

POLICY: Safe School Environment

PURPOSE OF POLICY

It is of utmost importance to provide a safe environment for our students, staff, volunteers, and guests. The School has a zero tolerance policy in regard to acts of violence and verbal, physical, or any other kind of behavior that could lead to or cause violence. These acts include anything done in person or by any other means whatsoever. The School does not tolerate violent behavior or actions anywhere within the School, on the school bus or during School activities by or against any of our staff or students, thus has created this **Safe School Environment Policy** (hereinafter "Policy").

FORBIDDEN ACTS

School staff has not only a duty to ensure that students can learn and achieve high academic standards, but also has a duty to safeguard students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, or any other reasonably preventable harm while at the School or while participating in School activities. Unacceptable behavior such as discrimination, uttering disparaging remarks, bullying, harassment, intimidation, or any other similar action will not be tolerated in the School.

Harassment, intimidation, disparagement, and bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, are conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and the School's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate bullying.

NOTE: Disciplinary action will be imposed if harassment, intimidation, disparagement, and bullying occur while away from the School or School activities, if such acts affect other School students or staff.

Disparaging Remarks

At no time is any student allowed to demean, utter disparaging remarks about, or undermine any other individual within the School property or while participating in School activities.

POLICY: Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

1 Statement of Purpose²

1.1 The SunBridge School District prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The district has determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards; harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment.

1.2 Harassment, intimidation, or bullying of students or personnel by students, school personnel, or school volunteers is prohibited, whether in the classroom, on school property, on school buses or vehicles, at school-sponsored events, or in cyber-space.

- 1.3 Because students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying.

2 Definition of Terms³

2.1 The SunBridge School District establishes that “harassment, intimidation, or bullying” means any intentional written, verbal, graphic, or physical act or gesture that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both:

2.1.1 causes mental or physical harm to the other student;

2.1.2 is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.

2.2 “Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” also means electronically committed acts (i.e., acts conducted using electronic or wireless communication devices) that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both:

2.2.1 causes mental or physical harm to the other student;

² Statutory Requirement: *The policy shall include a statement prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any student on school property or at school-sponsored events. O.R.C. 3313.666(B)(1).*

³ Statutory Requirement: *The policy shall include a definition of harassment, intimidation, or bullying that shall include the definition in division (A) of this section: As used in this section, “harassment, intimidation, or bullying” means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both:*

1) *Causes mental or physical harm to the other student;*

2) *Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student. O.R.C. 3313.666(A)(1)-(2)*

1.2.2. is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.

2.3 “Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” also means any intentional written, verbal, graphic, or physical act or gesture that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once, and based on any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic; and that both:

2.3.1 causes mental or physical harm to the other student;

2.3.2 is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.

2.4 A “school-sponsored activity” means any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Ohio Board of Education.

2.5 “Harassment or bullying” shall not mean any action that would constitute protected free expression under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.¹

3 Types of Conduct

3.1 Harassment, intimidation or bullying can include, but is not limited to, the following behavior, overt acts, and/or circumstances:

- 3.1.1 Verbal, nonverbal, physical or written harassment, bullying, hazing or other victimization that has the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- 3.1.2 Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- 3.1.3 Unreasonable interference with a student’s performance or creation of an intimidating, offensive or hostile learning environment;
- 3.1.4 Physical violence and/or attacks;
- 3.1.5 Threats, taunts and intimidation through words and/or gestures;
- 3.1.6 Extortion, damage or stealing of money and/or possessions;
- 3.1.7 Exclusion from the peer group or spreading rumors; and,
- 3.1.8 Repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others through the use of information and communication technologies and other web-based/online sites (also known as “cyber bullying”), such as the following:
 - 3.1.8.1 Posting slurs on websites where students congregate or on weblogs (personal online journals or diaries);
 - 3.1.8.2 Sending abusive or threatening instant messages;
 - 3.1.8.3 Using camera phones to take embarrassing photographs of students and posting them online; and,
 - 3.1.8.4 Using Websites to circulate gossip and rumors to other students;
 - 3.1.8.5 Excluding other from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to internet service providers.

