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 function, activity, function or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or 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 does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function or program.

Nothing in this policy 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 I of the Illinois Constitution.

Definitions

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 on one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' persons or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or student's physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or

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.

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.

Cyberbullying 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 email, internet communications, instant messages or fax communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a web page or blog 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. Cyberbullying 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.

Retaliation means any form of intimidation, reprisal including but not limited to the submissions 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 according to this policy.

Restorative measures are a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline such as suspensions and expulsions that

1. are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community
2. contribute to maintaining school safety
3. protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate
4. teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society
5. serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools and communities
6. reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school
7. 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.

School personnel are persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school district, charter school or non-public non-sectarian elementary or secondary school, including without limitation school and school district administrators, teachers, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers and security guards.

Bullying Report Process

Students, parents and school personnel are encouraged to immediately report bullying to any administrator within American School. Alternatively, reports may be made orally or in writing to the Bullying Report Manager:

David Perry, Director of Instructional Services
American School
2200 East 170th Street
708-418-2800
dperry@americanschool.org

Anonymous reports are accepted by calling the contact listed above and specifically indicating that you would like to remain anonymous. However, formal disciplinary action cannot be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Response to Bullying Reports

In the decision whether or not inappropriate behavior constitutes bullying, administrators will consider the student's intent, the frequency or reoccurrence of the inappropriate behavior, and whether there are power imbalances between the students involved. Although bullying is often characterized by repeated acts, in some cases, a single incident may constitute bullying depending on the student's intent and power imbalances.

Responsibilities of American School Staff

All American School staff who witness incidents of bullying or school violence or who possess reliable information that would lead to 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 persons involved;
2. Report the incident of bullying or retaliation to the Bullying Report Manager as soon practicable, but within 24 hours, using the American School Bullying Complaint Form; and
3. Cooperate fully in the investigation of the incident and in implementing any safety plan established by the Bullying Report Manager.

Responsibilities of Students and Parents/Guardians

Any student that witnesses bullying may not stand by or participate in the bullying, but must notify an adult at the School and an adult at home as quickly as practicable. Any parent/guardian who witnesses or is notified of bullying has an obligation to advise the Bullying Report Manager as quickly as practicable, but within 24 hours. Reports can be made to any American School employee or contractor in person, by completion of an American School Bullying Complaint Form, by calling the Instruction Department at 708-418-2860, or by emailing instructiondept@americanschool.org. Anonymous reports will be accepted by the Bullying Report Manager. No disciplinary action will be taken on the sole basis of an anonymous report.

Investigation

1. American School and/or its Bullying Report Manager shall select a designee to perform the investigation who is knowledgeable about bullying prevention and intervention.
2. Investigation of bullying incidents will be initiated within five business days of receipt of a report and completed within 10 business days, unless the Bullying Report Manager grants in writing an additional 5-day extension due to extenuating circumstances. The Bullying Report Manager shall document the extension in the investigation report and shall notify the parties involved.
3. The investigation shall include:
 - a. Identify 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. Individual interviews, allowing the alleged perpetrator and target to provide their complete history of the report incident.
 - c. A determination of how often the conduct occurred, any past incident or continuing pattern of behavior or 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. When appropriate, preparing a Misconduct Report identifying his/her recommendation for individual consequences.
 - f. Documenting full details of the investigation.
4. When the investigation is complete, the Bullying Report Manager shall ensure the investigation report is placed in the permanent record of the both the perpetrator and target.

Notification

The Bullying Report Manager shall report to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of all students involved within 24 hours of the investigation being initiated via telephone and/or in writing, the occurrence of any alleged incident of bullying as well as all threats, suggestions or instances of self-harm determined to be the result of bullying, and shall document these notifications in the permanent record of the both the perpetrator and target. The Bullying Report Manager also shall collect, maintain, and submit non-identifiable data regarding verified allegations of bullying to the Illinois State Board of Education.

