*Victorious Life International*

*World Changers Prep Academy*

*Bullying Policy*

*Adopted 11-01-2022*

1. Definition:

1. Bullying includes cyberbullying and is defined as a pattern of one or more of the following behaviors:

a. written, electronic, or verbal communications, including but not limited to calling names, threatening harm, taunting, malicious teasing, or spreading untrue rumors;

b. physical acts, including but not limited to hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, choking, damaging personal property, or unauthorized use of personal property; and

c. repeatedly and purposefully shunning or excluding from activities.

2. Bullying behavior is exhibited toward a student, repeatedly, by another student or group of students and occurs while a student is on school property, or at a school-sponsored or school-related function or activity, or in any school bus or van.

3. Bullying must have the effect of physically harming a student, or fear of physical harm, damaging a student's property, or fear of damage to the student's property, OR must be sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough to either create a threatening educational environment, or have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's performance in school, or be disrupting to the orderly operation of the school.

4. Bullying" includes "cyber-bullying" and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act 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 or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property; (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' 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.

5. Cyberbullying, as defined in 105 ILCS 5/27- 23.7, is 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, photoelectronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyberbullying" includes the creation of a webpage or weblog where the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates anything identified 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 defined as bullying in [105 ILCS 5/27- 23.7(b)].

B. Reporting: World Changers Prep Academy will use the following procedures for the reporting incidents of bullying:

1. Students and Parents

1. Any student who believes that he or she is or, has been the victim of bullying, or any student or parent or legal guardian, who witnesses bullying or has good reason to believe bullying is taking place, may report the bullying to a school official.

Bullying contact: Mr. Nicholas Jakich, Principal

618-589-3017

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1. Any report of bullying shall remain confidential.
2. Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the District’s goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan must be consistent with the following requirements:

1. Using the definition of bullying as provided in this policy, the Superintendent or designee shall emphasize to the school community that: (1) the District prohibits bullying, and (2) all students should conduct themselves with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students. This may include a process for commending or acknowledging students for demonstrating appropriate behavior. 2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this District. However, nothing in the District’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 Building Principal, who is the official Complaint Manager, 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 District named officials or any staff member. The District named officials and all staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anonymous reports are also accepted; however, this shall not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

2. School Personnel and Chaperones.

1. Any teacher, counselor, bus driver, or other school employee, whether full or part time, and any parent chaperoning or supervising a school function or activity, who witnesses or who learns of bullying of a student, shall report the incident to a school official.
2. A verbal report shall be submitted by the school employee or parent on the same day as the school employee or parent witnessed or otherwise learned of the bullying incident, and a written report must be filed no later than two days thereafter.

3. Retaliation against any person who reports bullying in good faith, who is thought to have reported bullying, or who otherwise participates in an investigation concerning allegations of bullying is prohibited conduct and subject to disciplinary action.

4. Making false reports about bullying to school officials is prohibited conduct and will result in disciplinary action.

C. Investigation Procedure: When a report of the bullying of a student by another student is received, the school shall conduct an investigation using the following procedure.

1. Timing. The investigation shall begin the next school day following the day on which the written report was received and shall be completed no later than 10 school days after receipt of the report. If additional information is received after the end of the 10-day period, the school official shall amend all documents and reports to reflect such information.

2. Upon receiving a report of bullying, the school shall notify the parents or legal guardians of the alleged offender and the alleged victim no later than the following school day.

3. Scope

a. The investigation shall include documented interviews by the designated school official of the reporter, the alleged victim, the alleged offender, and any witnesses.

b. The school official shall obtain copies or photographs of any audio-visual evidence.

4. Documentation. At the conclusion of a bullying investigation the school official shall:

a. prepare a written report containing the findings of the investigation, including input from students' parents or legal guardians, and the decision by the school official. The document shall be placed in the school records of both students. If completed entirely, the bullying investigation form may serve as the report;

b. keep reports/complain and investigative reports confidential, except where disclosure is required by law;

c. maintain reports/complaints and investigative reports for three years;

Disciplinary Action.

If the school official has determined bullying has occurred, the school official shall take prompt and appropriate disciplinary action against the offender and report criminal conduct to law enforcement, if appropriate.

• 1st Offense: Offender(s) will serve a Saturday detention (8:00 am-12:00 pm) and pay a $50.00 fine.

• 2nd Offense: Offender(s) will serve a 3 day out-of-school suspension and undergo emotional counseling at the parents’ expense.

• 3rd Offense: Expulsion from school.

G. Social Media In the spirit of respect for World Changers Prep Academy, the use of technology should in no way embarrass, threaten, or defame another student, faculty or staff member, Administration, the Board of Directors, or the school itself. Posting inappropriate material on any social networking or other websites can lead to disciplinary action.

Additionally, students should be aware that electronically transmitting inappropriate images of themselves or others is an illegal activity and the school reserves the right to act on this type of behavior.

