

SOCIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY

Frederica Academy believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. We believe we have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students, staff, parents and volunteers. We strive to cultivate an environment where social consideration is the norm. Therefore, we have outlined a social consideration policy to raise awareness of social aggression, the impact it has on our school, and prevent its occurrence

Section I: Vocabulary

Categories of Social Aggression:

- **Physical Aggression** is defined as causing harm through damage or threat of damage to another's physical well-being.
- **Verbal Aggression** is defined as obvious and/or hidden verbal acts of aggression toward another, such as threats, putdowns and name calling.
- **Relational Aggression** is defined as behavior that is intended to harm someone by damaging or manipulating his or her relationships with others such as exclusion, spreading rumors, ganging-up as well as any other forms of physical or verbal aggression.

Types of Social Aggression:

- **Teasing** makes fun of or puts down some human characteristic or difference, usually by calling the person a negative name.
- **Exclusion** ignores or sets someone apart, isolating them as outsider to be left alone. This act creates shame for the one being shunned. Usually there is a 'ring-leader' and the others in the group actively participate or passively let it happen.
- **Bullying** threatens, injures, or coerces so one person can dominate and control another.
- **Rumoring** spreads lies and damaging information through gossip to hurt someone's social standing.
- **Ganging Up** unifies the greater number to hurt a single individual or a chosen few.
- **Cyberbullying:** the use of modern communication technologies (such as the Internet and cell phone) to embarrass, humiliate, threaten, or intimidate individuals in an attempt to gain power and control over them. This can occur through social networking sites (Snapchat, Instagram, etc.), cell phone texting, and blogs. It can include examples of verbal and relational aggression.

Peer Roles:

- **Aggressor:** The person who chooses to hurt or damage a relationship. A bully.
- **Target:** The person who is aggressed upon or bullied. The object of bullying.
- **Bystander:** The person or persons who are not aggressors or targets but are caught somewhere in between.

Section II: Policy

All parties at Frederica Academy will be expected to show social consideration. We assert that:

1. Aggression is everyone's problem.
2. We treat each other with respect and civility.
3. We are each accountable for our actions.
4. When we make a mistake we make it right.
5. Adults help us deal with aggression, through intervention and modeling.
6. We protect each other.

Therefore, students shall not bully, harass, spread rumors about, intentionally exclude, gang-up on or intimidate another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: direct physical contact such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults such as teasing or name-calling; the use of electronic methods to harass, threaten or humiliate, and social isolation and/or manipulation.

The student code of conduct includes but is not limited to the following:

- Incidents of social aggressive behaviors shall be investigated by the teacher, division director or guidance counselor. Depending on the situation and age of the student(s) disciplinary action will be taken.
- Students (Target or Bystander) are expected to immediately report incidents of social aggression to a trusted adult (teacher, advisor, directors, counselor, parent, etc.).
- School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a social aggression incident occur.
- Students and parents can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of social aggression in a thorough and confidential manner.
- The division director shall be notified to provide support and/or additional guidance by the investigating staff member, if necessary.
- If the student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, and after consulting the division director, the student or the parent of the student should contact the Head of School or his designee.
- Frederica Academy prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

This policy applies to students on school grounds and while traveling or during a school-sponsored activity. Please note: Any form of electronic bullying (cyberbullying) using school equipment, school networks, e-mail systems or committed at school is strictly prohibited. *(See technology policy)*

Section III: Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action will be taken after each incident of social aggression and upon a finding of guilt. Disciplinary action after the first incident of social aggression may include but is not limited to the following:

Lower School Grades PK-4:

- Education and meeting with teacher or division head
- Meeting with parents
- Making reparation through apology
- Reassignment of seats in class or cafeteria
- Limits set on mutual play during recess

As students reach older grades of Lower School (3-4) additional steps would include:

- Out of school suspension for egregious act along with additional support such as counseling

Middle and Upper School:

- Loss of a privilege
- Reassignment of seats in the classroom, cafeteria, etc.
- Reassignment of classes
- Detention
- Meeting with parents
- Out of school suspension

(Adapted from Georgia Department of Education and The Ophelia Project)

If necessary, the guidance counselor will recommend counseling referrals and/or other interventions (i.e., support group, mediation, etc.) to address the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of an Aggressor, Target, and By-stander.

Section IV: Procedures

The procedures for preventing and intervening in social aggressive behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Students and their parents will be introduced to the policy and receive copies during orientation and Parents Night.
- The school will utilize a variety of research-based methods to maintain awareness and enhance prevention of social aggression such as school wide assemblies, social skills groups, collaborative readings of books relevant to the topic, and visual aids in classrooms and around public areas.
- The school will keep a record of all social aggression reports as well as maintain confidentiality of the results of an investigation.
- Staff are expected to immediately intervene when they see a social aggressive incident occur or upon receipt of any report of social aggression without exception and report it to their supervisor and/or guidance counselor.
- People witnessing or experiencing social aggression are encouraged to report the incident to the division director.

The following actions will be taken when a **division director** receives a report of social aggression:

1. **Investigate:** Upon receipt of a report of social aggression, this policy will be utilized. An immediate investigation involving appropriate personnel will begin, no later than the following school day. The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged aggressor(s) and target(s), identified by-stander(s), teacher(s) and staff members.
2. **Notify:** At an appropriate time during or after the investigation, parents/guardians of the aggressor and the target must be notified. If the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical attention should be provided and the parent/guardian should be notified immediately.
3. **Discipline:** Upon confirming that social aggression has occurred, the aggressor will be held accountable for their behavior and given an age-appropriate consequence (See section III: Disciplinary action). Schools should clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of social aggression is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action.
4. **Follow Up:** Follow up is important to the aggressor, target and By-stander, if applicable. The guidance counselor will implement a plan to provide after-care and follow up.

We want to empower our students, staff, and parents to influence the social climate at Frederica Academy toward social consideration. Our primary goal is to help students, staff, and parents understand what is happening, what their roles are, and how they can help change the dynamics. We believe by speaking a common language and giving clear guidelines, we can achieve this goal in addition to preventing occurrences of social aggression.