4 Dissemination of Policy⁵

- 4.1.1 The district shall annually disseminate the policy to staff, students, and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all applicable acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions, on school buses or school-related vehicles, or in cyber space. The policy shall appear in student handbooks and in all publications that set forth the school district’s comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools and students in the district.
- 4.1.2 To ensure staff are prepared to prevent and effectively intervene with incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the district shall incorporate information about the policy into employee training manuals and programs.

¹ ⁴ Statutory Requirement: *The policy shall include a disciplinary procedure for any student guilty of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, which shall not infringe on any student’s rights under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. O.R.C. 3313.666(B)(9).*

5 Complaints⁶

Written and Oral Complaints

- 5.1.1** The district requires the principal or the principal's designee at each school to be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. Students, parents or guardians may file written complaints of suspected harassment, intimidation or bullying with any school staff member or administrator. A teacher or other school staff member who receives a written complaint shall promptly forward it (no later than the next school day) to the building principal or his/her designee for review and action.
- 5.1.2** Oral complaints shall also be considered official complaints. Students, parents or guardians, and school personnel may make oral complaints of conduct that they consider to be harassment, intimidation or bullying by verbally reporting to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. A teacher or other school staff member who receives an oral complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing, and shall promptly forward it (no later than the next school day) to the building principal for review and action.
- 5.1.3** Both written and oral complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying, including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the prohibited behavior(s), and the names of any potential student or staff witness.

⁵Statutory Requirement: *Each board's policy shall appear in any student handbooks, and in any of the publications that set forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools and students in the district. Information regarding the policy shall be incorporated into employee training manuals. O.R.C. 3313.666(C).*

⁶ Statutory Requirements: *The policy shall include: a procedure for reporting prohibited incidents O.R.C. 3313.666(B)(3).*

Anonymous Complaints

Students who make oral complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school staff member(s) and administrator(s) who receive the complaint. The anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying.

6 School Personnel Responsibilities and Individual Intervention Strategies 7

6.1 Teachers and Other School Staff

- 6.1.1** Teachers and other school staff, who witness acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying, as defined above, shall promptly notify the building principal and/or his/her designee of the event observed by filing a written incident report concerning the events witnessed.
- 6.1.2** In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, school personnel are encouraged to address the issue of harassment, intimidation or bullying in other interactions with students. School personnel may find

opportunities to educate students about harassment, intimidation and bullying and help eliminate such prohibited behaviors through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior.

6.1.3 School personnel should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating or intimidating another student/school personnel, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “harassment, intimidation or bullying.”

6.1.4

6.2 Administrator Responsibilities⁸

6.2.1 Investigation

6.2.1.1 The district requires the principal and/or the principal’s designee to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the principal and/or the principal’s designee shall conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all written and oral complaints of suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying. A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. Such report shall include: findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying were verified, and, when prohibited acts are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.

⁷ Statutory Requirement: *The policy shall include: a requirement that school personnel report prohibited incidents of which they are aware to the school principal or other administrator designated by the principal; a procedure for documenting any prohibited incident that is reported. O.R.C. 3313.666(B)(4), 3313.666(B)(6).*

⁸ Statutory Requirement: *The policy shall include: a procedure for documenting any prohibited incident that is reported; and, a procedure for responding to and investigating any reported incident. O.R.C. 3313.666(6)-(7).*

6.2.1.2 Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a student making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complaint. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint (with or without discussing it with the alleged perpetrator), subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that his/her report be anonymous.

6.2.2 Responding to Incidents: Disciplinary and Non-Disciplinary Interventions

6.2.2.1 Verified acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall result in an intervention by the building principal or his/her designee that is intended to ensure that the prohibition against harassment, intimidation or bullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such prohibited behavior will cease.

1.1.1.2 _____ School District recognizes that acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying can take many forms and can vary

dramatically in seriousness and impact on the targeted individual and school community. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Disciplinary and appropriate remedial actions for a student or staff member who commits an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to, and including, suspension or expulsion.

1.1.1.3 In determining appropriate interventions for each individual who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the building principal shall give the following factors full consideration:

- * the degree of harm caused by the incident(s);
- * the surrounding circumstances;
- * the nature and severity of the behavior;
- * the relationship between the parties involved; and,
- * past incidences or continuing patterns of behavior.