H. Cell Phones and Electronic Devices Cell phones and electronic devices such as, but not limited to iPods, iPads, laptops, kindles, mp3 players, cd players, digital cameras, etc. are permitted during school hours when used for educational purposes. These devices must be turned off and stored out of sight, when not being used for educational purposes. Use of electronic devices is only allowed under the direct supervision of World Changers Prep Academy faculty or staff. Cell phones or electronic devices should not be used to talk, text, play games, take pictures, or video during school hours (including breaks, carline, lunch, and recess) unless given permission by World Changers Prep Academy faculty or staff. Photographing and/or videoing faculty, staff, students, and visitors is strictly prohibited without permission from World Changers Prep Academy faculty or staff.

These activities not only create disruptions in the educational environment, but also may infringe on the rights of others. Further, the school reserves the right to examine all students’ cell phones and electronic devices on suspicion of wrong-doing and upon reasonable belief that evidence of such wrong-doing is present on the cell phone or electronic device examined. If a student is found using a cell phone/electronic device during school hours without permission, he/she is subject to the following penalties:

1st Offense: Phone/electronic device will be confiscated, the student will be fined $25.00, and a request to return the cell phone/electronic device form must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to school the following day.

2nd Offense: Phone/electronic device will be confiscated, the student will be fined $50.00, and a parent/guardian must request to return the cell phone/electronic device in person at the school office.

3rd Offense: Phone/electronic device will be confiscated, the student will be fined $100.00, and the phone/electronic device will be kept in the 45 administrative office for the remainder of the school year. Please note: World Changers Prep Academy is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones/electronic devices.

I. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Superintendent or designee shall promptly inform parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students 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 Superintendent 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 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.

b. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.

c. Notifying the Building Principal or school administrator or designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.

1. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator 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.
2. The Superintendent or designee shall investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the District’s jurisdiction and shall require that the District provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the District and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.
3. The Superintendent or designee shall use interventions 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.
4. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. Any person’s act 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. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the District’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.
5. The District’s bullying prevention and response plan is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.
6. The Superintendent or designee shall post this policy on the District’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), and must also be provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty.
7. Pursuant to State law and Board Policy Development, 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 Superintendent 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 District 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 the amendment/modification date included 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

3) A signed statement from the Board President indicating that the Board re-evaluated the policy and no changes to it were necessary.

The Superintendent or designee must post the information developed as a result of the policy reevaluation on the District’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-evaluations in years they are due must be submitted to ISBE by September 30.

The Superintendent or designee shall fully implement the Board policies, including without limitation, the following:

1. Uniform Grievance Procedure. A student may use this policy to complain about bullying.
2. Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure. Any person may use this policy to complain about sexual harassment in violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
3. Curriculum Content. Bullying prevention and character instruction is provided in all grades in accordance with State law.

d. Student Social and Emotional Development. Student social and emotional development is incorporated into the District’s educational program as required by State law.

e. Access to Electronic Networks. This policy states that the use of the District’s electronic networks is limited to:

(1) support of education and/or research, or

(2) a legitimate business use.

f. Harassment of Students Prohibited. This policy prohibits any person from harassing, intimidating, or bullying a student based on an identified actual or perceived characteristic

g. Teen Dating Violence Prohibited. This policy prohibits teen dating violence on school property, at school sponsored activities, and in vehicles used for school-provided transportation.

h. Student Behavior. This policy prohibits, and provides consequences for, hazing, bullying, or other aggressive behaviors, or urging other students to engage in such conduct.

i. Restrictions on Publications; Elementary Schools, and Restrictions on Publications; High Schools. These policies prohibit students from and provide consequences for:

(1) accessing 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

(2) creating and/or distributing written, printed, or electronic material, including photographic material and blogs, that causes substantial disruption to school operations or interferes with the rights of other students or staff members.

The Superintendent or designee shall fully inform staff members of the District’s goal to prevent students from engaging in bullying and the measures being used to accomplish it. This includes each of the following:

a. Communicating the District’s expectation and State law requirement that teachers and other certificated or licensed employees maintain discipline.

b. Establishing the expectation that staff members: (1) intervene immediately to stop a bullying incident that they witness or immediately contact building security and/or law enforcement if the incident involves a weapon or other illegal activity, (2) report bullying, whether they witness it or not, to an administrator, and (3) inform the administration of locations on school grounds where additional supervision or monitoring may be needed to prevent bullying.

c. Where appropriate in the staff development program, providing strategies to staff members to effectively prevent bullying and intervene when it occurs. d. Establishing a process for staff members to fulfill their obligation to report alleged acts of bullying.

Submitted by Dr. Sherrie Birts, Superintendent

Adopted by the Victorious Life International-World Changers Prep Academy Board 11/01/2022