

## Students

### School Climate

The Woodstock Academy Board of Trustees (the Board) believes all schools must support and promote teaching and learning environments where all students thrive academically and socially, have a strong and meaningful voice, and are prepared for lifelong success.

The Board recognizes that improving the school climate is contextual. The Academy needs to consider its history, strengths, needs, and goals. Furthermore, it is the belief of the Board that The Academy will support and develop restorative action plans that will create and sustain safe and equitable learning environments.

### Definitions

1. “*School climate*” means the quality and character of Academy life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within The Academy community, and which is based on patterns of people's experiences that reflect the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within The Academy community.
2. “*Positive Sustained School Climate*” is the foundation for learning and positive youth development and includes:
  - a. Norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, culturally, racially, intellectually, and physically safe.
  - b. A school community that works collaboratively to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision.
  - c. Adults who model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and
  - d. A school community that contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.
3. “*Social and emotional learning*” means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.
4. “*Bullying*” means unwanted and aggressive behavior among students that involves a power imbalance.
5. “*School environment*” means an Academy-sponsored or related activity, function, or program, whether on or off campus, including at a bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle used by a local board of education, and may include other activities, functions or programs that occur outside of an Academy-sponsored or related activity, function or program if bullying at or during such other activities, functions or programs negatively impacts the school environment.
6. “*Cyberbullying*” means any act of bullying using the internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices, or any other electronic communication.
7. “*Teen dating violence*” means any act of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing, and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.
8. “*Mobile electronic device*” means any portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, iPad, equipment that can play a video game or equipment on which digital images are transmitted.
9. “*Restorative practices*” means system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among The Academy community, (B) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the community.
10. “*School climate survey*” means a developmentally appropriate survey administered to students, school employees, and families of students, that measures and identifies school climate needs and tracks progress through a school climate improvement plan.

11. “*School employee*” means any individual who, in the performance of their duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled at The Academy.
12. “*Challenging behavior*” means behavior that negatively impacts the school climate or interferes with the learning or safety of a student or school employee. This may include but is not limited to, bullying and teen dating violence.
13. “*Effective School Climate Improvement*” is a restorative process that engages all stakeholders in the following six essential practices:
  - a. Promoting decision-making that is collaborative and actively involves all stakeholders with varied and meaningful roles and perspectives where all voices are heard;
  - b. Utilizing data to drive action planning, preventive and intervention practices, and implementation strategies that continuously improve all dimensions of school climate;
  - c. Tailoring improvement goals to the unique needs of the students, educators, and The Academy community;
  - d. Fostering adult learning to build capacity building among school employees; and
  - e. Basing curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions on youth development. Interventions include strength-based programs and practices that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments, as well as address individual student barriers to learning and adult barriers to teaching.

#### Safe School Climate Coordinator/Specialist

The Head of School shall yearly assign an administrator as the Safe School Climate Coordinator/Specialist. This person shall:

1. provide leadership and support for the implementation of the school climate improvement plan;
2. develop strategies to prevent, identify, and respond to challenging behavior, and communicate such strategies to the school community through publication in the student handbook;
3. work with the administrative team and school climate committee to identify strategies to improve school climate, respond to challenging behavior, and implement interventions;
4. manage the yearly school climate survey; and
5. oversee the establishment of the school climate committee.

#### Safe School Climate Committee

The Academy shall establish a committee, or designate at least one existing committee, that is responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate at The Academy.

The committee shall consist of:

1. the school climate coordinator/specialist;
2. a teacher;
3. a demographically representative group of Academy students; and
4. at least two members of the school community, as determined by the school climate specialist.

The school climate committee shall be responsible for:

1. assisting in the development of the school climate survey, and reviewing the results;
2. using the results to identify strengths and challenges to improve school climate, and to revise the school climate improvement plan;
3. assisting in the implementation of the school climate improvement plan; and
4. annually providing notice of the uniform challenging behavior and/or bullying complaint form to the school community.

#### School Climate Improvement Plan

The Academy administration shall develop and update, as necessary, a school climate improvement plan. This plan shall be

based on the results of the school climate survey and any recommendations from the school climate committee. The plan shall be made available to members of the school community and used to prevent, identify, and respond to all challenging behavior.

### The Academy's Plan

1. Requires the development and implementation of a safe school climate plan and requires that the student handbook explain the process by which students and families may make such reports;
2. Permits anonymous reports of challenging behavior by students and requires that the student handbook explain the process by which students and families may make such reports;
3. Requires school employees who witness acts of challenging behavior or receive reports of challenging behavior to notify a school administrator verbally;
4. Requires an administrator to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
5. Requires The Academy to have a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with challenging behavior;
6. Provides for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning challenging behavior;
7. Parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of challenging behavior will be notified after the completion of the investigation;
8. Requires the administration to invite the parents/guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents/guardians the measures being taken by The Academy to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act of challenging behavior was directed;
9. Requires The Academy to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of such challenging behavior to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting of the parents/guardians of the student against whom the act of bullying was directed, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by The Academy;
10. The Academy shall document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of challenging behavior;
11. Prohibits discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of such challenging behavior;
12. Requires the development of student safety support plans for students against whom challenging behavior was directed that addresses safety measures the school will take to protect such students;
13. Requires The Academy to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when any challenging behavior constitutes criminal conduct;
14. Requires all Academy employees to annually complete training on identifying and responding to challenging behavior and preventing and responding to youth suicide; and
15. Requires students and the parents/guardians of students to be notified through the handbook of the process by which they may make reports concerning challenging behavior.

The Academy shall publish the plain language of the rights and remedies available under this policy in The Academy's Student Handbook.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
10-15b Access of parent or guardian to student's records. Inspection and subpoena of school or student records.  
10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160, PA 11-232, PA 14-172 and PA 18-15 and PA 19-166  
PA 06-115 An Act Concerning Bullying Policies in Schools and Notices Sent to Parents or Legal Guardians.  
PA 11-232 An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws.  
PA 14-172 An Act Concerning Improving Employment Opportunities through Education and Ensuring Safe School Climates.  
PA 14-234 An Act Concerning Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault  
PA 19-166 An Act Concerning School Climate  
PA 23-167 An Act Concerning Transparency in Education

