

PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO BULLYING, INTIMIDATION AND HARASSMENT

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 for the Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies.

Bullying is contrary to Illinois state law and the policy of Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies. However, nothing in this policy 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 of the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.

This bullying policy aligns with other Hopewell and Bridgepoint Policies and Procedures: See also: Student Supervision and Welfare 26.1 and Sexual Harassment 30.1.

PROHIBITED BULLYING & CYBER-BULLYING:

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, academic status, pregnancy, parenting status, homelessness, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic **is prohibited** at Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies. No student at Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies shall be subjected to bullying:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity;
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, 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; or
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of the school. This Paragraph 4 applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and does not require Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies, including its school personnel, to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

For purposes of this policy, *bullying* includes *cyber-bullying* 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 Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, posting or distributing sexually explicit images, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. For purposes of this policy, this list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Cyber-bullying 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. *Cyber-bullying* 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*. *Cyber-bullying* 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 or the posting or distribution of an unauthorized digital replica by electronic means if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Digital replica means a newly created, electronic representation of the identity of an actual individual created using a computer, algorithm, software, tool, artificial intelligence, or other technology that is fixed in a sound recording or audiovisual work in which that individual did not actually perform or appear and that is so realistic that a reasonable observer would believe it is a performance by the individual being portrayed and no other individual.

Unauthorized digital replica means the use of a digital replica of an individual without the consent of the depicted individual.

Artificial intelligence means a machine-based system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments. "Artificial intelligence" includes generative artificial intelligence.

PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PLAN:

As required by the Illinois School Code, (105 ILCS 5/22 – 110), Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the school's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment.

We encourage the reporting of any instance of bullying. Anyone, including students, parents/guardians, and staff members who have information about actual or threatened bullying are encouraged to report it. School personnel are available for students and their parents/guardians for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. A report may be made by anyone, including the students themselves, their parents/legal guardians, or staff members. A report may be made orally or in writing to any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. In addition, the following school personnel are available to receive reports of bullying:

Name: **Chad Kollross, Director, Hopewell & Bridgepoint Academies**
Address: **1009 S. Briggs Street, Joliet, IL 60433**
E-mail: **ckollross@hopewellschools.com**
Phone: **815-463-9655 x 102**

Name: **Titus Payton, Administrator, Hopewell Academies**
Address: **1009 S. Briggs Street, Joliet, IL 60433**
E-mail: **tpayton@hopewellschools.com**
Phone: **815-463-9655 x 301**

Anonymous reports are also accepted via phone, mail or e-mail to the contact information listed above. Formal disciplinary action shall not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Consistent with applicable federal and state laws regarding students' privacy rights, upon receipt of information of a student's alleged involvement in an incident of bullying, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of that student will be informed promptly (within 24 hours after school administration is made aware of the student's involvement in the incident) and, as deemed appropriate by the school, will be offered available services, including social work services, counseling, school psychological services, and/or other interventions.

The school shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent or legal guardian, utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained by the school within the 24-hour period.

Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies will promptly investigate and address reports of bullying by:

- a) Determining first whether the reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction;
- b) Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of a bullying incident was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported bullying incident;

- c) Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process;
- d) Notifying the Building Principal or Site Director or his/her designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received;
- e) Consistent with applicable federal and state laws regarding students' privacy rights, promptly informing parents/guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, and other interventions and restorative measures.
 - a. "Restorative Measures" means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspension and expulsions, that:
 - i. Are adapted to the particular needs of the school 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, and
 - 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.
 - vii. Increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.
 - b. Parents and guardians will have an opportunity to discuss with the Building Principal or Site Director the alleged incident, the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.
 - c. All individual instances of bullying, as well as all threats, suggestions, or instances of self-harm determined to be the result of bullying, shall be reported to the parents or legal guardians of those involved in accordance with the notification requirements set forth above.
- f) Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies shall provide the student who is the subject of bullying with information regarding services available within the school, resident school district, and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs. Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies shall also inform the resident school district of the incident, in order for the resident school district to provide the involved student(s) with information regarding services that are available within the resident school district and/or community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs, and/or to convene an IEP meeting, as determined appropriate by the resident school district.

Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies offer the following interventions, which may be amended, altered or discontinued from time-to-time, to address bullying situations: social work services, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies strictly prohibit reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as *bullying* for purposes of determining consequences or other remedial actions deemed appropriate by Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies.

No student will be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying will be treated as *bullying*, and appropriate consequences and remedial action may also be taken, as outlined above, including:

- a) Consistent with applicable federal and state laws regarding students' privacy rights, providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet and/or discuss with the Building Principal or Site Director the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying;
- b) Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies offer the following interventions, which may be amended, altered or discontinued from time-to-time, to address bullying situations: social work services, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services;
- c) As deemed appropriate, Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies shall inform the resident school district of the incident, in order for the resident school district to determine whether to provide the involved student(s) with information regarding services that are available within the resident school district and/or community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs, and/or to convene an IEP meeting, as determined appropriate by the resident school district.

Suggestions and or feedback regarding this bullying prevention policy are welcomed and should be directed to **Chad Kollross, Administrator, Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies, 1009 S Briggs Street, Joliet, IL 60433** or ckollross@hopewellschools.com or 815-463-9655 x 102.

Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies bullying policies were developed based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians.

Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies shall conduct a review and reevaluation of this policy and make necessary and appropriate revisions every 2 years. This includes Hopewell and Bridgepoint Academies' responsibility to evaluate and assess the outcomes and effectiveness including, but not limited to, the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. Information developed as part of the policy evaluation will be made available on school's website. The bullying policy is posted on the school website at www.hopewellschools.com, is included in the student handbook, and where applicable, is posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted in the school. The policy is distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired. No later than September 30 of the subject year, the updated policy will be

filed with the Illinois State Board of Education through the Bullying Policy Submission and Evaluation System in IWAS.

Reviewed and reevaluated: September 3, 2026

Last Revised: September 3, 2026