When the investigation is complete, the Bullying Report Manager shall notify the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of all students involved the outcome of the investigation via telephone and/or writing.

Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of the students who are parties to the investigation may request a personal conference with the Bullying Report Manager to discuss the investigation, findings of the investigation, the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying, and of possible resources outside the School to help the students address the underlying reasons for the bullying.

If the investigation results in the imposition of consequences, the Bullying Report Manager may advise the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of students other than the perpetrator that the Student Code of Conduct was followed. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of students other than the perpetrator will not be advised of specific consequences imposed, as that would be a violation of confidentiality of school-record information required by law.

When an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the Bullying Report Manager shall explain the consequences in a non-hostile manner, and shall impose any consequence immediately and consistently. The Bullying Report Manager shall keep communicating and working with all parties involved until the situation is resolved.

When communicating incidents of bullying to the target's parent(s)/guardian(s), the Bullying Report Manager will consider whether the student may want to keep certain information confidential.

Assigning Interventions and/or Consequences

American School will respond to bullying in a manner tailored to the individual incident, considering the nature of the behavior, developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Appropriate responses and consequences are outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and can include suspension and or dismissal from American School.

Referrals

Consistent with Federal and State laws, the Bullying Report Manager may refer students who bully to the School Counselor. The counselor, as appropriate, will inform and discuss with the parent(s)/guardian(s) the availability of social work, counseling, and psychological services, and other intervention and restorative measures in the student's local area.

Appeal

Any party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal to the American School Executive Committee within 15 calendar days of notification of the Bullying Report Manager's decision. The Executive Committee will render a final determination within 10 days of receipt of the appeal. The Executive Committee may return the incident to the Bullying Report Manager for further investigation or reconsideration of the consequence(s), direct the imposition of other consequence(s), or deny the appeal. The Executive Committee shall notify the party requesting the appeal and the Bullying Report Manager that its decision is final and shall document that notification in permanent record of the both the perpetrator and target.

Consequences

When it is determined that an employee or contractor was aware that bullying was taking place but failed to report it, the employee will be considered to have violated this policy. The Bullying Report Manager will report the incident the Human Resources Supervisor for employee discipline as outlined in the *American School Employee Handbook*.

Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. Such reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for the purpose of determining appropriate consequences. No person will be subject to making a good-faith report of bullying. However, making a false accusation of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying is prohibited and will be treated as bullying for the purpose of determining appropriate consequences.

Policy Evaluation

This policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders including students, parents and guardians. Furthermore this policy is consistent with other policies of American School.

Notice and Dissemination of Requirements

This policy shall be posted on American School's web site (www.americanschool.org), included in American School's Student Handbook and Employee Handbook, and will be distributed on a yearly basis to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel (including new hires).

American School will conduct a review and re-evaluation of this policy every two years to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of this policy and shall make any necessary and appropriate revisions. As part of this process American School shall review various factors including but not limited to

1. The frequency of victimization
2. Student, staff and family observations of safety at school
3. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs
4. The types of bullying utilized
5. Bystander intervention or participation

American 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 American School's web site (www.americanschool.org).

No later than September 30 of the subject year, the policy must be filed with the Illinois State Board of Education after being updated.

Date of Adoption: September 1, 2024

Date of Most Recent Review: September 1, 2024

References

105 ILCS 5/27-23.7—Bullying Prevention

23 Illinois Administrative Code § 1.295



Bullying and Retaliation Reporting Form

Date of Submission: _____

Victim or Target Information

Name(s) of Victim/Target:

Reporting Information*

Name and Title of Person Reporting: _____

Relationship to Victim/Target: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Incident Information

Name(s) of student(s) accused of engaging in bullying behaviors:

Course in which bullying/retaliation took place: _____

Date and time of incident: _____

Dates, times and frequency of prior incident(s): _____

Describe what happened and who was present in as much detail as possible (Required). _____
