



**POLICY
ON THE
PROHIBITION OF
BULLYING,
CYBERBULLYING
& ANTI-HARASSMENT**

Since “bullying also includes “cyberbullying”, any reference in this policy to “bullying” shall also be deemed to refer to “cyberbullying”.

The Hope Academy & BFDI Educational Services, Inc. Board of Directors believe that a safe and nurturing educational environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Therefore, it is the policy of Hope Academy to provide a safe and nurturing

environment for all of its students. Appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of students, as well as administrators, faculty, staff, visitors, and volunteers.

Bullying and Cyberbullying are Prohibited

Bullying and cyberbullying of a student, whether by other students, staff, visitors, Board Members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors and volunteers, is prohibited. All pupils are protected under this policy, and bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited without regard to its subject matter or motivating hostility or ill feelings.

Definition of Bullying

“Bullying” means any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, cyberbullying, that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one (1) one or more pupils either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

- A. Substantially interfering with the educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one (1) or more pupils.
- B. Adversely affecting the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the school district’s or public school’s educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress.
- C. Having an actual and substantial detrimental interference with the orderly operation of the school.
- D. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

“Cyberbullying” means any electronic communication that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one (1) or more pupils either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

- A. Substantially interfering with the educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one (1) or more pupils.
- B. Adversely affecting the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the school district’s or public school’s educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress.
- C. Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a pupil’s physical or mental health.
- D. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying/Cyberbullying are prohibited at Hope Academy. “At school” is defined as on school premises, at school-sponsored activities or events, in a school-related vehicle, or using telecommunications access device or a telecommunications service provider if the telecommunications

access device or telecommunications service provider is owned by or under the control of the school district. "Telecommunications access device" and "telecommunications service provider" mean those terms as defined in Section 219a of the Michigan Penal Code (MCL 750.219a).

Bullying and cyberbullying that does not occur "at school", but that causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with this policy and applicable law.

Anti-Harassment is Prohibited at Hope Academy

It is the policy of the Board to maintain an education and work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. This commitment applies to all Academy operations, programs, and activities.

➤ Sexual Harassment

The Board will vigorously enforce its prohibition against discriminatory harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), disability, age (except as authorized by law), religion, height, weight, marital or family status, military status ancestry, or genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes") that are protected by Federal civil rights laws (hereinafter referred to as unlawful harassment), and encourages those within the Academy community as well as Third Parties, who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify such problems.

➤ Religious (Creed) Harassment

Prohibited religious harassment occurs when unwelcome physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct is based upon an individual's religion or creed and when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work or educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working and/or learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity. Such harassment may occur where conduct is directed at the characteristics of a person's religious tradition, clothing, or surnames, and/or involves religious slurs.



Reporting and Investigating Reports of Bullying & Anti-Harassment

Every student is encouraged to report any situation that he or she believes to be bullying behavior directed toward a student to a teacher, a counselor, administrator, or other staff member.

Retaliation or false accusation against a target of bullying, a witness, or another person with information about an act of bullying is prohibited. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as suspected bullying behavior. Making intentionally false accusations of bullying is likewise prohibited. Retaliation and making intentionally false accusations of bullying may result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

The School Leader is the school official responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

Notification

This policy will be annually circulated to parents and students, and shall be posted on the Academy website.

Reporting

As required by state statute, the Academy shall provide a report of all verified incidents of bullying and other required information to the Michigan Department of Education on an annual basis, according to the form and procedures established by the Department.

As required by state statute, the Academy's procedures with respect to bullying are contained within this policy.

Summary Revision 8/16/23 (A full copy of these policies, as approved by the Hope Academy Board, may be obtained from the School Office Manager.)

Adopted 8/11/15, Revised 7/11/17, 8/24