



Carrollwood Day School
Student Welfare - Freedom from Bullying Policy

Carrollwood Day School (CDS) strives to create a caring, safe, and inclusive school climate in which students may excel, not only in academics, but also ethically, socially, and emotionally. To this aim, CDS prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined herein by our *Student Welfare - Freedom from Bullying Policy*.

I. Statement of Prohibited Conduct

Conduct constituting bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined below, is prohibited and will not be tolerated at CDS. CDS reserves the right to address bullying and, as deemed necessary, impose discipline for bullying behavior that:

- 1) Occurs on school property or during a school-sponsored activity or event on or off school property; or
- 2) Occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity or event, if the conduct interferes with or limits a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operations of the school or school-sponsored activity or event.

II. Definitions

A. Bullying

Bullying, including cyberbullying, is defined as a pattern of incidents involving written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student which:

- 1) Places a student in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or property;
- 2) Physically harms a student or damages the student's property;
- 3) Causes significant and ongoing emotional distress to a student;
- 4) Interferes with a student's educational opportunities;
- 5) Creates a hostile educational environment; or
- 6) Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying shall also include, but is not limited to, actions motivated by an imbalance of power based on a student's actual or perceived personal characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs, or motivated by the student's association with another person and based on the other person's characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs.

B. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sound, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted by the use of any electronic device, including, but not limited to, a computer, cellular telephone, tablet, or text messaging device.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another 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 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.

III. False Claims

A student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another of bullying of any kind may face discipline or other consequences ranging from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

IV. Protection from Retaliation

CDS will discipline and take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, or other employee who retaliates against any person who makes a good-faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who assists in an investigation relating to such bullying. Any student found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to and including suspension or expulsion.

If the alleged victim or any witness reports to any CDS administrator, faculty, or staff member that they believe that they may be retaliated against, a process or plan to protect that student from possible retaliation will be developed. Each process or plan may be developed on a case-by-case basis. A plan may include, but is not limited to, rearranging student schedules to minimize contact, warnings to alleged perpetrators, temporary removal of privileges, or other means necessary to protect against possible retaliation.

V. Disciplinary Consequences

CDS will impose disciplinary consequences against any student who commits acts of bullying, wrongfully and intentionally accuses another student of bullying, or retaliates against any student or witness who provides information about an act of bullying. Consequences will range

from early intervention measures, mindset training, alternative dispute resolution, up to, and including, suspension and expulsion.

VI. Notice to Parents or Guardians

Parents or guardians may access the *Student Welfare - Freedom from Bullying Policy* at any time through the CDS website or upon request. Parents or guardians are also expected to:

- 1) Report bullying, including cyberbullying, when it occurs;
- 2) Inform CDS immediately (within 24 hours) if they believe their child is being bullied or is bullying others; and
- 3) Cooperate fully with school personnel in identifying and resolving issues.

VII. Reporting Procedures

A. Student Reporting

- 1) Any student who believes they have been the victim of bullying, witnesses or has knowledge of acts of bullying shall report the alleged acts immediately to the Division Head, Assistant Division Head, or School Counselor.
- 2) Failure to immediately report may impair CDS's ability to fully investigate and address the prohibited conduct.
- 3) Upon receipt of a report of bullying, CDS will commence an investigation.

B. Employee Reporting

- 1) All CDS faculty and staff members shall report acts or behaviors they witness that may constitute bullying. Reports must be made to the Division Head, Assistant Division Head, or School Counselor as soon as possible, but no later than the end of that school day.
- 2) Any CDS faculty or staff member who receives a report or has knowledge that bullying occurred shall inform the Division Head, Assistant Division Head, or School Counselor as soon as possible, but no later than the end of that school day.
- 3) All CDS faculty and staff are expected to encourage students to disclose acts that may constitute bullying.
- 4) Upon receipt of a report of bullying, CDS will commence an investigation.

VIII. Investigative Procedures

- 1) Upon receipt of a report of bullying, CDS will initiate an investigation into the alleged act within two (2) school days.

- 2) The investigation may include documented interviews with the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses. All interviews shall be conducted privately, separately, and confidentially (to the extent permitted). Each individual will be interviewed separately and at no time during the investigation will the alleged victim and perpetrator be interviewed together.
- 3) Any discussion between the alleged perpetrator and alleged victim will only occur in the event that BOTH parties, separately, agree to this course of resolution.
- 4) If the alleged bullying was in whole or in part cyberbullying, CDS may ask students and/or parents or guardians to provide CDS with printed copies of the electronic communications (e.g., emails, text messages, social media posts, etc.).
- 5) CDS will collect and evaluate the facts including, but not limited to:
 - The parties involved;
 - Description of incident(s), including the nature of the behavior;
 - How often the conduct occurred;
 - Whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior;
 - The identity and number of individuals who participated in bullying behavior;
 - Where the alleged incident(s) occurred;
 - Whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or educational environment; and
 - Whether the alleged victim perceived an imbalance of power prior to or as a result of the reported incident.
- 6) A determination of whether a particular action or incident constitutes bullying, and therefore a violation of this policy, shall be based upon a consideration of all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

IX. Follow-Up Procedures

After completing an investigation, if CDS determines that bullying occurred, consequences will be implemented on a case-by-case basis, ranging from educational interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Individual follow-up discussions with all parties involved will be initiated to ensure long-term resolution.

[Freedom from Bullying Reporting Form](#)