1.1.1.3.1 Non-disciplinary Interventions

1.1.1.3.1.1 Counseling: When verified acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of harassment, intimidation or bullying, its prohibition and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered harassing, intimidating or bullying.

1.2.2.3.1.1 Peer Mediation: If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. The victim's communication and assertiveness skills may be low and could be further eroded by fear resulting from past intimidation and fear of future intimidation. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

1.2.2.3.2 Disciplinary Interventions

6.2.2.3.2.1 When acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints that are not otherwise verified, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

6.2.2.3.2.2 In and out-of-school suspension may be imposed only after informing the accused perpetrator of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving him/her an opportunity to explain the situation.

6.2.2.3.2.3 Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board of Education, a committee of the Board or an impartial hearing officer designated by the Board of Education in accordance with Board policy. This consequence shall be reserved for serious incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating prohibited behaviors.

2. **Intervention Strategies for Classroom, School Building, or District**

V.1 SunBridge School District recognizes that overall school climate and school culture might overtly or inadvertently support prohibited behaviors. Accordingly, when the district responds to an individual who has committed a verified act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the district should consider whether taking action beyond the individual would prevent potential problems. Additionally, the SunBridge district should attempt to actively involve parents, school employees, school volunteers, students and community members in the remediation of prohibited behaviors.⁹ The following are examples of potential intervention strategies that shall serve as a resource for administrators and school personnel:

- 7.1.1 Respectful responses to harassment, intimidation or bullying concerns raised by students, parents or school personnel;
- 7.1.1 Planned professional development programs addressing targeted individuals' problems;
- 7.1.2 Data collection to document victim problems to determine the nature and scope of the problem;

⁹ Statutory Requirement: *The policy shall be developed in consultation with parents, school employees, school volunteers, students, and community members. O.R.C. 33313.666(B).*

- 7.1.4 Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;
- 7.1.5 Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping (e.g., males need to be strong and tough);
- 7.1.6 Awareness and involvement on the part of all school personnel and parents with regard to victim problems;
- 7.1.7 An attitude that promotes communication, friendship, assertiveness skills and character education;
- 7.1.8 Modeling by school personnel of positive, respectful and supportive behavior toward students;
- 7.1.9 Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others (*Ohio School Climate Guidelines*);
- 7.1.10 Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere; and
- 7.1.11 Form harassment, intimidation and bullying task forces, programs and other initiatives involving volunteers, parents, law enforcement and community members.

⁸ **Intervention Strategies to Protect Victims¹⁰**

- 8.1 When responding to verified acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the district shall consider potential strategies to protect victims from additional harassment, intimidation, or bullying, and from retaliation following a report. Potential strategies include:
 - 1.1.1 Supervising and disciplining offending students fairly and consistently;
 - 8.1.2 Providing adult supervision during recess, lunch time, bathroom breaks and in the hallways during times of transition;
 - 1.1.3 Maintaining contact with parents and guardians of all involved parties;
 - 1.1.4 Providing counseling for the victim if assessed that it is needed;
 - 1.1.5 Informing school personnel of the incident and instructing them to monitor the victim and the offending party for indications of harassing, intimidating and bullying behavior; instructing personnel to intervene when prohibited behaviors are witnessed;

- 1.1.6 Checking with the victim daily to ensure that there have been no incidents of harassment/intimidation/bullying or retaliation from the offender(s).

¹⁰ Statutory Requirement: *The policy shall include a strategy for protecting a victim from additional harassment, intimidation, or bullying, and from retaliation following a report. O.R.C. 3313.666(B)(8).*

⁹ **Reporting Obligations¹¹**

^{9.1} Reports to the Parent or Guardian of the Perpetrator

- 1.1.1 If after investigation, acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying by a specific student are verified, the building principal or his/her designee shall notify in writing the parent or guardian of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in such notification.

^{9.2} Reports to the victim and his/her parent of guardian

- 9.2.1 If after investigation, acts of bullying against a specific student are verified, the building principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the victim of such finding. In providing such notification, care must be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation and bullying.

^{9.3} List of verified acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying¹²

- 9.3.1 _____ School District administrators shall semiannually provide the president of the district board a written summary of all reported incidents and post the summary on the district Web site, if one exists. The list shall be limited to the number of verified acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying, whether in the classroom, on school property, to and from school, or at school-sponsored events.

