

ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

I. Statement of Purpose

The Charter High School for Law and Social Justice (the “School”) aims to maintain an environment in which all individuals feel that they are treated with respect. To that end, we prohibit unlawful discrimination and harassment. We also prohibit intimidation or bullying, as defined below. This policy applies in the School and at offsite events.

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intent to harm another individual. Bullying can include any written, verbal or physical act, when the act physically harms an individual or damages the individual’s property, when the act interferes with an individual’s peace of mind or ability to work, or when the act is severe or part of a pervasive pattern of conduct that creates an intimidating or threatening work environment.

If you believe that you have witnessed or have been subjected to bullying, you should immediately report the incident using the complaint procedures described in the Policy. Individuals who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

II. Definitions

Bullying or harassment: Bullying is the use of aggression with the intent to harm another individual. Bullying can take many forms. While it is not possible to list all those acts that may constitute bullying and violate this policy, bullying can include the creation of a hostile environment by conduct, threats, intimidation, or abuse, including cyberbullying, that:

1. has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional, or physical well-being;
 2. reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety;
 3. reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or
 4. occurs off school property and creates or would reasonably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation, or abuse might reach school property.
- B. **Acts of bullying and harassment:** These include those acts based on a person’s actual or perceived characteristics or group membership, including, but not limited to race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender (which includes a person’s actual or perceived gender, as well as gender identity and expression).
- C. **Conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse:** These include verbal and non-verbal actions.
- D. **Cyberbullying:** Bullying or harassment as defined above, where such bullying or

harassment occurs through any form of electronic communication.

- E. School property: In or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot, or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school, or in a school bus.

III. Dignity Act Coordinator

The School will appoint a Dignity Act Coordinator who will be responsible for implementing this policy.

IV. Applicability

This policy applies to all students, personnel, visitors, vendors, volunteers, and any other people on school property, or at school events off school property, or whose behavior is in any way connected to or has an impact on the School.

V. Prohibited Behavior

- A. Bullying or harassment against students by students, employees, or anyone else on school property and at school-related events or activities or in connection with the school, including but not limited to:
 - 1. physical bullying or harassment, including but not limited to hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, or pushing, or damaged personal property;
 - 2. verbal bullying or harassment, including but not limited to name-calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, discriminatory remarks, or verbal abuse; and
 - 3. covert bullying or harassment, including but not limited to lying, spreading rumors, making negative facial or physical gestures, socially excluding someone, or encouraging others to exclude someone.
- B. Cyberbullying against students by students or employees using the internet, mobile phones, or other digital technologies to harm others either in school or outside school, including but not limited to threats, bullying, or harassment through email, instant messaging, texting, social media websites, or social media applications.

VI. Consequences and Corrective Action

- A. The School will investigate allegations of prohibited conduct and take appropriate disciplinary actions.
- B. If the School finds that a person has engaged in prohibited behavior the School may take one or more of the following actions against members of the following groups.
 - 1. Students: admonition; temporary removal from the School; deprivation of privileges; prohibited from access to school facilities; classroom or administrative detention ; in-school suspension; out-of-school suspension; suspension from after-school programs; any form of discipline described in the School's Student Code of Conduct; or expulsion.
 - 2. Employees: fine; withholding of increment; suspension; or termination.

3. Others: exclusion from school grounds or properties; appropriate legal action or referral to outside legal authorities; termination of service agreements or contracts; or ethics charges.
- C. The School will submit an annual report listing all material bullying or harassment incidents to the New York State Education Department.

VII. Reporting and Investigating Bullying

- A. All school personnel will be responsible for addressing issues of bullying, harassment, or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health of any students, employee, or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school event off of school property.
- B. Students who have been bullied or harassed, parents whose children have been bullied or harassed, or other students who observe bullying or harassment are encouraged and expected to make a verbal and/or written complaint to any school staff member in accordance with this policy and any other applicable policies.
- C. If any employee of the School observes bullying or receives a report of bullying, he or she will immediately forward the information to the Dignity Act Coordinator (the “DAC”).
- D. Once the DAC receives a report of bullying or harassment the DAC will immediately begin an investigation. In conducting the investigation, at a minimum, the DAC will request statements from all school employees, students, or parents who witnessed or received reliable information regarding the incident.
- E. The DAC will report the results of the investigation to the principal, who will determine what disciplinary or other action to take.

VIII. Education

- A. Students
The School will require students to attend at least one anti-bullying session per year at which they will learn the appropriate bullying/harassment reporting procedures and the resources that the School provides relating to anti-bullying and harassment efforts.
- B. Parents
The School will provide parents with information about how to report bullying and how to help their children with bullying issues.
- C. Teachers and Administrators
The School will provide teachers and administrators with at least one training session each year on bullying prevention, how to create a climate of mutual respect, how to create a safe-space environment, and how to report incidents of bullying and harassment.
- D. Social workers
The School will provide social workers with training about how to prevent bullying and how to make students feel from bullying.

IX. Student Code of Conduct

The School has adopted the Student Code of Conduct (the “Code”) for the maintenance of order on school property and the School will apply this policy consistently with the Code.

X. Non Retaliation

The School will not permit retaliation against anyone because that person has participated in the good faith filing or investigation of a complaint of bullying.

Source: Dignity for All Students Act, N.Y. Educ. L. §§ 10-18 (2013)

Adopted by the Board of Trustees: February 11, 2015