



Center City Public Charter Schools

Character, Excellence, Service

Bullying Prevention Policy

Updated February 2025

Bullying Prohibited

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school related activities, functions or programs whether on or off school grounds, on or off school bus or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school.

Bullying is also prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school, if the act or acts in question create a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a youth, volunteer or staff member who reports bullying, provides information about an act of bullying, or witnesses an act of bullying is also prohibited.

Administrators will make expectations clear to students and staff that bullying will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and dismissal for students. Retaliation against anyone who reports bullying, provides information about an act of bullying, or witnesses an act of bullying is also prohibited.

Definitions

Bullying means any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct whether physical, electronic, or verbal that:

May be based on a youth's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place or residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a youth's association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and

Can reasonably be predicted to:

- Place the youth in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person or property;
- Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the youth's physical or mental health;
- Substantially interfere with the youth's academic performance or attendance; or

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- Substantially interfere with the youth's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by an agency, educational institution, or grantee.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Investigations

Center City PCS will investigate and address all incidents of bullying that school personnel know or reasonably should have known are occurring. Incidents of bullying will be promptly investigated by campus leadership or a designee. If the investigation reveals that bullying occurred, Center City PCS will take prompt and effective steps to end the bullying, eliminate its effects and prevent it from recurring.

Prior to the investigation of an incident, the campus leadership will take steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim referenced in a reported bullying incident. Once an investigation is concluded, further steps will be taken as needed to assure the continued safety of the victim from additional incidents of bullying or retaliation.

Reporting Bullying

All staff members are required to report any bullying they witness or are made aware of. Staff members should immediately record all such incidents in accordance with school procedures for reporting behavior incidents and notify campus leadership or other administrator on duty.

Any student who believes that they have been the target of bullying or who is aware of bullying is strongly encouraged to promptly report the matter orally or in writing to campus leadership, another administrator, or to any other faculty or staff member or member of Center City PCS with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Also, any student who is subject to retaliation in violation of this policy or who knows of another student who has been subject to retaliation is urged to report it as soon as possible.

A parent who witnesses or becomes aware of bullying /retaliation is strongly urged to promptly notify the campus leadership or another administrator.

Anonymous Reporting

Reports may be made anonymously, although no formal response will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. However, such a report may trigger an investigation.

Investigation Procedures

If an incident of bullying or retaliation is reported, campus leadership will respond quickly and appropriately to investigate and intervene. Complaints or reports of bullying/ retaliation will be investigated in an adequate, reliable and impartial manner. Each investigation will include, as necessary, interviewing witnesses, obtaining documents and allowing the complainant and accused to present evidence.

Within two (2) school days of receiving a report of bullying, the campus team will conduct the investigation and respond to the parents of the students involved in writing, summarizing the course and outcome of the investigation and identifying an appropriate resolution. If it is determined that bullying has occurred, appropriate corrective and remedial action will be taken. Center City PCS will make determinations as to whether a reported incident constitutes bullying based on all of the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident. Center City PCS will use a preponderance of the evidence standard (i.e., more likely than not that bullying occurred) when resolving complaints.

Steps will be taken as necessary to protect suspected victims of bullying during the course of the investigation process. Center City PCS will make every effort to protect confidentiality during the course of the investigation. The individual responsible for conducting the investigation will be responsible for making determinations about confidentiality.

Center City PCS will take steps to provide the complainant and accused with periodic updates on the status of the investigation. Once a determination has been made, Center City PCS will notify the complainant and accused about the outcome of the investigation, the result of any school disciplinary proceeding that results and the appeal process. The Director of Family Engagement will determine if parents or guardians should be informed prior to or after the investigation of the incident. Center City PCS may notify appropriate law enforcement agencies if school staff determine that the behavior cannot be safely and appropriately handled through school-based disciplinary action. Law enforcement agencies will be notified if mandatory reporting requirements are triggered.

Appeals

Any party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation and response from Center City PCS may appeal in writing to the Director of Family Engagement. Appeals must be made within 30 days of the conclusion of the initial investigation. The secondary investigation shall be completed within 30 days of receipt of an appeal, unless: (1) circumstances require additional time to complete a thorough investigation; (2) the higher-level authority sets forth those circumstances in writing; (3) the additional time is not to exceed 15 days. The party not satisfied with the outcome shall be informed of his/her right to seek further redress under the Human Rights Act.

Sanctions and Remedies for Bullying^[LB1]

Center City PCS takes a tiered approach to responding to inappropriate behavior. The same approach will be taken when responding to bullying. Center City PCS's tiers of discipline are designed to (a) appropriately correct the bullying behavior; (b) prevent another occurrence of bullying or retaliation; (c) protect the target of bullying; and are flexible and can be varied in method and severity based on: (i) nature of the incident; (ii) developmental age of the person committing the act at issue, and; (iii) any history of problem behavior from the person committing the act at issue. The Director of Family Engagement will confer with the campus disciplinary team to determine what disciplinary consequences are appropriate.

Bystander Policy

Students are expected to report rumors of bullying, planned bullying, as well as bullying actually observed. Students who watch and laugh, but do not report what they have witnessed, are considered bystanders and will be treated as participants.

^[LB1]Policy must include a code of conduct and a list of consequences that can result from an identified incident of bullying.