



PROVIDENT CHARTER SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Purpose

Provident Charter School is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for students, and recognizes that bullying and intimidation have a negative effect on school climate. Students who are bullied, intimidated or fearful of other students may not be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered by Provident Charter School. Therefore, the Board of Trustees prohibits bullying by Provident students, and it is a violation of this policy for any Provident staff member to tolerate bullying.

Definitions

Bullying shall mean an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts:

1. Directed at another student or students;
2. Which occurs in a school setting and/or (in some instances) outside a school setting;
3. That is severe, persistent or pervasive; and
4. That has the effect of doing any of the following:
 - i. substantially interfering with a student's education;
 - ii. creating a threatening environment; or
 - iii. substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyber-bullying.

“Cyberbullying” as defined in this policy, includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher or employee of the school by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or web site postings (including blogs). All forms of cyberbullying are unacceptable and, to the extent that such actions are disruptive of the educational process of the school, offenders shall be the subject of appropriate discipline, which may include legal and/or police proceedings.

Bullying includes but is not limited to:

1. Physically harming a student.
2. Damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property.
3. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm.
4. Placing a student in emotional unrest by spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships or environment, engaging in social exclusion, extortion, intimidation, or ridicule.
5. Cyber-bullying: forms of verbal and psychological bullying may also occur on the Internet through e-mail, instant messaging, or personal profile web sites.
6. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities.
7. Creating verbal statements or written remarks that are taunting, malicious, threatening or sexual.

Bullying includes retaliation against another student for reporting bullying or for assisting or testifying in the investigation or the hearing. Students who engage in such retaliation will be subject to consequences as defined in the Code of Student Conduct.

School Setting shall mean in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

The term bullying shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.

Authority

The Board of Trustees prohibits all forms of bullying by students. Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying and therefore the Board of Trustees encourages students who believe they or others have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to either of the school principals. It is the obligation of Provident professionals and support staff to report any incident of bullying to the elementary or middle school principal.

Students are encouraged to put the complaint in writing; however, oral complaints shall be accepted and documented. The person accepting the complaint shall handle the report objectively, neutrally, and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor the student filing the complaint or those accused of a violation of this policy.

The Board of Trustees directs that verbal and written complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and appropriate corrective or preventive action shall be taken when allegations are substantiated. The Board of Trustees directs that any complaint of bullying brought pursuant to this policy shall also be reviewed for conduct which may not be proven to be bullying under this policy but merits review and possible action under other Board policies. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with Provident Charter School's legal and investigative obligations.

Discrimination/Discriminatory Harassment

Every report of alleged bullying that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws against discrimination and discriminatory harassment shall be handled as a joint, concurrent investigation into all allegations and coordinated with the designated Compliance Officer. If, in the course of a bullying investigation, potential issues of discrimination or discriminatory harassment are identified, the Compliance Officer shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of alleged discrimination as well as the incidents of alleged bullying.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of all parties, witnesses, the allegations, the filing of a complaint and the investigation shall be handled in accordance with this policy and Provident Charter School's legal and investigative obligations.

Retaliation

Reprisal or retaliation relating to reports of bullying or participation in an investigation of allegations of bullying is prohibited and shall be subject to disciplinary action.

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

Delegation of Responsibility

The CEO or designee shall ensure that this policy is appropriately reflected in administrative guidelines and any Code of Student conduct and that such codes are reviewed annually with students.

The CEO or designee, in cooperation with other administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board of Trustees. School administration shall annually provide the following information to PDE through the Safe School Report:

1. Board of Trustees' Anti-Bullying Policy
2. Report of bullying incidents.
3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.

The Student Handbooks, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students.

This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the Provident Charter School Website.

Additional Reporters

Provident Charter School strongly encourages students, parents/guardians, school employees, or bus drivers who become aware of any act of bullying to immediately report that conduct to the School principal. The School principal or designee is authorized and directed to investigate reports of bullying brought to their attention by students, parents/guardians, school employees or bus drivers.

Education

Provident Charter School may develop and implement bullying prevention and intervention programs. Such programs shall provide School staff and students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting incidents of bullying.

Consequences/Discipline

Consequences for students who are found to have bullied others may include counseling; remediation; parent/guardian conference; loss of school privileges; transfer to another classroom or school bus; detention; suspension; expulsion; or referral to law enforcement agency, in accordance with Provident Charter School's disciplinary policies and Code of Conduct.

Interplay With Other Provident Charter School Policies

Nothing in this policy shall prevent school employees from enforcing, or imposing discipline, or fulfilling their professional responsibilities under other school policies or student disciplinary rules.

This policy shall not be interpreted as preventing a student or parent/guardian from filing a complaint under the school's anti-harassment policy.