



## Peoria Academy Bullying Policy

### Peoria Academy Mission Statement

Peoria Academy is a diverse community of students, parents, and educators working together to provide a rigorous educational experience. Using progressive techniques that nurture the whole child, our independent school fosters maturation, resilience, and creativity.

### Bullying

Bullying is not acceptable behavior at Peoria Academy, and as such will not be tolerated. We believe that no one has the right to do or say anything that may negatively impact the educational opportunities or the physical and/or emotional well-being of any other student. The State of Illinois defines “bullying”, including “cyber-bullying”, as 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:

- placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school (as defined in Public Act 098-0669)

The following behaviors are examples of some, but certainly not all, forms of bullying:

- Telling or forcing another person to do something against his/her will;
- Making another person give up his/her lunch, place in line, or material possessions;
- Threatening some kind of retaliation (physical harm or withdrawal of friendship) if a person doesn't comply with the bully's request;
- Repeated acts of physical aggression upon another person (tripping, hitting, poking, pushing);
- The spread of gossip, rumors and lies to hurt another person;
- Teasing, mocking, and taunting a peer.

### *School's Responsibility in Bullying*

First and foremost, Peoria Academy is committed to providing a safe, supportive atmosphere for every student. This policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students, teachers, and parents or guardians. When bullying is thought to occur, we will take prompt, strong action in dealing with any and all aspects of such situations. Students who cannot or will not abide by school rules and policies will be separated from the school. Bullying is contrary to State law (Public Acts 98-0669 and 98-0801)



and school policy. Peoria Academy will determine whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction and shall require that the school provides services to those students being bullied. This policy is aligned and consistent with the policies of the Peoria Academy Board of Trustees.

Peoria Academy believes that re-education and restorative measures, rather than just punishment, is the appropriate way to deal with bullying behaviors. Restorative measures include a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspension and expulsion. These measures:

- are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community;
- contribute to maintaining school safety;
- protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate;
- teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society;
- serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities;
- 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
- 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.

To that end, the administration and the faculty will make every effort to work with both the bully and the victim. The administration will assist in preventing bullying behaviors and to minimize the risk of being bullied. **However, Peoria Academy can and will take whatever steps necessary to protect the rights and the well-being of students and/or staff. Students who engage in acts of bullying may be subject to disciplinary actions which may include verbal or written reprimand, detention, in-school suspension, and/or out of school suspension or expulsion.**

*Investigating Bullying:*

- Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school 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.
- Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- 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.
- If necessary, we will provide information to parties about local services (including social work, psychological services, etc.)

"Cyber-bullying" (using electronic means to bully another student), and using school computers to do so, will be subject to the same rules and procedures as physical, verbal and/or emotional bullying. If the behavior occurs after school hours or over the Internet, the parent should call the other child's parents to inform them of the incident. If a child receives inappropriate email or other electronic communications, the parents should keep a copy to show bully's parents. Parents should inform their child's teacher and the administration of the incident so that school authorities can take appropriate action. Because it has an impact on students' daily interactions inside school, we will treat any cyber-bullying as a school matter.



### *Victims of Bullying:*

Whenever a student believes that he/she is being bullied, he/she must go to any teacher or school official to tell of his/her experience as soon as possible. Failure to report such incidents delays the school's efforts to deal with the problem. Any issue involving bullying must be reported as soon as possible, either by the victim of bullying, by the victim's parents, or by another student who has witnessed the event. We encourage any student to come forward and report incidents to his/her teacher or to the administration. At Peoria Academy, anyone who silently witnesses an event and does nothing is also considered part of the problem. Conversely, false reporting of a bullying behavior is considered to be another form of bullying. Retaliations or reprisals against those reporting bullying will not be tolerated. As such, these actions may result in the same graduated sanction scale as above. To report bullying, please contact the school Principal, Stacy Stoyanoff, at 309.692.7570 or [sstoyanoff@peoriaacademy.org](mailto:sstoyanoff@peoriaacademy.org).

### *The Victim's Parents:*

If/when a parent believes that some sort of bullying is affecting his/her child, the parent must:

- report the incident to the school immediately;
- realize that resolving the problem permanently may take some time;
- ask the school to keep an extra watchful eye on the child.

### *The Bully's Parents:*

When a parent has been notified that his/her child has been engaging in behavior that is considered bullying, it is expected that:

- Parents will make it clear to their child that such behavior is unacceptable;
- Parents will work with the school administration and the students involved to help resolve the situation. Parents should be aware that continued bullying behaviors may result in suspension and/or permanent expulsion from Peoria Academy.

## **Harassment**

Peoria Academy believes that all people deserve to be treated in a respectful manner. No person, including students, parents, visitors and Peoria Academy employees, shall harass or intimidate a student, another parent, visitors, and/or Peoria Academy employees based upon that individual's sex, color, race, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, political affiliation, physical or learning disability, or sexual orientation. The school will not tolerate harassing or intimidating conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that unreasonably interferes with a student's educational opportunity/performance or that creates a hostile or offensive learning environment. Examples of prohibited conduct include name-calling, using derogatory slurs, or wearing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice. Any conduct that has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort is not acceptable.

Sexual harassment of students, faculty and staff, and parents is prohibited. Any person engages in sexual harassment whenever he or she makes sexual advances, requests sexual favors, and involves any conduct that has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort. Examples of sexual harassment include touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing and/or spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities. Any sexual harassment that may occur from student to student, from teacher to student, from student to teacher, from parent to student, from student to parent, from teacher to parent, from parent to teacher, from employer to employee, or from employee to employer cannot and will not be tolerated.

Students who believe they are victims of any form of harassment, or have witnessed harassment, should make a complaint to a faculty member, Assistant to the Head of School, or the Head of School. Complaints will be kept



confidential to the extent possible, given the need to investigate. Students who make good faith complaints will not be disciplined. Any student who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion from the school. Any person making a knowingly false accusation regarding harassment will likewise be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion from the school.

All policies regarding bullying and harassment will be evaluated yearly and modified, as needed, to best meet state law and promote a safe learning environment.

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