

Approved 5/20/09

Integrated Day Charter School

Series 5000. Students

POLICY BULLYING BEHAVIOR IN THE SCHOOLS

In accordance with state law, it is the policy of the Integrated Day Charter School Governing Board that any form of bullying behavior, whether in the classroom, on school property, on a school bus, or at school-sponsored events, is expressly forbidden.

The Director or his/her designee shall be responsible for developing and implementing administrative regulations in furtherance of this policy. As provided by statute, such regulations shall: (1) enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators and require that students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make such anonymous reports, (2) enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying, (3) require teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying or receive student reports of bullying to notify school administrators in writing, (4) require school administrators to investigate any written reports and to review any anonymous reports (except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report), (5) include a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by this policy, for school staff to deal with bullying, (6) provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying, (7) require IDCS school administrators to notify both the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed, and to invite them to attend at least one meeting, (8) require the IDCS to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and within available appropriations, report such number annually to the Department of Education, in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, (9) direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline, and (10) identify the appropriate school personnel, which may include, but shall not be limited to, pupil services personnel, responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint.

The notification required pursuant to subdivision (7) shall include a description of the response of school staff to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. *Such regulations may include provisions addressing bullying outside of the school setting if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.* Any information provided under this policy shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the district's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.

For purposes of this policy, **“Bullying”** shall mean any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate, or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year. Such overt acts, which occur off-campus (and not at a school sponsored activity) may also constitute bullying if it is determined that they have a direct and negative impact on a student’s academic performance or safety in school.

For purposes of this policy, **“School-Sponsored Activity”** shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the IDCS Governing Board.

For the purposes of this policy, **“Prevention and Intervention Strategy”** may include, but shall not be limited to, (1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying, including any such program identified by the Department of Education, 2) a school survey to determine the prevalence of bullying, (3) establishment of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee with broad representation to review the survey results and implement the strategy, (4) school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (5) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur, (6) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying prevention curricula in kindergarten through grade eight, (7) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school staff, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school staff, (8) school-wide training related to safe school climate, and (9) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.

Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline up to and including expulsion in accordance with the IDCS Governing Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion.

Effective July 1, 2009, this policy and the applicable regulations shall be included in the school’s publication of the rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

Public Act No. 08-160

6/13/08

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Series 5000, Students

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS CONCERNING BULLYING BEHAVIOR IN THE SCHOOLS

The following sets forth the procedures to implement the IDCS Governing Board Policy concerning the prohibition against bullying. Bullying behavior is strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school, in accordance with the Governing Board's Student Discipline policy. The school's commitment to addressing bullying behavior, however, involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which bullying will not be tolerated by students or staff.

It is imperative that bullying be identified only when the specific elements of the definition are met, because the designation of conduct as bullying carries with it special statutory obligations. Any misconduct by one student against another student, whether or not appropriately defined as bullying, however, will subject the perpetrator to disciplinary action in accordance with the Governing Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion.

I. Definition:

In accordance with IDCS Governing Board policy, "bullying" means any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on or off school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity, or on a school bus, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year. Overt acts occurring off-campus (and not at a school sponsored activity) may also constitute bullying if it is determined that they have a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

In accordance with this definition, the following factors should be considered before identifying conduct by a student or group of students as bullying in violation of the Governing Board policy. The determination that conduct does not constitute bullying under state law and Governing Board policy, however, does not restrict the right of the Administration and the IDCS Governing Board to impose appropriate disciplinary consequences for student misconduct.

- Location. Bullying behavior in violation of Governing Board policy may occur on or off school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity, or on a school bus. Conduct that occurs off-campus, (e.g. physical intimidation in the community) is considered bullying under the Governing Board's Policy and this Regulation. Cyber-bullying, which is the use of electronic equipment to commit acts of bullying, is also considered bullying.

- Misconduct Committed More Than Once. Bullying behavior in violation of Governing Board policy must be “committed more than once against any student during the school year.” An isolated incident, however egregious, is not “bullying” under state law and Governing Board policy. However, where there are multiple incidents of bullying against one student or multiple students by the same individual, during the school year, the responsible administrator shall develop a case-specific intervention to address such repeated incidents of bullying, which may include both counseling and discipline.
- Ridicule, harassment, humiliation, and/or intimidation. Bullying behavior is more than misconduct. Such behavior is marked by the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the victim. In evaluating whether conduct constitutes bullying, special attention should be paid to the words chosen or actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the perpetrator interacted with the victim, and the motivation of the perpetrator.
- Types of conduct. Bullying can take many forms and can include many different behaviors having the overt intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate another student. Examples of conduct that could constitute bullying include:
 1. Physical violence and/or attacks;
 2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, including taunts based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected and/or individual characteristics such as socioeconomic status or physical appearance;
 3. Threats and intimidation (through words and/or gestures);
 4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions;
 5. Cyberbullying, defined as use of computer systems, including email, instant messaging, text messaging, blogging or the use of social networking websites, or other forms of electronic communications, to commit acts of bullying.

