

RCS Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation Prevention Policy

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important school goals.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, nationality, 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 characteristics **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, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, 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 non-school-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 school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This paragraph applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require staff members to monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

Definitions from [105 ILCS 5/27-23.7](#)

The term bullying includes *cyber-bullying* and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act 1 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 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 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.

Bullying may take various forms, 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 is non-exhaustive.

Cyberbullying 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 electric mail, Internet

communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. *Cyberbullying* 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 the posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects listed in the definition of *bullying*. *Cyberbullying* 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 listed in the definition of *bullying*.

Restorative measures means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline such as suspension and expulsions, that: are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community; contribute to maintaining school safety; protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate; teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society; serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, 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 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 means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteers in a school district, including without limitation school and school administrators, teachers, school counselors, school social workers, school psychologist, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resources officers and security guards.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

Administration shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the school's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying. This plan must be consistent with the requirement listed below; each numbered requirement, 1-11, corresponds with the same number in the list of required policy components in [105 ILCS 5/27-23.7\(b\)](#) 1-11.

1. Robertson Charter School used the definition of *bullying* as provided in this policy.
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this school; 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 Assistant Principal of Student Services 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 Assistant Principal of Student Services or any staff member. Anonymous reports are also accepted; however, this shall not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Assistant Principal of Student Services
2240 E. Geddes Ave.
217-428-7072
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4. Consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the CEO, 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 CEO, 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 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. Grievance Process. In such cases, the 10 school day timeline may not be reasonable. In each case, the Assistant Principal of Student Services shall promptly notify the CEO of any reports, complaints, or other information about bullying and shall determine with the CEO which process(es) for resolving the bullying report or complaint apply.
- c. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- d. Notifying the Building Principal or designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- e. 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 meeting with the Building Principal or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The CEO 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 CEO 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. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is **prohibited**. Any person's acts of reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge with regard to employees, or suspension and/or expulsion with regard to students.

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, a person who is found to have falsely accused another of bullying, as a means of retaliation, as a means of bullying, or provided false information will be treated as either: (a) bullying, (b) student discipline up to and including

suspension and/or expulsion, and/or (c) both (a) and (b) for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

9. The school's bullying prevention and response plan is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.

10. The CEO or designee shall post this policy on the school's 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 be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

11. Pursuant to state law the Board monitors this policy every two years, by conducting a review and re-evaluation of this policy to make any necessary and appropriate revisions. The CEO or designee shall assist the Board with its re-evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. Updates to this policy will reflect any necessary and appropriate revisions. This process shall include, without limitation:

- a. The frequency of victimization;
- b. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
- c. Identification of 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. Acceptable documentation to satisfy the re-evaluated policy submission include one of the following:

1. An updated version of the policy with amendment/modification date include in the reference portion of the policy.
2. If no revisions are deemed necessary, a copy of board minutes indicating that the policy was re-evaluated and no changes were deemed to be necessary, or a signed statement from the board; or
3. A signed statement from the Board Chair indicating that the Board re-evaluated the policy and no changes to it were necessary.

The CEO or designee must post the information developed as a result of the policy re-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. Reviews and re-evaluation in years they are due must be submitted to ISBE by September 30.

The CEO or designee shall develop and maintain a program that:

1. Prohibits any person from bullying a student based on a actual or perceived characteristic that is identified the policy.

2. Prohibits students from engaging in hazing, bullying, or any kinds of aggressive behavior that does physical or psychological harm to another or any urging of other students to engage in such conduct; prohibited conduct includes any use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threats, intimidation, fear, harassment, or other comparable conduct.
3. Prohibits students from possessing 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 creating and/or distributing written, printed or electronic material, including photographs and Internet materials and blogs, that cause substantial disruption to school operations or interferes with the rights of other students or staff members.
4. Provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of reports or complaints by students, parents/guardians, employees and other members of the school community alleging the violation of one or more rights.
5. Prohibits discrimination on the basis of any prohibited basis in the school's educational program and activities and in employment.
6. Includes bullying prevention and character instruction provided in all grades in accordance with State law.
7. Limits the use of the school's electronic network to the support of education and/or research or a legitimate business use. Individuals are subject to a loss of privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal actions for violating the use of the school's electronic network.

LEGAL REF:

[105 ILCS 5/10-20.14](#), [5/10-22.6](#) (b-20), [5/24-24](#), and [5/27-23.7](#).

[405 ILCS49/](#), Children's Mental Health Act.

[775 ILCS 5/1-103](#), Illinois Human Rights Act.

[23 Ill.Admin.Code Section 1.240](#) and [1.280](#)

Adopted: October 21, 2022

Date: October 21, 2022