10 Police and Child Protective Services

10.1 Allegations of criminal misconduct will be reported to law enforcement, and suspected child abuse must be reported to Child Protective Services, per required timelines. _____ School District must also investigate for the purpose of determining whether there has been a violation of _____ School District Policy or Procedure, even if law enforcement or CPS is also investigating. All _____ School District personnel must cooperate with investigations by outside agencies.

10.2 In addition to, or instead of, filing a bullying/harassment/intimidation complaint through this policy, a complainant may choose to exercise other options, including but not limited to filing a complaint with outside agencies or filing a private lawsuit.

Nothing prohibits a complainant from seeking redress under any other provision of the Revised Code or common law that may apply.

11 Training¹³

11.1 Orientation sessions for students shall introduce the elements of this policy and procedure. Students will be provided with age-appropriate information on the recognition and prevention of harassment, intimidation or bullying, and their rights and responsibilities under

this and other district policies, procedures and rules, at student orientation sessions and on other appropriate occasions. Parents will be provided with information about this policy and procedure, as well as information about other district and school rules and disciplinary policies. This policy and procedure shall be reproduced in student, staff, volunteer and parent handbooks.

11.2 Information regarding the policy on harassment/intimidation/bullying behavior shall be incorporated into employee training materials and volunteers with direct contact with students. Time spent by school employees in the training, workshops or courses shall apply toward any state or district mandated continuing education requirements.

11.3 School personnel members are encouraged to address the issue of harassment/intimidation/bullying in other interaction with students. School personnel may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. School personnel should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating or intimidating another student/school personnel, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “harassment/intimidation/bullying.”

¹³ Statutory Requirement: *To the extent that state or federal funds are appropriated for these purposes, each school district shall: 1) provide training, workshops, or courses on the district’s harassment, intimidation, or bullying policy adopted pursuant to section 3313.666 of the Revised Code to school employees and volunteers who have direct contact with students. Time spent by school employees in the training, workshops, or courses shall apply towards any state- or district-mandated continuing education requirements; 2) develop a process for educating students about the policy. O.R.C. 3313.667(B)(1)-(2).*

Harassment

Behavior that targets an individual because of their race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, marital status, disability, or veteran status or any other protected status as defined by federal, provincial, state, or local laws is strictly prohibited. Harassment is such verbal or physical conduct that unreasonably disrupts or harms another in the School or while participating in School activities. Each individual at the School has the right to be free from improper or offensive conduct while at the School or while participating in School activities. School students, employees, student family members, guests, and visitors should be treated with respect, courtesy, and dignity at all times. Unwelcome, insulting, or offensive remarks or actions have no place at the School. To maintain an atmosphere free from harassment, each individual at the School should exercise good judgment in their relationships with others.

The School is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Harassment at the School, on the school bus, via computer/internet or at School-sponsored events is strictly prohibited. The School requires all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students, visitors, guests, and all members of the School community.

Harassment In General. Harassment includes communications such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct that offends or shows disrespect to others based upon race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. This includes cyberbullying.

What one person may consider acceptable behavior, may reasonably be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, students should consider, before speaking or acting, how their words and actions might reasonably be viewed by other individuals. It is also important for students to make it clear to others when a particular behavior or communication is unwelcome, intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

Sexual Harassment. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Acceptance of or submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of education,
2. The individual's response to such conduct is used as a basis for educational, disciplinary, or other decisions affecting a student,
3. Such conduct interferes with an individual's education or participation in extracurricular activities, or
4. The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or school environment.

Intimidation and Bullying

Intimidation and bullying means any deliberate or intentional gesture, or any deliberate or intentional written, verbal, or physical act or threat that one individual exhibits towards another individual at the School or when participating in a School activity, and the behavior both: (1) has one or more of the following effects: (a) harming the other individual; (b) damaging the other individual's property; (c) placing the other individual in reasonable fear of harm to their person; (d) placing the other individual in reasonable fear of damage to their property; and (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for the impacted individual. This includes cyberbullying by use of technology in school or out of school.

