

Meridian World School, LLC

Response to Bullying Policy 2017-2018



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Meridian's Policy

Meridian School expects that all members of our school community will uphold the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile Traits and Attitudes. We will treat each other with respect and appreciate individuality. Meridian School is committed to providing an environment that remains steadfastly committed to the Profile Traits within the International Baccalaureate Program. This commitment is the cornerstone of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning and prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other disruptive behavior that impedes the learning process.

Meridian School prohibits bullying on school property, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, or in any vehicle operated by the district. Any student or parent of a student who believes that their student or another student has experienced bullying is encouraged to immediately report the incident. Reports may be made anonymously by using Anonymous Alerts. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of district policy and is prohibited.

Any witness to suspected bullying may report that alleged incident of bullying directly to the school administration, staff member or anonymously using Anonymous Alerts. Oral or written reports may be made and addressed to a teacher, counselor, principal or other district employee.

A report of cyberbullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity, on or off school property, will be investigated as a report of bullying and the process for responding to the report will be implemented.

In accordance with state, and federal laws, and the policies of Meridian School, no person shall be discriminated against on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. This plan does not preclude the district from taking action to remediate bullying and/or cyberbullying based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, federal law, or district policies.

Meridian School will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying including both on and off campus, or retaliation in our building, on school grounds, or in/during school-related activities. All reports and complaints of bullying and retaliation will be promptly investigated; and the administration will take prompt action.

Definition

Bullying Under Education Code § 37.0832

S.B. 179 amends TEC §37.0832 by engaging the definition of “bullying” to include that bullying can be a “single significant act” or a “pattern of acts” by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power. The bullying conduct must either physically harm a student; damage a student’s property; place a student in reasonable fear of harm; create an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student; materially and substantially disrupt the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or infringe on the rights of the victim at school.

S.B. 179 integrates “cyberbullying” into the legal definition of bullying by defining cyberbullying as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including cell phone, social media, websites or other Internet -based communication tools. Cyberbullying that occurs both off and on campus and interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the school environment will be investigated following our policies and procedures.

The Anti-Bullying Policy at Meridian School prohibits the bullying of a student. Policy also prohibits retaliation against any person, including a victim, a witness, or another person, who in good faith provides information concerning an incident of bullying.

Reporting

Any employee, student or parent can report an incident of alleged bullying. All reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, however, cannot be guaranteed.

Bullying Protocol-To Be Completed By A Campus Administrator:

The investigation shall include:

- Administrator initiate interviews and completion of the documentation forms (attached) in the following order:
- Administrator collects the Initial alleged Bullying Report Form (if available)
- The victim completes the **Victim Response Form**.
- The alleged offender(s) completes an **Incident Report Form**.

- The witnesses/bystanders complete an **Incident Report Form**.

Bullying Protocol-To Be Completed By A Campus Administrator:

- Parent is contacted: Assistant Principal shall notify the Campus Principal once the investigation has commenced.
- The Assistant Principal will notify the parents/guardians of the offender and victim within 24 hours of the report being made.
- The Assistant Principal will consult with your campus principal and Head of School at onset of investigation.
- Stay Away Agreements can be put in place prior to the conclusion of the investigation
- Investigation will continue to ensure that all facets of the report have been addressed
- Initial report, statements other material collected during the investigation are analyzed
- Investigating Administrator completes the **Investigative Finding Report**.
- Investigating Administrator completes the **Summary Report**.
- Findings of the investigation discussed with all parties.
- Disciplinary Action will be taken in accordance with the findings from the investigation.

If the investigation reveals the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying or another type of prohibited conduct, the District may take disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

If the investigation indicates that the conduct is bullying according to MERIDIAN SCHOOL Policy, MERIDIAN SCHOOL Bullying Protocol must be followed. If the allegations could constitute both bullying and another type of prohibited conduct, the investigation shall include a determination on each type of conduct.

Examples of Bullying

Physical: hitting, punching, pushing, scratching, tripping, assault, demands for money, confinement, hazing if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct. The bullying conduct must either physically harm a student; damage a student's property; place a student in reasonable fear of harm; create an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student; materially and substantially disrupt the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or infringe on the rights of the victim at school.

Verbal: name calling, teasing, putdowns, sarcasm, threats, taunting, hazing if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct. The bullying conduct must either physically harm a student; damage a student's property; place a student in reasonable fear of harm; create an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student: materially and substantially disrupt the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or infringe on the rights of the victim at school.

Textual: Cyberbullying includes passing notes, writing on desks, SMS, MMS, email, chat rooms, website, social networks if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct. The bullying conduct must either physically harm a student; damage a student's property; place a student in reasonable fear of harm; create an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student: materially and substantially disrupt the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or infringe on the rights of the victim at school.

Social: ignoring, excluding, mimicking, ostracism, spreading rumors, psychological defaming, dirty looks, intimidation, extortion, theft of valued possessions or destruction of property if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct. The bullying conduct must either physically harm a student; damage a student's property; place a student in reasonable fear of harm; create an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student: materially and substantially disrupt the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or infringe on the rights of the victim at school.

CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION

TIMELINE: Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the report; however, the investigating administrator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The Investigating administrator shall prepare a written summary of the investigation (EXAMPLES attached). The report shall be filed with the Campus Principal's office at the conclusion of the investigation.

MONITOR: Administrator will monitor and follow up with the students within 15 school days after the incident to secure that no additional acts of bullying or retaliation have occurred. Additional follow up may be necessary considering the circumstances of the situation. Attach the follow up documentation to the file in the Campus Principal's office.

NOTE: Texas Law HB 1942 "prohibits the imposition of a disciplinary measure on a student who is a victim of bullying on the basis of that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying," and "requires that discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities comply with Federal law including section 504 and IDEA (2004)."

APPEAL: A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG (LOCAL) beginning at the appropriate level. A student shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

MERIDIAN SCHOOL STAY AWAY AGREEMENT

Alleged Offender:

On _____ (date), a complaint was filed against you and is being investigated. This behavior may be a violation of Meridian policy and Student Code of Conduct. In order to protect the rights and safety of all members of our school community, you are required to stay away from _____ and stop all communication from him/her.

If you continue to engage in these behaviors, encourage others to engage, or retaliate against in any way for making this complaint, additional disciplinary actions may result. Your compliance will be monitored by school administration and staff.

This agreement will be reviewed on _____.

Please be advised that any further infraction can result in suspension and/or removal from campus in addition to possible legal consequences.

Signature of alleged offender

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Administrator Signature

Date

MERIDIAN SCHOOL
INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS REPORT

- The Complaint is Sustained. The incident fits the definition as defined in Meridian Policy.
- The Complaint was Not Sustained. There was not enough verifiable proof that Bullying was taking place or the complaining party has refused to assist in the investigation.
- Unfounded. The complaint was discovered to have no merit or the complaining party has informed the investigator that the allegations were false and untrue

<p>GESTURES, WRITTEN, OR VERBAL EXPRESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal fight <input type="checkbox"/> Written or verbal threat <input type="checkbox"/> Written note or written or verbal rumors 	<p>GESTURES, WRITTEN, OR VERBAL EXPRESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Seclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Embarrassing the student <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<p>PHYSICAL ACT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Physical fight <input type="checkbox"/> Physical injuries <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ 	<p>DAMAGE OF STUDENT PROPERTY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Property damage <input type="checkbox"/> Stolen or missing property <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<p>ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION</p> <p>Identify the component used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone <input type="checkbox"/> Audio or visual image <input type="checkbox"/> Instant message/email <input type="checkbox"/> Gaming <input type="checkbox"/> Social Networking <input type="checkbox"/> Blog <input type="checkbox"/> Other: 	<p>REASONABLE FEAR OF HARM TO PERSON OR PROPERTY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of harm to person <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of harm to property <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<p>DISRUPTION OR INTERFERENCE WITH SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL MISSION OR THE EDUCATION OF THE STUDENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Absences <input type="checkbox"/> Tardies <input type="checkbox"/> Missing classes/parts of school day <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in grades <input type="checkbox"/> Other 	<p>DISRUPTION OR INTERFERENCE WITH SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL MISSION OR THE EDUCATION OF THE STUDENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in participation of school activities <input type="checkbox"/> Avoidance of elements: lunch, car-line, unstructured time

MERIDIAN SCHOOL

Summary Form

Person(s) Assigned to Investigation:

Incident Details:

Alleged Student Offender: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Student Victim: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Witnesses:

Witness:

DOCUMENTATION:

- Written statement of student victim
- Written statement of witness/bystander
- Written statement of alleged offender
- Notification of parents
- Interview of staff witness (if applicable)
- Physical evidence (if applicable)
- Medical information (if applicable)
- Copy of police report (if applicable)

ADMINISTRATOR ACTION TAKEN:

- Interviewed student victim
- Interviewed alleged student offender
- Interviewed witness
- Interviewed staff involved
- Reviewed physical evidence
- Reviewed medical information

MERIDIAN SCHOOL

Summary Form

Action Taken-Victim	Action Taken-Offender
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> None were warranted<input type="checkbox"/> Student contract<input type="checkbox"/> Counseling interventions<input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up/Monitoring<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Student victim's parent notification on completion of investigation. Date of notification:</i> _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> None were warranted<input type="checkbox"/> Student contract<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of privileges<input type="checkbox"/> Counseling interventions<input type="checkbox"/> School service work<input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up/Monitoring<input type="checkbox"/> Detention<input type="checkbox"/> In-school assignments or intervention programs<input type="checkbox"/> ISS/OSS<input type="checkbox"/> Student moved to another class<input type="checkbox"/> Student released from Meridian<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Student offender's parent notification on completion of investigation. Date of notification:</i> _____

RESOURCE LIST

Brunner, J. and Lewis, D. School House Bullies: Prevention Strategies for Professional Educators. (Thousand Oaks, California, Corwin Press. 2006).

Stopbullying.Gov. www.stopbullying.gov

Ohio Department of Education Incident Investigation Kit www.Ohio.gov

Oklahoma Department of Education www.Oklahoma.gov

Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC). www.txssc.txstate.edu/K12

