District HIB Coordinator:
Mr. Anthony Williams
awilliams@mptcs.org
973.621.0060, ext. 1078

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Marion P. Thomas Charter School that harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any kind shall be prohibited. No pupil, staff member, vendor, volunteer, or visitor shall commit an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any kind against any member of the school community.

Definition

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means any gesture, written or electronic communication including telephone, cellular phone, computer, tablet, verbal or physical act that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus and that:

- Is motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or mental, physical or sensory disability; or,
- by any other distinguishing characteristic; and
- a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances that the act(s) will have the effect of harming a student or damaging the scholar's property, or placing a scholar in reasonable fear of harm to his person or damage to his property; or
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of scholars in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with the orderly operation of school.

This policy may impose consequences for acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying that occur off school grounds, such as cyber-bullying,(e.g., the use of electronic or wireless devices to harass, intimidate, or bully), to the extent that this policy complies with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1. In all instances of harassment, intimidation, or bullying behavior occurring off school grounds, the consequences may only be exercised when it is reasonably necessary for the pupil's physical or emotional safety

and well-being, or for reasons relating to the safety and well-being of other pupils, staff or school grounds, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:25-2 and 18A:37-2, and when the conduct which is the subject of the a proposed consequence materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school.

The Marion P. Thomas Charter School believes that a standard for scholars' behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the scholars, parents/guardians, staff and community members. This produces an atmosphere that encourages scholars to grow in self-discipline, the development of the atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for district and community property on the part of scholars, staff, and community members.

The Marion P. Thomas Charter School believes that the best discipline is self-imposed, and that it is the responsibility of staff to use disciplinary situations as opportunities to help scholars learn to assume and accept responsibility and consequences for their behavior. Staff members who interact with scholars shall apply best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage scholars' abilities to grow in self-discipline.

Based on broad community involvement, and in line with the school's core ethical values the Marion P. Thomas Charter School has developed guidelines for scholar conduct and detailed regulations suited to the age level of our students and the mission and physical facilities of our school. All scholars in the school are required to adhere to the rules and regulations established by the school's Board of Trustees, and to submit to such disciplinary measures as are appropriately assigned for infraction of these rules.

Implementation

The Chief School Administrator shall provide annually to scholars and their parents/guardians the rules of scholar conduct for the school, the policy shall appear in all publications of school rules, procedures and standards of conduct, which shall include the Scholar/Parent Handbook. Provisions shall be made for informing parents/guardians whose primary language is other than English.
The policy shall:

- Describe scholar responsibilities, including the requirements for scholars to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior; respect the person, property and rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to those who hold authority;
- Address appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship and academic success.
- Explain scholar rights; and
- Identify disciplinary sanctions and due process.

In determining the appropriate response to scholars who commit one or more acts of harassment intimidation or bullying, administrators shall consider the following factors: the developmental or maturity level of the scholars involved, the levels of harm, the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behaviors, past incidents or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationship between the parties involved, and the context in which the alleged incidents

occurred. Concluding whether a particular incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts surrounding the circumstances. It is only after meaningful consideration of these factors that an appropriate consequence should be determined, consistent with case law, federal and state statutes, regulations and policies, and school policies and procedures. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for scholars who commit acts associated with this policy may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.
Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements.

Reporting
The principal or principal's designee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy, and all school employees are required to report complaints alleging violations of this policy to the principal or his designee. All other members of the school community, including scholars, parents/guardians, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. While submission of a written report is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to make such a written submission, in any case, oral or electronic reports are to be considered official reports. Anonymous reports may be made, however formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report.

Investigation and Response
The principal and/or designee is responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In doing so, the designated person shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of the alleged incident. Some acts of harassment intimidation or bullying may be isolated incidents requiring an appropriate response to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be more serious, or parts of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation, or bullying that require a response either at the classroom, school, or law enforcement level.

Consequences and or appropriate remedial actions for students who violate this policy may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion from school as permitted under N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1, Discipline of Pupils.

In considering whether a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, the nature of the incident, circumstances of the act, level of harm, past incidents, patterns of behavior, and the context in which the alleged incident occurred is to be considered. School responses may range from support for victims, and community surveys to mailing to focus groups, adaption of research-based bullying prevention programs, professional development, community meetings and training, and the involvement of law enforcement.

Reprisal or Retaliation
The Marion P. Thomas Charter School prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act that is in violation of this policy. The consequences and remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the designated administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, federal and state statutes and regulations and school policy and procedures.

Consequences and appropriate action for a scholar found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation and bullying range from the positive behavioral reinforcement up to and including suspension or expulsion, as permitted under N.J.S.A 18A:37-1, Discipline of Pupils. Discipline and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment intimidation and bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with district policies, procedures and agreements. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for volunteers, visitors or vendors found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be determined by the building administrator after consideration of the nature, and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

This policy shall be disseminated annually to all school staff, scholars, parents, and guardians, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying that occur on school property, at school sponsored functions, or on the school bus.

The Chief School Administrator shall develop an annual process for discussing this policy with scholars.

References:

N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15	Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying
N.J.S.A. 18:36-20	Discrimination
N.J.S.A. 6A:16-5.1	Code of Student Conduct
N.J.S.A. 2C:33-4	Harassment

Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights District Grade Report (2021-2022)
Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights District Grade Report (2022-2023)
Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights District Grade Report (2024-2025)