Teen Dating Violence

The Board is committed to providing a learning environment in which dating violence is not tolerated. Consistent with this philosophy, the Board is committed to promoting an environment free from dating violence. Accordingly, the Board seeks to increase awareness of teen dating violence and help in responding to the needs of victims and children who are witnesses to such violence.

Teen dating violence occurring in any setting is unlawful and teen dating violence occurring in any school setting will not be tolerated. Further, retaliation against an individual who has complained about teen dating violence or cooperated in an investigation of teen dating violence will not be tolerated. The Board will respond promptly to complaints and reports of teen dating violence or retaliation and corrective action will be taken where necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

REPORTING

If an individual experiences or observes harassment, intimidation, bullying, or disparaging remarks, they should immediately report the incident to the School Principal, Dean of Students, or any other member of the School's staff.

All School employees, Trustees, volunteers, and students are required to report prohibited incidents of which they are aware to the Principal or their designee. The Principal or their designee is then responsible for determining whether an alleged incident constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the Principal or their designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of the reported incident, and prepare a report documenting the prohibited incident that is reported. Once an investigation is completed, and the reported incident has been substantiated, the parent or guardian of any student involved in the

prohibited incident shall be notified and to the extent permitted by R.C. § 3319.321 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. 1232g) have access to any written reports pertaining to the prohibited incident. The School will maintain information regarding the number of incidents of harassment of students against other students that violate this policy. All School employees, volunteers, and students shall be individually immune from liability in a civil action for damages arising from reporting an incident in accordance with this policy.

How to Report Violations

Any violations of this Policy should be immediately reported to the Principal of Operations, the Executive Principal, or any other member of the School's staff for further action. Anonymous reporting can be made via US mail.

Mandatory Reporting

All School employees will comply at all times with all laws that require the reporting of certain information to various authorities. No provision in any School policy or procedure shall be read or interpreted in a way to be in conflict with a law related to mandatory reporting.

Timeliness of Reporting and Response

The Code requires that Staff responds immediately and consistently to incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, substance abuse, and/or violence or any other violation of the Code or other policy or procedure of the School that impacts negatively on students in a manner that effectively addresses incidents, deters future incidents, and affirms respect for individuals.

Grievance Procedure

Complaints under this **Grievance Procedure** must be filed within 30 school days of occurrence of the alleged event. The complaint must be in writing. The Principal or any person of the grievant's choosing may assist the grievant with filing the complaint. The written complaint must include the following information:

1. The name and school (or address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the grievant (complainant).
2. The name (and address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the grievant representative, if any.
3. The name of the person(s) alleged to have caused the discrimination or harassment (respondent).
4. A description, in as much detail as possible, of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
5. The date(s) of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
6. The name of all persons who have knowledge about the alleged discrimination or harassment (witnesses), as can be reasonably determined.
7. A description, in as much detail as possible, of how the grievant wants the complaint to be resolved.

Grievance – Where to File a Complaint

Individuals who believe they have been subjected to harassment under this policy may file a complaint with the Principal or the Dean of Students. If the Principal is the person who is alleged to have caused the

harassment, the complaint may be filed with the Board. Under these circumstances, a representative of the Board will conduct the investigation as outlined below.

Grievance – Investigation and Resolution of the Complaint

Respondents will be informed of the charges as soon as the Principal deems appropriate based upon the nature of the allegations, the investigation required, and the action contemplated.

The Principal will interview witnesses whom they deem necessary and appropriate to determine the facts relevant to the complaint, and will gather other relevant information. The Principal will make every effort to complete such interviews and gathering of information within fifteen (15) school days of receiving the written complaint.

After completing the investigation, the Principal will meet with the grievant and/or their representative to review the information gathered and, if applicable, to propose a resolution designed to stop the discrimination or harassment and to correct its effect.

Notwithstanding the above, it is understood that in the event a resolution contemplated by the School involves disciplinary action against an employee or a student, the complainant will not be informed of such disciplinary action, unless it directly involves the complainant (i.e., a directive to “stay away” from the complainant, as might occur as a result of a complaint of harassment).

Retaliation

The School will not tolerate retaliation in any way against individuals who report instances of violations of this Policy, who provide information related to violations of this Policy, or who otherwise assist with the reporting of or investigation of violations of this Policy. Acts of retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Health and Safety

The School is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for its students and Employees. The School will follow all federal, state, and local laws regarding workplace safety and health. Each employee must immediately report any work-related accident, illness, unsafe condition or practice to the Principal or their designee. Once the situation has been reported, the individual making the report to the Principal must complete an **Injury Incident Report** so a formal record of the incident may be kept on file.