II. Complaint processes

A. Publication of the policy and regulations against bullying

Effective July 1, 2009, this policy and the applicable regulations shall be included in the school’s publication of the rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

B. Appropriate school personnel

All school administrators are charged with the responsibility of taking reports of bullying and appropriately investigating same. Reports may be made to the director or designee.

C. Formal/written complaints

Students and/or their parents or guardians may file written reports of conduct that they consider to be bullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with the director or designee for review and action in accordance with Section III below.

D. Informal/verbal complaints by Students

Students may also make informal/verbal complaints of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbally reporting to a teacher, administrator, or other professional employee such as a guidance counselor, school psychologist, nurse, social worker or therapist. Such informal/verbal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A teacher, other professional employee, or administrator who receives an informal/verbal complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the information provided. Such written report by the teacher, other professional employee and/or administrator shall be promptly forwarded to the director for review and action in accordance with Section III below.

E. Anonymous complaints

Students who make complaints of bullying to a teacher, administrator, or other professional employee such as a guidance counselor, school psychologist, nurse, social worker or therapist, may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the staff member who receives the complaint. Should anonymity be requested, the director or his/her designee shall meet with the student to review the request for anonymity and the impact that maintaining anonymity of the complaint may have on the investigation of the complaint and/or possible remedial action. At such meeting, the student shall be given the choice as to whether to maintain the anonymity of the complaint. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying.

III. Staff responsibilities and intervention strategies

A. Teachers and other school staff

1. Teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying, as defined above, shall promptly notify the director and/or his/her designee in writing of the events observed, and shall promptly file a written incident report concerning the events witnessed. Teachers and other school staff who receive student reports of suspected bullying shall promptly notify the director and/or his/her designee of such report(s). If the report is a formal, written complaint, such complaint shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the director or his/her designee. If the report is an informal/verbal complaint by a student that is received by a teacher, administrator or other professional employee, he or she shall prepare a succinct written report of the informal complaint, which shall be forwarded promptly (no later than the next school day) to the director or his/her designee. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by other school staff, this employee shall verbally report the matter to the director and/or his/her designee promptly (no later than the next school day).
2. In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, teachers and other professional employees are encouraged to address the issue of bullying in other interactions with students. Teachers and other professional employees may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior. Teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, harassing, humiliating or intimidating another student, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of "bullying."

B. Administrator responsibilities

1. Investigation
 - a. The director (or other responsible program administrator) shall be promptly notified of any formal or informal complaint of suspected bullying received by any building administrator, teacher or other professional employee. Under the direction of the director or his/her designee, all such complaints shall be investigated promptly. In order to allow the IDCS to adequately investigate all formal complaints, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied must complete a consent form that permits the IDCS to release that student's name to those third parties who the IDCS contacts as part of its investigation of that complaint. With regard to the investigation of informal complaints, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied must complete the above-referenced consent form so long as that student has not requested anonymity.

- b. A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of bullying were verified, and, when acts of bullying are verified, a recommendation for intervention, which may include disciplinary action. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.
- c. Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complainant. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged perpetrator), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

2. Remedial actions

- a. Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the director (or other responsible program administrator) or his/her designee that is intended to address the acts of the perpetrator and the needs of the victim and to assure that the prohibition against bullying behavior is enforced with the goal that any such bullying behavior will end as a result.
- b. Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of “bullying”, as defined above, will generally warrant disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such bullying, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (e.g., detention, in-school suspension, suspension or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the director (or responsible program administrator or his/her designee). No disciplinary action may be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint.

The following sets forth possible interventions for the director (or other responsible program administrators) to enforce the Governing Board’s prohibition against bullying.

- c. Addressing bullying behavior
 - i. Non-disciplinary interventions

When verified acts of bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

In any instance in which bullying is verified, the director (or other responsible program administrator) shall invite the parents or guardians of the perpetrator and the parents or guardians of the bullied student to attend at least one meeting. At the discretion of the director or other responsible program administrator, the meeting(s) described in this section may be held jointly or separately.

ii. Disciplinary interventions

When acts of bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences that apply to on campus and off campus conduct. Anonymous complaints, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

In-school suspension and suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation, in accordance with the Governing Board's Student Discipline policy.

Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Governing Board, a committee of the Governing Board or an impartial hearing officer designated by the Governing Board in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy. This consequence shall normally be reserved for serious incidents of bullying and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating bullying behavior.

In those cases where bullying behavior has occurred *off campus* (and outside of any school-sponsored activity), discipline for such

conduct may be imposed if such conduct violates a publicized policy of the Governing Board and is seriously disruptive of the educational process.

3. Interventions for bullied students

The director (or other responsible program administrator) or his/her designee shall intervene in order to address multiple incidents of bullying against a single individual. Intervention strategies for a bullied student may include the following:

- a. Counseling;
- b. Increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying situations;
- c. Encouragement of student to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization;
- d. Peer mediation where appropriate.

4. General Prevention and Intervention Strategies

In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of bullying and direct intervention when acts of bullying are verified, other school actions may ameliorate potential problems with bullying in school or at school-sponsored activities. While no specific action is required, and school needs for specific prevention and intervention strategies may vary from time to time, the following list of potential prevention and intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers and other professional employees in each school:

- a. Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying, including any such program identified by the Department of Education;
- b. A school survey to determine the prevalence of bullying;
- c. Establishment of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee with broad representation to review school climate survey results and implement appropriate strategies;

- d. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur;
- e. Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying prevention curricula;
- f. Individual interventions with the perpetrator, parents and school staff, and interventions with the bullied student, parents and school staff;
- g. School-wide training related to safe school climate;
- h. Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;
- i. Respectful responses to bullying concerns raised by students, parents or staff;
- j. Planned professional development programs addressing prevention and intervention strategies;
- k. Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;
- l. Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping;
- m. Continuing awareness and involvement on the part of staff and parents with regards to prevention and intervention strategies;
- n. Modeling by teachers of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;
- o. Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;
- p. Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.

IV. Reporting obligations

A. Report to the parent or guardian of the perpetrator

If after investigation, acts of bullying by a specific student are verified, the director (or other responsible program administrator or his/her designee) shall

notify the parent or guardian of the perpetrator in writing of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in such notification.

B. Reports to the victim and his/her parent or guardian

If after investigation, acts of bullying against a specific student are verified, the director (or other responsible program administrator or his/her designee) shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such finding. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such bullying. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, as reflected in the student's educational records, shall not be disclosed to the parents or guardian of the victim, except as provided by law.

C. List of verified acts of bullying

The director of the school shall maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school, and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. Given that any determination of bullying involves multiple acts during the same school year, each report prepared in accordance with Section III above that includes verified acts of bullying shall be tallied as one verified act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the subject of the report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall be limited to the number of such verified acts of bullying in the school, and it shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including but not limited to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.

D. Report to Department of Education

Within available appropriations, the director of the school shall report the number of verified acts of bullying in the school annually to the Department of Education, in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

Public Act No. 08-160

3/15/09
320664 v.20 S4

Integrated Day Charter School

REPORT OF BULLYING FORM/INVESTIGATION SUMMARY

School _____ Date _____

Location(s) _____

Reporter Information:

Anonymous student report _____

Staff Member report _____ Name _____

Parent/Guardian report _____ Name _____

Student report _____ Name _____

Student Reported as Committing Act: _____

Student Reported as Victim: _____

Description of Alleged Act(s): _____

Time and Place: _____

Names of Potential Witnesses: _____

For Staff Use Only:

Action of Reporter: _____

Administrative Investigation Notes (use separate sheet if necessary):

Bullying Verified? Yes ___ No ___

Remedial Action(s) Taken: _____

If Bullying Verified, Report Sent to Parents of Students?

Parents' Names: _____

Date Sent: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Date Sent: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Date Sent: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Date Sent: _____

(Attach bullying complaint, witness statements, and notification to parents of students involved if bullying is verified)

2/21/07

320664 v.19 S5

Integrated Day Charter School

Report of Bullying/Consent to Release Student Information

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

School: _____

To Parent/Guardian:

A complaint of bullying has been filed on behalf of your child alleging that he/she has been the victim of bullying. In order to facilitate a prompt and thorough investigation of the complaint, the Integrated Day Charter School may need to disclose the name of your child and/or other information which may otherwise disclose your child's identity.

(Please check one):

_____ I hereby give permission for the Integrated Day Charter School to disclose my child's name, along with any other information necessary to permit the IDCS to adequately and appropriately investigate such complaint, to third parties contacted by the district as part of its investigation.

_____ I do **NOT** give permission for the Integrated Day Charter School to disclose my child's name, along with any other information necessary to permit the IDCS to adequately and appropriately investigate such complaint, to third parties contacted by the district as part of its investigation.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Name (Please print)