

Bullying Prevention Policy

Governor French Academy, SY 2023-2024 Updated 12/07/23

Governor French Academy believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The school and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance. Governor French Academy will not tolerate behaviors, bullying, or cyber-bullying that infringe on the safety of any student as it is contrary to protecting freedoms in the United States Constitution, the Illinois Constitution, and the policy of our school.

All students are expected to regard the rights and welfare of other students. No student nor faculty shall intimidate, harass, or bully a student through words or actions. All students and faculty who witness bullying are expected to report the incident. Faculty is expected to intervene (when safe to do so), and the school will promptly investigate the report. The following bullying prevention policy applies on school grounds, in virtual classroom spaces, while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during lunch periods, and during any school-sponsored activity.

DEFINING BULLYING

Bullying and cyber-bullying is defined as any severe or pervasive physical, verbal, or written act or conduct that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following: 1) Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property; 2) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health; 3) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or 4) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying, as defined in 105 ILCS 5/27- 23.7 includes without limitation one or more of the following:

- Harassment
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Stalking
- Physical violence
- Sexual harassment or violence
- Theft
- Public humiliation
- Destruction of property
- Retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying

Cyber-bullying, as defined in 105 ILCS 5/27- 23.7, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic communication to create any of the effects enumerated in the above definition of bullying. It includes but is not limited to one or more of the following:

- Creating web content 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 creating any of the effects of bullying defined above
- Distributing by electronic communications to one or more persons or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creating any of the effects of bullying defined above

REPORTING BULLYING

Governor French Academy faculty who witness acts of bullying will take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Anyone who witnesses or experiences bullying is strongly encouraged to immediately report incidents of bullying. There will be no reprisal against anyone who reports an act of bullying, including false

reports. Reports of bullying should be submitted directly to the headmaster:

- Mrs. Kim Powers: kpowers@governorfrench.org
- School Phone: 618-233-7542
- Anonymous Reporting: Use this link to submit an anonymous report:
<https://forms.gle/2RTWht3FYrvnAqQs6>

INVESTIGATING BULLYING

Each report of bullying will be promptly investigated by appropriated, trained staff who will notify the headmaster. Investigation will begin immediately and conclusively within 2 school days after the date the report received and could change reasonably considering relevant information received during the investigation about the reported incident of bullying. The school will follow Federal and State laws governing student privacy rights and confidentiality. The school will also provide parents/guardians of the students involved in the investigation an opportunity to meet with the headmaster to discuss the investigation. During and after the investigation, GFA will provide students with support & resources.

RESTORATIVE MEASURES AND CONSEQUENCES

It is the responsibility of the staff to use violations of the school rules as opportunities to help students improve their social and emotional skills, accept personal responsibility for their learning environment, and understand consequences for poor choices and behaviors. A clear distinction exists between restorative measures and consequences.

Restorative measures, intended to counter or “remedy” a behavioral mistake, can be an effective prevention practice. Restorative measures are intended to correct the problem behavior, prevent a recurrence, protect and provide support for the victim and take corrective action for documented systemic problems related to bullying and harassment. Restorative measures allow the student an opportunity to reflect on behavior, learn pro-social skills and make amends to those affected.

Restorative measures:

- Are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community.
- Contribute to maintaining school safety.
- Protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate.
- Teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society.
- Serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools and communities.
- Reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students’ behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.
- 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.

Consequences tend to be punitive in nature and should be used only when appropriate and always in conjunction with restorative measures. Consequences for habitual nuisances in behavior such as bullying may lead up to (including but not limited to) in-school suspension, suspension, and even expulsion as listed in the Governor French Academy Parent/Student Handbook.

PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, & SUPPORT

Critical to the establishment of a Bullying Protocol is the development of a comprehensive bullying policy and school-wide strategies for effective bullying prevention and intervention. Best practices in bullying prevention include:

School establishes and enforces an effective Bullying Policy that:

- Clearly defines bullying behavior and provides examples.
- Clearly establishes school rules and expectations for all members of the school community.
- Communicates rules and expectations to all students, staff and parents.
- Requires staff to consistently enforce school rules and encourages students to take personal

- responsibility for creating a physically and emotionally safe learning environment.
- Provides additional instructional opportunities to address pro-social skills to prevent bullying.
- Makes age appropriate, non-punitive remediation a priority.
- Recognizes the importance of increased adult supervision in known “hotspots”.

School administration is responsible for:

- Knowing federal and state definitions, requirements and ramifications for bullying, harassment and intimidation.
- Tracking all reported bullying incidents.
- Ensuring bullying awareness training is available to all students, staff and parents
- Securing data about the frequencies, types and locations of bullying in the school.

Social emotional learning skills are embedded throughout the curriculum.

School promotes a welcoming, caring, safe culture and climate.

- School actively seeks input regarding school climate.
 - School regularly surveys stakeholders about climate.
 - All staff and students take a personal responsibility for establishing a caring environment.
 - School encourages and positively reinforces students' reporting of bullying incidents.
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- Provide information and assistance with support including but not limited to:
 - Websites such as <https://www.stopbullying.gov/>
 - Support lines such as 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) through The CyberSmile Foundation
 - Online chat support such as Lifeline: <https://988lifeline.org/chat/>

(Students and parents will sign/date this policy.)

Student Name: _____ Student Signature: _____

Student Name: _____ Student Signature: _____

Student Name: _____ Student Signature: _____

PARENT SIGNATURE

DATE