Appropriate Relationships with Children

School employees are expected to act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. School staff is in a position of trust and has a duty to protect young people from discrimination and harm, and to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. It is equally important for staff to avoid behavior that might be misinterpreted by others as being inappropriate.

School Searches

School property, equipment, vehicles, and any other asset owned, leased, operated, or in the possession of the School is considered to be under the control of the School. A search of this School property (including, but not limited to, student storage units, backpacks, and any vehicle parked on School property or used in the course of School activities) may be made at the discretion of the School’s Principal if a reasonable suspicion arises that items considered illegal, disruptive, or a general nuisance to the educational process are at the School. The School’s Principal, or their designee, may also search a student’s person and personal property, desk area, backpack, or vehicle parked on School property

whenever the School's Principal, or their designee, has reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials. School officials will detain a student if there is a reasonable suspicion that the student has drugs, narcotics, weapons, explosives, or other dangerous contraband in their possession, and if such possession would constitute a clear and imminent danger to the safety and welfare of the student, any other persons, or any school property. Furthermore, School officials will promptly notify parents and the appropriate law enforcement agency of illegal possession of such materials, if found.

Drugs and Alcohol

Use, possession, distribution, or sale of alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, or prescription drugs that are in possession by one for whom they were not prescribed is prohibited on School grounds, at any School-sanctioned activities, when students are being transported in School-sponsored vehicles, or at any time or in any place where the School conducts business. A student violation of this policy will lead to a suspension, reporting to authorities, and/or a recommendation for expulsion, as required by law, or at the discretion of the School. An employee violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary actions up to and including immediate termination.

If a student receives a suspension for a first violation of this policy, the student may be required to enroll in a rehabilitation/counseling program at the sole cost of the student's family. The student's family, when appropriate, will be required to report back with an assessment, diagnosis, and treatment plan as a condition for re-admittance into the school. A second violation of the policy will be reported to authorities and will lead to an expulsion hearing. Depending on the severity of the circumstances, the School reserves the right to proceed directly to a notification of the authorities and an expulsion hearing.

All employees are subject to pre-employment screening, reasonable suspicion, periodic, and/or random drug and alcohol testing.

Prescription Medication

Any student who needs to take prescription medication while on School property or while engaged in School activities must 1) give the prescription medication to the School office staff for safe keeping, and 2) provide a notification from the student's doctor indicating the kind of medication and dosing instructions.

NOTE: Any student who has not followed this policy and is in possession of medicine of any kind shall be treated as if they were in possession of illegal drugs.

Tobacco

The School is committed to enforcing the provisions of the Smoke-Free Workplace Law. Additionally, the School prohibits the use of any tobacco product in the workplace. Accordingly, the School's policy on smoking is as follows:

- It is recognized that smoking is dangerous to the health of the smoker and that second-hand smoke is a cause of disease, including lung cancer, in healthy non-smokers. The simple separation of smokers and non-smokers within the same air space may reduce, but does not eliminate, the exposure of non-smokers to environmental tobacco smoke. This applies to *all* smoking tobacco products, i.e., cigarettes, cigars, and pipes. This policy has been developed to help protect all persons from the exposure to environmental tobacco smoke and to help ensure a safe working environment.
- The School also recognizes that smokeless tobacco is dangerous to one's health and creates sanitary issues. Thus, it prohibits the use of all smokeless tobacco products (i.e. snuff and chewing tobacco) in all School facilities and areas of the workplace with no exceptions.
- Smoking is prohibited in all facilities and areas of the entire workplace with no exceptions. Smoking is not permitted anywhere at the School, including all common work areas, elevators,

hallways, School owned or operated vehicles, restrooms, conference and meeting rooms, and all other enclosed or outdoor areas in the workplace. Further, there is no use of any tobacco product within thirty (30) feet of any window or door where any School functions are occurring. Should the laws of the State of Ohio require further limitations or restrictions on the use of any tobacco product, the School will uphold those further limitations or restrictions. The policy applies to all employees, consultants, contractors, visitors, and students.

