

## Anti-Bullying Policy

Adopted September 6, 2022

As members of the Chiaravalle Montessori community, students share in the responsibility of creating a school climate that fosters mutual caring, trust, and respect. As a Montessori school based on the philosophy of peace education, each year students of all ages help affirm classroom rules and routinely practice developmentally appropriate conflict resolution skills. Our school climate is affected not only by students' conduct in school, but also by their interactions outside of school and through their use of technology.

*Bullying* (Defined by [105 ILCS 5/27-23.7](#)) includes *cyberbullying* and means 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 non-exhaustive.

*Cyberbullying* means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation 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, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation 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 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*.

*Restorative measures* means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (i) are adapted to the particular

needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school, and (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Ill. Human Rights Act.

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important goals at Chiaravalle.

The non-discrimination policy prohibits bullying based on actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, 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.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred.

## Bullying Response Plan

The Head of School or designee shall maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances Chiaravalle's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan is consistent with the following requirements:

1. The School uses the definition of *bullying* as provided in this policy.
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this School. However, nothing in the School's bullying prevention and response plan 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 U.S. Constitution](#) or under [Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution](#).
3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be

made orally or in writing to the Head of School, Educational Director, School Psychologist, or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the School's named officials or any staff member. The School named officials and all staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anonymous reports are also accepted; however, this shall not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

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**Anonymous Reporting:**

1. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Head of School or designee shall promptly inform parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students involved in an alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.
2. The Head of School or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying, by, among other things:
  - a. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation in 10 days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
  - b. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
  - c. Notifying the Head of School or designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
  - d. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an

opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The Head of School or designee shall investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the School's jurisdiction and shall require that the School provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the School and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

1. The Head of School or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, and community-based services.
2. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. Any person's act of reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge with regard to employees, or suspension and/or expulsion with regard to students.
3. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the School's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, a person who is found to have falsely accused another of bullying, as a means of retaliation, as a means of bullying, or provided false information will be treated as either: (a) *bullying*, (b) student discipline up to and including suspension and/or expulsion, and/or (c) both (a) and (b) for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
4. The School's bullying prevention and response plan is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.
5. The Head of School or designee shall post this policy on the School's website, if any, and include it in the student handbook, and, where applicable, post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy will be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel (including new employees when hired) and included in personnel and family handbooks.
6. The school monitors this policy every two years and will update it as is necessary and appropriate. Changes to the policy will be communicated through posting on the website at [www.chiaravalle.org](http://www.chiaravalle.org) and updating the Chiaravalle Family Handbook.

## Bullying Prevention Plan

1. The School's bullying prevention plan is consistent with other school policies.
2. The Head of School or designee shall fully inform staff members of the School's goal to prevent students from engaging in bullying and the measures being used to accomplish it. This includes each of the following:

- a. Communicating the School's expectation and State law requirement that teachers and other certificated or licensed employees maintain discipline.
- b. Establishing the expectation that staff members: (1) intervene immediately to stop a bullying incident that they witness or immediately contact their supervisor and/or law enforcement if the incident involves a weapon or other illegal activity, (2) report bullying, whether they witness it or not, to an administrator, and (3) inform the administration of locations on school grounds where additional supervision or monitoring may be needed to prevent bullying.
- c. Where appropriate in the staff development program, providing strategies to staff members to effectively prevent bullying and intervene when it occurs.
- d. Establishing a process for staff members to fulfill their obligation to report alleged acts of bullying.