



Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention Policy

Overview:

Scholarship Prep is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all students and members of the Scholarship Prep community. Scholarship Prep will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. Scholarship Prep has many policies and programs in place that help create an environment that is proactive in preventing—and addressing, as needed—harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

Definition:

Bullying is prohibited and is grounds for suspension or expulsion. Bullying is defined (according to AB 1156) to include **severe** or **pervasive** conduct, including cyberbullying, that can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing a reasonable student in fear of harm to the student’s person or property;
- Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance; or
- Causing a substantial detrimental effect on a reasonable student’s physical or mental health.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic communication technology such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, e-mail, web applications, and text messages. In some cases, cyberbullying is a single child sending a hurtful text to another child. But it can also be a group of students posting hurtful things about another student on a social media website.

Cyberbullying includes but is not limited to:

- Sending mean emails, texts or instant messages to students;
- Threatening or intimidating another student online or in a text message;
- Posting hurtful statements about a student on social media platforms;
- Pretending to be another person by creating a fake online profile;
- Taking an embarrassing or sexually explicit photo of a student and/or sharing it without permission; and
- Sending repetitive neutral messages to someone a student in a harassing manner.

Victims of cyberbullying may experience many of the same effects as children who are bullied in person, such as impacted academic performance, low self-esteem, or depression. However cyberbullying can seem more extreme to its victims for several reasons, including:

- Cyberbullying can be harsher. Often kids say things online that they wouldn’t say in person;
- Cyberbullying can have a greater impact on children as they can receive bullying communications at home. Being bullied at home can take away the place children feel most safe; and
- The impact of cyberbullying can be devastating due to how easy it is to share bullying communications. Children are able to send emails or make posts on social media about a student and it can be easily

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shared with classmates and a larger public audience. The student who is targeted may feel publically humiliated since the viewing audience is virtually limitless.

Prohibition:

Scholarship Prep will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student, including the bullying, harassment, intimidation, and cyberbullying of any student. Students who engage in bullying or cyberbullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

Scholarship Prep can discipline students for any acts that occur on-campus (e.g., student sends bullying texts to another student during school hours). A student may also be disciplined for off-campus bullying or cyberbullying if it meets the definition above and substantially disrupts another student’s instructional environment.

Prevention:

Scholarship Prep staff will receive annual training on the Pyramid of Success character education program, restorative practices, this policy, the Student Suspension and Expulsion Policy, and strategies to raise the awareness of children and school staff regarding harassment, intimidation and bullying. Additionally, each teacher at Scholarship Prep implements a classroom management plan that addresses inappropriate behavior including bullying. Teachers discuss/review their plans with their students throughout the year.

Parent-Staff Interactions:

The Scholarship Prep program greatly benefits from volunteer support of our parent community. This support takes many forms, including helpful parent feedback.

Scholarship Prep expects that parents/guardians will communicate with staff members in a respectful and non-harassing manner. If parents/guardians direct harassing, malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating communications towards any member of the Scholarship Prep community (e.g., staff, parents, and students), they may have their electronic and/or telephonic access to school staff and Scholarship Prep social media accounts (e.g., Facebook groups and pages) restricted at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Reporting:

Any student, parent/guardian, or other individual who believes that a student or student group has been subjected to bullying or cyberbullying or who has witnessed such conduct, may report the conduct verbally to any school employee or administrator, and/or file a formal written complaint via email. The Principal is responsible for investigating incidents of cyberbullying, notifying parents/legal guardians, and issuing discipline consistent with Scholarship Prep’s policies. Scholarship Prep shall discipline students who commit a prohibited act of cyberbullying following the procedures laid out in Element 10 of the charter petition and the Parent Handbook.

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Complaints should include the name of the reporting person, the specific nature and date of the misconduct, the names of the alleged victim of the misconduct, the names of any witnesses and any other information that would assist in the investigation of the complaint.

A staff member who receives a report of bullying or cyberbullying, shall, within one school day or as soon as possible thereafter, report this to the principal. In addition, any school employee who observes any incident of bullying or cyberbullying involving a student shall, within one school day or as soon as possible thereafter, report this observation to the principal; whether or not the victim makes a report.

If bullying or cyberbullying is of a very serious nature, such as threats of physical violence or sharing explicit photographs of another student, the Principal must immediately inform the Executive Director. The Executive Director and Principal are responsible for notifying law enforcement in response to these serious incidents.

Investigation:

Parents and students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint in a thorough and confidential manner. Upon receiving the report, the principal or designee will conduct an investigation using the information provided. After a report or complaint is made, the principal or designee shall determine whether interim measures are necessary to stop, prevent or address the effects of bullying or intimidation, including retaliation, harassment or bullying during and pending any informal resolution and/or investigation. Measures may include placing students in separate classes or transferring a student to a class taught by a different teacher. Interim measures will be implemented in a manner that minimizes the burden on the individual who was the target of bullying or intimidation.

The principal or designee shall interview individuals who have information relevant to the investigation, including but not limited to, the subject of the complaint and, where appropriate, his or her parents/guardians, the person accused of bullying or intimidation, anyone who witnessed the reported conduct, and anyone mentioned as having relevant information. At no time should the alleged perpetrator and victim be interviewed together.

The Scholarship Prep official conducting the investigation shall notify the alleged victim and parents as appropriate when the investigation is completed and a decision regarding disciplinary action, as warranted, is determined. If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the student or the parent of the student should contact the Principal. Scholarship Prep prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

Prevention Resources for Parents:

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Every Scholarship Prep teacher implements a classroom management plan that addresses inappropriate behavior, including bullying. Teachers discuss this plan with the Principal and conduct ongoing discussions and activities in the classroom related to bullying prevention throughout the school year.

As cyberbullying can also take place at home, parents play an important role in preventing cyberbullying. The following are some strategies that can be helpful in cyberbullying prevention:

- Provide guidance to children on appropriate behavior using technology, which may include:
 - Never give out personal information online, whether on blogs, messaging services, social media sites, or personal websites.
 - Never tell anyone but your parents your password, even friends.
 - If someone sends a mean or threatening message, don't respond. Save it or print it out and show it to an adult.
 - Don't put anything online that you wouldn't want your classmates to see, even in email.
 - Don't send messages or make posts when you're angry. Before clicking "send," ask yourself how you would feel if you received the message.
 - Help other students who are bullied online by not joining in and showing bullying messages to an adult.
- Know the sites your children visit and their online activities. Ask where they're going, what they're doing, and who they're doing it with.
- Learn about the sites and applications your children use, so you can better monitor their use.
- Discuss cyberbullying with your children and ask if they have ever experienced it or seen it happen to someone.
- Ask for their passwords, and if necessary tell them you'll only use them in case of emergency.
- Ask to "friend" or "follow" your kids on social media sites or ask another trusted adult to do so.
- Tell your children that you won't blame them if they are cyberbullied. Emphasize that you won't take away their computer/phone privileges - this is one of the main reasons students don't tell adults when they are cyberbullied.

The following are links to websites that feature additional information and resources, which may be helpful to our families:

National Crime Prevention Council: <https://www.ncpc.org/resources/cyberbullying>

Stop Bullying: <https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/index.html>

Cyberbullying Research Center: <http://cyberbullying.org/resources>

Cyber Bully Help: <http://cyberbullyhelp.com>

Safe Kids: <http://www.safekids.com>

A Thin Line: <http://www.athinline.org>

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