- Any disputes involving smoking must be referred to the Principal.

Gang Affiliation

The School has adopted a policy prohibiting gang activities and presence at the School pursuant to state law, in recognition of the fact that gang activities and presence at school threaten the welfare and safety of students, teachers, visitors, guests, and others in the School community. The term “gang” as used in this policy refers to all groups of three or more individuals who share a common interest, bond, or activity characterized by criminal, delinquent, or otherwise disruptive conduct engaged in collectively or individually.

The purpose of this policy is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of those in the School community and to prevent the initiation or continuation of gang membership and gang activity in the School.

Prohibited gang affiliation or appearance includes: any manner of grooming or apparel, including clothing, jewelry, hats, emblems, and badges which by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark, or other attribute is associated with or denotes membership in or affiliation with any gang will not be allowed in School buildings or on School grounds, at School-sanctioned activities and events, or School-sponsored transportation. Gestures, signals, or graffiti that denote gang membership or activities are prohibited in the School building and on School grounds, at School-sanctioned activities and events, and on School-sponsored transportation. The prohibition against gang-related apparel and actions will be applied at the discretion of the staff at the School. Consequences will be applied according to the circumstances of the infraction and may include suspension or expulsion. The School will communicate with law enforcement regarding this policy, and any information related to violations of this policy, in order to further its purposes.

VIOLATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

General Discipline Procedures

The purpose of disciplinary consequences is to ensure that both the individuals involved in the situation as well as the school community maintain complete focus on learning and growth. Inappropriate student behavior not only impacts the individual, but also exacts a cost on teachers, other students, and the larger school community. Students must understand that they are a part of a larger whole and are accountable to their peers for adhering to the values and expectations of the community. Prompt resolution of problems and student/family solutions to inappropriate behavior is expected.

Except as otherwise indicated in this Policy, disciplinary action for students, depending upon the nature of the action and/or referral, may include but is not limited to: a student warning (oral or written), parent notification, a written assignment, lunch or enrichment detention, community service, suspension, or expulsion. This list of possible consequences is not indicative of a series of progressive punishment that must happen in order. The School may, at its sole discretion, elect to utilize any corrective measure at its legal disposal without first utilizing other less severe consequences.

Except as otherwise indicated in this Policy, employees who violate this Policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

All decisions regarding disciplinary action will be made by the Principal or their designee. The School will make every effort to notify parents/guardians promptly of any disciplinary action and will do so in writing wherever possible.

The School reserves the right to discipline students' off campus behavior which substantially disrupts the School's educational process or mission, or threatens the safety or well-being of a student or staff member. Some factors which may be considered in determining whether the behavior warrants discipline include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) whether the behavior created material and substantial disruption to the educational process or School's mission due to the stress on the individual(s) victimized or the time invested by Staff in dealing with the behavior or its consequences; (2) whether a nexus to on-campus activities exists; (3) whether the behavior creates a substantial interference with a Student's or Staff member's security or right to educate and receive education; (4) whether the behavior invades the privacy of others; or (5) whether any threat is deemed to be a true threat by the administration or Board, using factors and guidelines set out by the courts or by common sense, reasonable person standards.

Some acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying, disparagement, and cyber-bullying may be isolated incidents requiring that the school respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or part of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation, bullying, disparagement, or cyber-bullying that they require a response either at the classroom, School building, or by law enforcement officials. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for students who commit an act of harassment, intimidation, bullying, disparagement, or cyber-bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

No Limitation on Other Legal Recourse

Nothing in this policy prohibits a victim from seeking redress under any provision of Ohio law that may apply.

Training and Workshops

The School may form a prevention task force and/ or programs to educate students about this policy, such as holding an assembly on harassment, intimidation and bullying for Parents and Students, to raise the level of awareness and help prevent the prohibited conduct. The School may also provide training, workshops, or courses on this policy to school employees and volunteers who have direct contact with students.

R.C. §§ 3301.0714(B)(1)(p); 3313.666, 3313.667

Other Initiatives

The School will take other measures as required by law to prevent harassment, bullying, intimidation, and disparagement of staff and students. False reports will be treated as a violation of Safe Schools and will follow general discipline procedures.