

Bullying and Cyber Bullying

The Board of Directors of Hoosier Academy has approved the following anti-bullying policy.

Policy Statement

Hoosier Academy believes that a safe and secure educational environment is necessary for students to achieve. To further its goal of providing an environment that is safe, secure and conducive to learning, Hoosier Academy prohibits acts of bullying, whether by students, staff, visitors, parents, guests, contractors or volunteers. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of Hoosier Academy students, administrators, parents, faculty, staff, visitors, and volunteers at all times.

Definition of Bullying

1. Bullying means overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), physical acts, aggression, or any other behaviors, that are committed against a student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:
 - a. Places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student's person or property;
 - b. Has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
 - c. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance; or
 - d. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school.
2. The term "bullying" will not be interpreted to impose any burden or sanction on, or to include in its definition, the following:
 - a. Participating in a religious event;
 - b. Acting in an emergency involving the protection of a person or property from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or substantial danger;
 - c. Participating in an activity consisting of the exercise of a student's rights protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I, Section 31, of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, or both;
 - d. Participating in an activity conducted by a nonprofit or governmental entity that provides recreation, education, training, or other care under the supervision of one or more adults;

- e. Participating in an activity undertaken at the prior written direction of the student's parent; and/or
 - f. Engaging in interstate or international travel from a location outside Indiana to another location outside Indiana.
3. Bullying is prohibited “at school,” which for purposes of this policy includes but is not necessarily limited to any location on school premises, at school-sponsored activities or events away from school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, or when using a telecommunications access device or a telecommunications service provider that is owned by or under the control of Hoosier Academy. Bullying that does not occur “at school,” as defined above, including bullying that occurs over the internet (cyberbullying), is also subject to disciplinary action in accordance with this policy and applicable law if it causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment and meets the criteria listed above.
 4. Bullying includes acts that satisfy the above definition, whether committed by students, staff, visitors, parents, guests, contractors, volunteers, or others.

Reporting and Investigating Reports of Bullying

1. Students, parents, and volunteers are encouraged to report alleged violations of this policy to a staff member, including a teacher, counselor, or the Head of School, as soon as possible after the occurrence of the alleged violation. A student or parent may also submit a written report of any alleged violation to the Head of School or the Head of School’s designee. A written report may be made anonymously; however, disciplinary action for violations of this policy may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
2. Staff members or contracted service providers who witness or receive reliable information regarding an incident of bullying must report such incident to the Head of School or the Head of School’s designee on the same day the incident was witnessed or the information was received. A written report of the incident shall also be submitted to the Head of School or Head of School’s designee within one (1) school day of submitting the verbal report. Any staff member or contracted service provider who receives a report of a suspected violation of this policy from a student, parent, visitor or colleague, and fails to initiate an investigation, or who witnesses or observes a bullying incident and fails to take sufficient action to minimize or eliminate the harassment, intimidation, or bullying, may be subject to disciplinary action.
3. Any complaint against the Head of School should be reported to the Board of Directors.
4. Retaliation or false accusation against a target of bullying, a witness, or another person with reliable information about an act of bullying is also prohibited under this policy. Suspected retaliation or false accusation should be reported in the same manner as suspected bullying behavior.

5. Intentionally making false accusations about bullying is also prohibited and should be reported in the same manner as suspected bullying behavior.
6. The Head of School or the Head of School's designee shall promptly investigate all reports of violations of this policy. The Head of School may appoint additional personnel to assist in the investigation. Any such investigation shall be completed with written findings submitted to the Head of School within five school days from the date of the report of the alleged violation to the Head of School.
7. If an investigation results in a finding that an instance of bullying has occurred, prompt and appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken in accordance with the disciplinary procedures found in this School Handbook and the Code of Student Conduct, which may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including: (a) expulsion for students; (b) discharge for employees or staff members; and (c) exclusion for parents, visitors, volunteers, and contractors. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions will depend upon the severity of the offense and will take into account both the developmental ages of student offenders and such students' histories of inappropriate behaviors. The Head of School will ensure the Code of Student Conduct has been implemented and will provide intervention and/or relevant support services as appropriate (i.e., referral to counseling, establishment of training programs to reduce bullying and enhance school climate, enlisting parent corporation and involvement, or other appropriate action).
8. The Head of School shall provide the parents or legal guardians of the students who are parties to an investigation with information about the investigation, in accordance with Federal and State law and regulation. The information to be provided to parents will generally include the nature of the investigation, whether the Head of School found evidence of bullying, and whether consequences were imposed or services provided to address the bullying incident if the evidence of bullying was substantiated. This information will be provided in an expedited manner.
9. Hoosier Academy will document all reports of suspected violations of this policy, including the steps taken to investigate such reports and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals. The Head of School shall provide a report of all verified incidents of bullying and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals, to the Board of Directors on an annual basis. The Head of School's report will also include a record of the frequency of bullying incidents in the following categories: verbal bullying, physical bullying, social/relational bullying, and electronic or written communication bullying.
10. The Head of School is the school official responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

Education and Training

1. Hoosier Academy will provide annual training on preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying to administrators, staff members, contracted service providers, and volunteers who have direct, ongoing contact with students.
2. No later than October 15th of each school year, Hoosier Academy will: (1) disseminate the Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy to all students, and (2) provide bullying prevention instruction to all students. The student instruction will be part of a comprehensive bullying prevention effort communicated to students throughout the school year, with age appropriate, research based instruction for all students in grades 1-12 delivered by a school safety specialist, school counselor, or other person with training and expertise in the area of bullying prevention and intervention.

Confidentiality

Hoosier Academy will comply with all applicable laws regarding confidentiality of personally identifiable information from education records.