

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

### **HUMAN DIGNITY POLICY/PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE RACISM-FREE SCHOOLS ACT PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy is to identify conduct that violates human dignity and to identify the procedure for reporting and investigating such conduct so that students and employees may learn and work in an educational environment free from these offensive behaviors. Bullying, discrimination, harassment, and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and retaliation are contrary to God's will for his people, state law, the policies of the Board, and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this Section. Nothing in this Section 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 of the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois constitution. Such behaviors diminish students' ability to learn and the school's ability to educate. Preventing these harmful and disruptive behaviors is an important goal of the school. People are created to reflect God Himself and, therefore, are expected to treat each other with respect. All members of the staff (administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, secretaries, custodians, 36 teacher aides, lunchroom personnel, student teachers, visitors to the building or program) are to be respected by students, and, conversely, students are to be treated with the same respect and courtesy by staff. Communication, oral, written, or electronic including web logs, must reflect Biblical standards. Students must be considerate of others at all times. Profanity, put downs, lying or other improper speech, gestures, or inappropriate written remarks will not be tolerated. "Do not speak evil against one another, brethren. He that speaks evil against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law." James 4:11 Students who engage in the misconduct identified in this Policy are subject to discipline in accordance with the student discipline policy. Employees who engage in the misconduct identified in this Policy are subject to discipline in accordance with the employee discipline policy.

### **DEFINITIONS**

1. Bullying includes "cyber-bullying" and is defined as any severe or pervasive physical, verbal, or visual act or conduct, including written or electronic communications, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- a. Placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
- b. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
- c. Substantially interfering with the student's academic performance.
- d. Substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school. Bullying may take various forms, including, without limitation: harassment, intimidation, threats, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, isolation, hazing or inappropriate initiation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. For purposes of this Policy, the term bullying includes harassment, intimidation, retaliation, and school violence.

2. Cyber-bullying means 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, photo electronic system, or photo optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which 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 any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. Cyber-bullying 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 enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Policy. Cyber-bullying also includes digital self-harm.

3. Physical abuse means any intentional act or threat of an act that results or could result in physical pain or injury to another person.

4. Sexual abuse means unwanted, unwelcome advances, and/or behavior of a sexual nature. Sexual abuse may or may not involve physical contact.

5. Emotional abuse means any attempt to destroy another person's self-worth through harassment, threats, deprivation, and control another person's life through words, threats, and fear.

6. Discrimination means disparity in areas including but not limited to discipline, course assignments, participation in extracurricular activities, and other opportunities in the school setting.

7. Harassment means any persistent and repeated pattern of behavior that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational and work environment whether occurring on or off school property. The terms “intimidating,” “hostile,” and “offensive” include words or conduct that have the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort.

8. Sexual harassment means unwanted sexual activities, advances, comments, innuendoes, jokes, gestures, electronic communications or messages, requests for sexual favors, and engaging in other verbal or physical contact of a sexual or sex-based nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational and work environment.

9. Restorative measures means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students’ behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school, and (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

## **PROHIBITIONS**

Bullying, discrimination, harassment, and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and retaliation are prohibited.

Such behavior on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex or gender, religion, age, disability, citizenship or immigration status, status of being homeless, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, any other distinguishing characteristic or any other protected status also is prohibited.

Intentionally pressuring or intimidating another employee or a student with respect to a claim of bullying, discrimination or harassment, or falsely denying, lying about, or otherwise covering up or attempting to cover up any behavior described above is prohibited conduct.

Filing a false or frivolous complaint under this Policy is prohibited. However, a complaint shall not be considered false and frivolous solely because it is not proven, provided it was made in good faith.

Retaliating against an employee or student for resisting or reporting any behavior under this Policy or for participating in an investigation or testifying regarding a claim of such is prohibited. No student or employee shall be subjected to bullying, discrimination, harassment, and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and retaliation that occurs:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity;
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or schoolsanctioned events or activities;
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment;
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-schoolrelated location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by YCS if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of YCS. This item (#4) applies only in cases in which a YCS staff member receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and does not require YCS to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program;
5. Through transmission of information from any school-sponsored publications and forums that may reasonably be perceived as sponsored by YCS; or
6. In any other way that has a nexus to YCS or school activities. **REPORTING** School staff shall promptly (within 24 hours) report all incidents of bullying behavior, physical, sexual, or emotional

abuse, or harassment and encourage students and parents to report such incidents to the Principal or School Nurse:

## **REPORTING**

School staff shall promptly (within 24 hours) report all incidents of bullying behavior, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or harassment and encourage students and parents to report such incidents to Administration:

Mr. Fred Versluys, Principal  
fversluys@yorkvillechristian.com  
630-708-7927

Ms. Liz Sovern, School Nurse  
lsovern@yorkvillechristian.com  
630-708-7927

If the situation involves the Principal, the individual shall notify the Athletics and Campus Director either verbally or in writing.

