



**Purpose:** Westinghouse Arts Academy Charter School (WAA) is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for all students. Bullying in any form is prohibited on school grounds, during school-sponsored activities, and through electronic communication that disrupts the learning environment. This policy is intended to prevent and address all forms of bullying as defined under Pennsylvania law.

**Definition of Bullying:** Bullying is defined as an intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act, or a series of acts, directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside of school, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive, and has the effect of:

- Substantially interfering with a student’s education.
- Creating a threatening environment.
- Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

For the purposes of this policy, "school setting" includes school grounds, school buses, designated bus stops, and school-sponsored events, as well as any electronic communication that has a direct impact on the school environment.

Prohibited Conduct: Bullying, as defined above, is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical actions such as hitting, kicking, shoving, or damaging property.
- Verbal actions such as teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, or threatening to cause harm.
- Social exclusion, spreading rumors, or other forms of relational aggression.
- Cyberbullying through electronic communication, including social media, text messages, and other digital platforms.

**Reporting and Investigation Procedures:**

1. Reporting Bullying: Any student who believes they have been a victim of bullying, or any parent/guardian who suspects their child has been bullied, is encouraged to report the incident to a teacher, counselor, or school administrator as soon as possible. Reports may be made verbally or in writing, and anonymous reports will also be accepted.
2. Staff Responsibility: All school employees are required to report observed incidents of bullying or reports of bullying made to them by students, parents, or other staff members.
3. Investigation Process: Upon receiving a report of bullying, the school administration will initiate an immediate investigation, which will include interviews with all relevant parties (alleged victim, alleged bully, witnesses, etc.). The investigation will be completed in a timely manner, ensuring all allegations are taken seriously.
4. Intervention and Consequences: If an investigation confirms bullying has occurred, the school will take appropriate action, which may include:
  - Counseling and restorative practices.
  - Disciplinary measures, ranging from detention to suspension, and, in severe cases, expulsion in accordance with the school’s discipline policy.
  - Educational interventions for the bullying student(s), including, but not limited to, social skills instruction or behavior modification programs.

**Retaliation Prohibited:** Retaliation against anyone who reports bullying or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Prevention and Education: WAA will implement educational programs and practices to create a culture of respect and prevent bullying.

These efforts will include:

- Staff training on identifying and addressing bullying.
- Student education on the effects of bullying, conflict resolution, and promoting positive peer relationships.
- Ongoing assessments of school climate through surveys and feedback from the school community.

**Parental Involvement:** Parents and guardians are vital partners in the effort to prevent and address bullying. WAA encourages open communication between school staff and families and will provide resources and guidance on identifying and addressing bullying at home.

Confidentiality: All reports and investigations will be handled confidentially to the extent permitted by law, with the privacy of the individuals involved protected throughout the process.

Annual Review: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to comply with state laws and best practices

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