

Good Shepherd Academy Bullying and Harassment Policy

a. Statement prohibiting bullying and harassment:

It is the policy of Good Shepherd Academy that all of its students and school employees have an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The district will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

b. Definition of bullying and a definition of harassment:

Bullying includes cyberbullying and means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to:

1. Teasing
2. Social Exclusion
3. Threat
4. Intimidation
5. Stalking
6. Physical violence
7. Theft
8. Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
9. Public or private humiliation
10. Destruction of property

Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photooptical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog 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 conditions 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 conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Harassment means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

1. Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property;
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying and harassment also encompasses:

1. Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
2. Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
 - a. Incitement or coercion
 - b. Accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system
 - c. Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment

Cyberstalking as defined in s. 784.048(1)(d), F.S., means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

c. Consequences for a student or employee of Good Shepherd who commits an act of bullying or harassment:

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student or school employee found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with school discipline policies. Consequences for a student or employee of Good Shepherd Academy who is found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another of an act of bullying or harassment:

d. A procedure for receiving reports of an alleged act of bullying or harassment, including provisions that permit a person to anonymously report such an act.

At GSA, the principal is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal. All other members of the school community, including students, parents/legal

guardians, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in-person to the principal.

Any written or oral reporting of an act of bullying or harassment shall be considered an official means of reporting such act(s). Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

e. A procedure for the prompt investigation of a report of bullying or harassment and the persons responsible for the investigation. The investigation of a reported act of bullying or harassment is deemed to be a school-related activity and begins with a report of such an act:

At each school in the district, the Procedures for Investigating Bullying and/or Harassment include:

- The principal selects a designee, employed by the school, trained in investigative procedures to initiate the investigation. The designee may not be the accused perpetrator (harasser or bully) or victim.
- Documented interviews of the victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses are conducted privately, separately, and are confidential. Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses) will be interviewed separately and at no time will the alleged perpetrator and victim be interviewed together.
- The investigator shall collect and evaluate the facts including, but not limited to:
 - o Description of incident(s) including nature of the behavior; context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred, etc.;
 - o How often the conduct occurred;
 - o Whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior;
 - o The relationship between the parties involved;
 - o The characteristics of parties involved (i.e., grade, age, etc.);
 - o The identity and number of individuals who participated in bullying or harassing behavior;
 - o Where the alleged incident(s) occurred;
 - o Whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or educational environment;
 - o Whether the alleged victim felt or perceived an imbalance of power as a result of the reported incident; and
 - o The date, time, and method in which the parents/legal guardians of all parties involved were contacted.
- Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances and includes:
 - o Recommended remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying and/or harassing behavior; and
 - o A written final report to the principal, if investigation was completed by a designee.
- The maximum of 10 school days shall be the limit for the initial filing of incidents and completion of the investigative procedural steps. The highest level of

confidentiality possible will be upheld regarding the submission of a complaint or a report of bullying and/or harassment, and the investigative procedures that follow.

f. A procedure for providing immediate notification to the parents/legal guardians of a victim of bullying or harassment and the parents/legal guardians of the perpetrator of an act of bullying or harassment as well as, notification to all local agencies where criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator:

The principal, or designee, shall promptly report via telephone, personal conference, and/or in writing, the occurrence of any incident of bullying or harassment as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident(s) has been initiated. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

g. A procedure for regularly reporting to a victim's parents/legal guardians the legal actions taken to protect the victim:

The principal or designee shall by telephone and/or in writing report the occurrence of any incident of bullying or harassment as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident has been initiated. According to the level of infraction, parents/legal guardians will be notified by telephone and/or writing of actions being taken to protect the child; the frequency of notification will depend on the seriousness of the bullying or harassment incident. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).