In an effort to reduce or remove any barriers to reporting, any report of misconduct under this policy may be submitted verbally or in writing. It is consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying within 24 hours after the school's administration is made aware of the students' involvement in the incident and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. The school shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent or legal guardian, utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained by the school within the 24-hour period.

Complainants making a verbal report may be accompanied by a support individual of their choosing. Anonymous reports also are accepted. No disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible

given the need to investigate subject to the additional exceptions noted below. Individuals who make good faith complaints will not be disciplined.

The Administration will promptly inform parents of all students involved in the alleged incident, to the extent permitted by state and federal laws and rules governing student privacy rights.

Parents will be informed, as appropriate, of the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

Individuals are directed to follow the Reconciliation Process to resolve the matter.

## **INVESTIGATING BULLYING**

When a report of bullying is received, the Administrator will take the following steps to promptly investigate and address reports of bullying:

1. Investigate whether the reported acts of bullying are within YCS jurisdiction as defined by this policy.
2. Make all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the bullying incident is reported, taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation.
3. Involve appropriate school support staff and staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
4. If the Administrator does not receive the initial report of bullying, the bullying incident should be reported to him/her as soon as possible after the report is received.
5. To the extent permitted by federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, provide parents of students under investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Administration to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.
6. The Administrator shall document all reports of bullying incidents, investigation steps, determinations, and outcomes.

## **CORRECTIVE MEASURES, OUTCOMES, AND DISCIPLINE**

Following the final decision on a complaint under this Policy, the Principal (or the Athletics and Campus Director, if appropriate) shall take any necessary corrective measures. These measures may include, but are not limited to: training, counseling, warning, suspension, or

immediate dismissal. YCS will take ongoing steps to protect the victim from retaliation or harm and work with the victim to create a safety plan, as appropriate.

Anyone, regardless of position or title, found through investigation to have engaged in misconduct under this Policy will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge. Additionally, any employee accused of sexual impropriety by another employee, parent, student, or any other member of the public and who will be or is standing trial for sexual impropriety for any reason will be placed on immediate leave of absence without pay.

Students who are victims of bullying, as well as students who engage in bullying, students who retaliate against any person reporting an act of bullying, or students who falsely accuse another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying, will be referred to the Principal or designee to determine the appropriate intervention(s). Interventions 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. Parents will be advised of this referral and any action that is taken or suggested.

Individuals may contact the Illinois Department of Human Rights electronically at [dhr.illinois.gov](http://dhr.illinois.gov), by U.S. mail at 555 West Monroe Street, Suite 700, Chicago, IL 60661, or by phone at (312) 8146200 or (866) 740-3953 (TTY) concerning violations of the Racism-Free Schools Act.

## **REVIEW AND COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be reviewed and reevaluated every two years with input from a variety of YCS stakeholders, including school staff, students, and parents. The policy review and reevaluation process shall include assessment of the policy's outcomes and effectiveness, including, but not limited to, the following factors: frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at school; identification of areas of school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation.

Information developed as a result of the policy's review and reevaluation must be made available on the YCS website. After the policy is reviewed and revised it shall be filed with the Illinois State Board of Education.

This policy is consistent with the policies of the school board, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school. The policy shall be available on the YCS website, included in the Student-Parent Handbook, and distributed annually to students, parents, and school staff, including new employees when hired.

### **Resource Guide: Sexual Abuse and Prevention**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) maintains a resource guide on sexual abuse response and prevention and requires non-public schools to share this information with their communities. The guide contains information on and the location of children's advocacy centers, organizations that provide medical evaluations and treatment to victims of child sexual abuse, organizations that provide mental health evaluations and services to victims and families of victims of child sexual abuse, and organizations that offer legal assistance to and provide advocacy on behalf of victims of child sexual abuse.

This guide can be accessed through the ISBE website at [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net).

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