



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY			
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I. PURPOSE

Acero is committed to creating a safe and caring environment for all students that is free from bullying. This Policy defines and prohibits bullying, and outlines procedures for reporting bullying, informing parents and investigating reports of bullying.

II. ACERO RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A. 01.003: [Student Code of Conduct and Discipline](#)
- B. 10.002: [Title IX Policy](#)
- C. 09.002: [Reporting Incidents](#)

III. SCOPE

Bullying is contrary to Illinois law and this Policy is consistent with the Illinois School Code.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Bullying** (includes cyber-bullying): Any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students 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 may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and not exhaustive.

- B. Cyberbullying: bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, and instant messages. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or blog 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. Cyberbullying 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.
- C. Retaliation: any form of intimidation, reprisal including but not limited to the submission of knowingly false bullying allegations, or harassment direct against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation, witnesses, or has reliable information about bullying.

V. POLICY

- A. Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in all Acero schools.
- B. No student shall be subjected to Bullying:
 - 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 awaiting for the school bus, or at school sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities;
 - 3. through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment; or
 - 4. through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Acero if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and does not require Acero to monitor any non-school-related activity, function or program.

- C. Nothing in this Policy 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 to the United States Constitution.
- D. Acero prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of Bullying and the consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation. Acero shall ensure consequences and appropriate remedial actions against any person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.

VI. PROCEDURE

A. Reporting Bullying

1. At the beginning of the school year, the school Principal shall designate school staff responsible for assisting with bullying matters or to make a report about bullying.
2. The school designee specified above, and any Acero employee with first-hand knowledge of an incident of Bullying shall do the following:
 - a. intervene immediately in a manner that is appropriate to the context and ensures the safety of all people involved;
 - b. verbally report the incident of Bullying to his/her supervisor and the respective School Principal immediately, or in the event that the Bullying incident involves sexual or gender-based harassment or violence, refer to the and follow the procedure therein, which requires direct reporting in writing to the Title IX Coordinator¹ within 24 hours; and
 - c. complete section 1 of the [Incident Report Form](#) and submit the form through his/her chain of command to the School Principal within the same day the incident occurred.
 - d. the School Principal shall complete section 2 of the Incident Report Form, and submit the completed document to incidentreports@aceroschools.org within two (2) business days of receiving the [Incident Report Form](#) from the employee. The School Principal shall copy the applicable Chief on the email.
3. Any Acero parent/guardian with first-hand knowledge of an incident of Bullying has an obligation to notify the School Principal/Designee as soon as possible. Reports can be made by notifying the respective School Principal/Designee, emailing incidentreports@aceroschools.org, or calling the Acero network office at (312) 637-3900. Anonymous reports will be accepted by the School Principal/Designee and the Acero network office.

B. Investigating Bullying

1. Upon receipt of an Incident Report for Bullying, the School Principal/Designee shall conduct an investigation and complete such

¹ The Acero Title IX Coordinator is the General Counsel/Chief Administrative Officer/Designee.

investigation within ten (10) school days from the date the report was received.

2. In the event that the Bullying incident involves sexual or gender-based harassment or violence, the School Principal/Designee shall refer to the [Title IX Policy](#) and follow the procedure therein.
3. During the investigation, the School Principal/Designee shall:
 - a. identify the perpetrator(s), target(s) and bystander(s), as well as any adult who witnessed the incident or may have reliable information about it;
 - b. conduct an individual interview in a private setting with the alleged perpetrator and target. The alleged perpetrator and target should never be interviewed together. Individual interviews shall also be conducted in private with any students, witnesses or adults who witnessed the Bullying conduct;
 - c. determine how often the conduct occurred, any past incident or continuing pattern of behavior, and whether the target's education was affected;
 - d. assess the individual and school-wide effects of the incident relating to safety, and assigning school staff to create and implement a safety plan that will restore a sense of safety for the target and other students who have been impacted;
 - e. following the appropriate discipline procedure pursuant to the [Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedure](#), where appropriate; and
 - f. documenting the details of the investigations.
4. If applicable, the Principal/Designee shall convene the Individualized Education Program ("IEP") Team to determine whether additional or different special education or related services are needed to address the student's individual needs and revise the IEP accordingly.
 - a. If the targeted student is a student with a disability, and the student's disability affects social skill development or makes the student vulnerable to bullying. The IEP team shall assess whether the student's disability affects social skill development or makes the student vulnerable to bullying. The IEP team shall consider whether the student's IEP should include provisions to develop skills and proficiencies to respond to bullying.
 - b. If the student who engaged in the bullying behavior is a student with a disability, the IEP team shall consider; (1) whether additional services are needed to address the inappropriate behavior, (2) determine if changes to the student's environment are warranted by examining the environment in which the bullying occurred, and (3) determine if a behavior intervention plan is needed, or review the student's current behavior intervention plan and revise if necessary.

- c. The Principal Designee shall consult the [Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedure](#) when considering discipline and/or intervention for students with disabilities.
5. The School Principal/Designee shall involve appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on Bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.

C. Informing Parents/Guardians

1. Upon initiating the investigation, the School Principal/Designee shall notify the parent/guardian of all involved students in writing of the occurrence of any alleged incident of Bullying. Upon completion of the investigation, the School Principal/Designee shall notify the parent/guardian of all involved students of the outcome of the investigation, if appropriate.
2. Parents/Guardians of the students who are parties of the investigation shall be given, upon request, an opportunity to meet with the School Principal/Designee to discuss the investigation, the findings, and actions taken to address the reported incident of Bullying, unless inappropriate due to the confidential nature of actions.

D. Interventions

1. The School Principal/Designee shall apply interventions to address Bullying as applicable. Interventions may include, but are not limited to, social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

E. Information for Victims of Bullying

In the event that an act of Bullying has occurred, the School Principal/Designee shall ensure that the victim is provided with information regarding services that are available within the community such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

F. Policy Dissemination

1. Acero shall ensure that this Policy is:
 - a. posted on the Acero policy intranet site, and distributed to all staff, including new hires;
 - b. posted on the Acero website in English and Spanish; and
 - c. distributed to Acero students and families.

G. Evaluation

Acero's Legal Department will re-evaluate this Policy every two (2) years based on an assessment of its outcomes and effectiveness, including, but not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff and family observations of safety at the school; identification of areas of a school where Bullying occurs; the types of Bullying being utilized; and bystander intervention

or participation. The information developed will be made available on the Acero website.

VII. Legal Reference

105 ILCS 5/27-23.7 Bullying Prevention

VIII. Applicability

This Policy is applicable to all Acero employees. Failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.