

Bullying

Mulberry School has zero tolerance for bullying. Bullying is contrary to state law and Mulberry School's policy. Bullying, intimidation and harassment are detrimental to a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors is important to Mulberry School's Board of Directors, teachers, staff and families.

Mulberry School prohibits ANY bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientations, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, or the 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 characteristics.

1. During any school sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school or on school property at school sponsored or school sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, network or other similar electronic school equipment.

*Bullying, as defined in 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7, is defined as **unwanted** repetitive verbal and/or physical aggressive behavior. In an early childhood setting it can look like name calling, taunting, excluding someone on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone else, spreading rumors, hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, and tripping/pushing.*

Intervention and Prevention of Bullying

- Discuss and model positive behavior and other ways young children can make friends and interact with their peers
- Set clear and consistent rules for behavior
- Be vigilant in monitoring for aggression and bullying
- Value kindness
- Use age-appropriate consequences for aggressive behavior
- Model alternative behaviors for aggression
- Teach them to report to an adult
- Distinguish between friendly teasing and bullying

Parents are encouraged to report incidents of bullying to teachers, the Non-Profit Director and/or the Academic Coordinator as soon as possible, both for assistance and for prompt investigation purposes. This information can be reported orally or written to the Non-Profit Director at the school by email to info@mulberryschool.org or via phone at 309.862.0510.

A full implementations of the policies includes, but not limited to;

1. Conducting a prompt and thorough investigation of alleged incidents of bullying.
 - a. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation in 10 school days after the report was received.
 - b. Involving appropriate school support personnel with knowledge, experience, and training - as deemed necessary.
 - c. Notify the Non-Profit Director as soon as possible.
 - d. Provide parents/ guardians of the students involved information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Non-Profit Director.
2. Providing each student who violates any of the policies with appropriate consequences and/or remedial action.
 - a. Verbal warning and incident report documented by supervising staff and placed into the students file. (minimum of 3 documentation incidents)
 - b. Supervising staff, Non-Profit Director or Academic Coordinator will contact family of student bullying via email (for documentation purposes), to address how to proceed.
 - c. Continued unacceptable behavior will result in an in person contact between the student, parent/ guardian, teacher, Non-Profit Director and/or Academic Coordinator.
 - d. Any additional incidents will be directed to the Board of Directors to further review and resulting in loss of extra curricular activities, loss of school days or removal from Mulberry School.
3. Protecting students against retaliation for reporting bullying.
4. Includes the interventions that can be taken to address bullying, which 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.

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

Mulberry School will not punish a student/ family because he or she made a complaint or report, supplied information, or otherwise participated in an investigation, provided the individual/family did not make a knowingly false accusation or provide knowingly false information.

Incidents of bullying will be evaluated by the teaching staff, and Non-Profit Director Academic and/or Academic Coordinator and brought to the Board of Directors as needed. Actions similar to those outlined in the previous section will apply to bullying.

For purposes of this policy, the term bullying includes cyberbullying and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, directed towards a student that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
3. Substantially interfering with the student's academic performance.
4. Substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

This policy is not 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 or 4 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

- a) As part of this policy evaluation process to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy that includes, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. Mulberry School may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation must be made available on the website of the school.

This policy is consistent and based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians. This policy is posted on the school's website and is distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

Policy Updated:

January 6, 2023