



Harambee Institute of Science & Technology Charter School

Section	School
Title	Bullying/Cyber Bullying
Date Issued	
Policy Number	
Date Revised	September 2023

Purpose

The Board of Directors is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for students. The Board of Directors recognizes the negative impact that bullying has on student health, welfare, and safety and on the learning environment at school. The Board of Directors recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board of Directors prohibits bullying by students.

Definitions

Bullying means an intentional physical, psychological, verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantial interference with a student's education.
2. Creation of a threatening and hostile learning environment.
3. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying is characterized by the following three (3) criteria:

1. It is intentional or deliberate aggressive behavior or harm doing;
2. It is carried out repeatedly over time; and
3. It occurs within an interpersonal relationship where there is an imbalance of power (e.g., one person is physically larger, stronger, mentally quicker or socially more powerful).

Bullying takes many forms and can include a variety of behaviors. It refers to direct or indirect action, which may include but is not limited to:

1. Physical – touching, hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, getting another person to hurt someone.
2. Verbal – name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossiping, and spreading rumors.
3. Nonverbal – threatening, intimidation, obscene gestures, isolation, exclusion, stalking, cyber bullying (bullying that occurs by use of electronic or communication devices through means of social networking, e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, tweets, blogs, photo and video sharing, chat rooms, bash boards, or web sites).

It is the intent of this policy that the term bullying includes, but not be limited to, incidents that are reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as gender, age, race, color, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), national origin, religion, disability, socioeconomic status and/or political beliefs.

Cyber Bullying includes an "intentional electronic act" in its definition of bullying in the school setting.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at any off-site activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

Student shall mean an individual enrolled in Harambee Institute of Science and Technology Charter School.

Authority

The Board of Directors prohibits all forms of bullying by Harambee students. The Board of Directors encourages students or parents/guardians of students who have been bullied or witness bullying to immediately report such incidents to the building principal or designee, or to any other member of the school staff, including teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators using the Bullying Reporting Form. Any staff member who receives such a report shall immediately notify the principal or designee of same.

The Board of Directors directs that complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly and thoroughly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are substantiated.

Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the Harambee's legal and investigative obligations. All parties will be treated with dignity and due process.

No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.

Delegation of Responsibility

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

The CEO or designee shall develop administrative procedures to implement this policy.

The CEO shall ensure that this policy and administrative procedures are reviewed annually with staff, students, and parents/guardians.

Pending Board Approval on September 25, 2019

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

1. Board of Directors' Bullying Policy.
2. Report of bullying incidents.
3. Information on the development and implementation of any and all research-based bullying prevention and intervention programs.

Guidelines

The Code of Student Conduct, which shall incorporate this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students. This policy shall be accessible in every classroom, posted in a prominent location within each school building and posted on the district website. The policy shall be made available in English and all other languages necessary to facilitate understanding by students and families.

Education

Harambee Institute shall implement research-based bullying prevention and intervention programs. Such programs shall provide training for district staff for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting incidents of bullying.

Complaint Procedure

Step 1 – Reporting

A student or his/her parent/guardian or third party who believes he or she has been bullied or has witnessed an incident of bullying should immediately report the incident to a member of the CRT team.

A school employee who witnesses, suspects or is notified that a student has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy shall immediately report the incident to a member of the CRT team.

Step 2 – Investigation

Upon receiving a complaint of bullying, the CRT team shall take immediate and appropriate action to investigate the complaint.

The investigation will consist of individual interviews with the complainant, the accused, and others with knowledge relative to the incident. The investigator may also evaluate any other information and materials relevant to the investigation.

The investigator will make every attempt to secure statements from all participants in, and witnesses to the alleged incident(s). The complainant shall not be required to meet face-to-face with the accused.

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When a student with limited English proficiency is a party to a complaint, interpretation and/or translation services shall be provided. The limited English proficiency of a complainant, witness, or the accused is not an acceptable reason for failure to secure a statement from him or her.

The obligation to conduct this investigation shall not be negated by the fact that a criminal or other investigation of the incident is pending or has been concluded.

Consequence for Violations

If an investigation determines that the accused engaged in bullying behavior, the school will take prompt action to reasonably end the bullying and prevent the bullying from recurring.

Because bullying involves an imbalance of power, mediation and conflict resolution will not be used to resolve an incident of bullying. When appropriate, scholars who have been found to violate this policy will receive instruction or training on why their actions were inappropriate and/or hurtful.

If the allegations are confirmed, CRT staff shall:

1. Inform the student(s) and his/her parents/guardians the results of the investigation and the consequences for his or her actions.
2. Review the definition of bullying and the policy on bullying
3. Administer the appropriate responses and/or consequences for the behavior.
4. Inform the person who made the complaint of the results of the investigation and the school's action(s) to address the complaint (without disclosing specific, confidential information).

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which shall include:

1. First Offense - documented warning and parent/guardian notification.
2. Second Offense -parent/guardian conference, loss of school privileges, exclusion from school-sponsored activities, detention, and/or counseling within the school.
3. Third Offense - suspension or transfer to another classroom, school building or school bus.

If the first offense is notably severe, a student may immediately be disciplined in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. This could result in a long-term suspension (4-10 days) and/or expulsion.