

Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment Policy

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important to the goals of the YouthBuild McLean County Charter School, YouthBuild Academy and all YouthBuild programs.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in each of the following situations:

1. During any school sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles 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 nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the Charter School, Private School or YouthBuild related programs if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the education process or orderly operation of a school. This paragraph (item #4) applies only when program staff receive a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require staff members to monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

Definitions from Section 27-23.7 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7)

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 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; 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.

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, photo-electronic 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. 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.

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,
- (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, and
- (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.

School personnel and program staff means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in within the charter school, private school or YouthBuild programs, including without limitation school and school administrators, teachers, school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

Bullying may take various forms as detailed under 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7, 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.

Bullying is contrary to state law and the policy of YouthBuild McLean County Charter School and YouthBuild Academy.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

The YouthBuild McLean County Board of Directors will maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the charter school/private school/and or YouthBuild program's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan must be consistent with the requirements listed below; each numbered requirement, 1-12, corresponds with the same number in the list of required policy components in 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7(b) 1-2.

1. The Charter School/Private School/YouthBuild program uses the definition of *bullying* as provided in this policy.
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this Charter School/Private School/YouthBuild program. However, nothing in the School's bullying prevention and response plan 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 U.S. Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.
3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Compliance Manager or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the Compliance Manager or any staff member. Anonymous reports are also accepted.

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4. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Compliance Manager or designee shall promptly inform the parents/guardians of every student involved in an alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.
5. The Compliance Manager or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying, by, among other things:
 - a. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of a bullying incident was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported bullying incident.
 - 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 Executive Director of the reported 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/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Education Director or school administrator or his/her/they designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The Compliance Manager or designee shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the School's jurisdiction and shall require that the School provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the School and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

6. The Compliance Manager or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, that may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative

measures, social emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

7. YouthBuild McLean County Charter School/YouthBuild Academy and YouthBuild programs prohibits a reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
8. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the School's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. 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.
9. The School's bullying prevention and response plan must be based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.
10. The School's policy on bullying will:
 - a. Be based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, including students/ parents and/or guardians.
 - b. Where applicable, be posted where other policies, rules or standards of conduct are posted in the school.
 - c. Be posted prominently on the district or school website
 - d. Be included in the school handbook.
 - e. Be distributed annually to parents, guardians, students and school personnel, including new employees when hired.
11. The Compliance Manager or designee shall post this policy on the School's Internet website, if any, and include it in the student handbook, and, where applicable, post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy must also be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.
12. The Executive Director or designee shall assist the Board with its evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, without limitation:
 - a. The frequency of victimization;
 - b. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
 - c. Identification or areas of a school where bullying occurs;
 - d. The types of bullying utilized; and
 - e. Bystander intervention or participation.The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that the School already collects for other purposes. The Compliance Manager or designee must post the information developed as a result of the policy

evaluation on the School's website, or if a website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, Board members, school personnel, parents/guardians, and students.

13. The Executive Director or designee shall fully implement the Board policies, including without limitation, the following:
 - a. 2.260 ~Uniform Grievance Procedure. A student may use this policy to complain about bullying.
 - b. 6.60 ~ Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Policy. Bullying prevention and character instruction is provided in all grades in accordance with State law.
 - c. 6.65 ~ Student social and emotional development is incorporated in the Charter School's educational program as required by State law.
 - d. 6.235 ~ This policy states that the use of the Charter School's electronic networks is limited to:
 - i. support of education and/or research, or
 - ii. a legitimate business use.
 - e. 7.20 ~ This policy prohibits any person from harassing, intimidating, or bullying a student based on an actual or perceived characteristic (the list of characteristics in 7.20 is the same as the list in this policy).
 - f. 7.185 ~ This policy prohibits teen dating violence on school property, at school sponsored activities, and in vehicles used for school-provided transportation.
 - g. 7.190 ~ This policy prohibits, and provides consequences for, hazing, bullying, or other aggressive behaviors, or urging other students to engage in such conduct.
 - h. 7.310 ~ This policy prohibits students from, and provides consequences for:
 - i. accessing and/or distributing at school any written, printed, or electronic material, including material from the Internet, that will cause substantial disruption of the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the school or school activities, and
 - ii. creating and/or distributing written, printed, or electronic material, including photographs and Internet material and blogs, that causes substantial disruption to school operations or interferes with the rights of other students or staff members.

LEGAL REF.: 405 ILS 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. CROSS REF.: 2.240, 2.260, 4.170, 5.230, 6.60, 6.65, 6.235, 7.20, 7.185, 7.190, 7.220, 7.230, 7.240,