



West Town Academy

Greater West Town Community Development Project

Policy Updated 4/10/2023

Bullying/Cyber Bullying Policy

West Town Academy prohibits bullying of any form in accordance with Illinois State Law and ISBE policies. Please read the definition of Bullying as described by ISBE:

The Policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students, parents and or guardians.

"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:

- 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.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of West Town Academy is consistent with subsection 9a-5) of this Section (free exercise of religion). Nothing in this Section 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 United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

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.

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, photoelectric system, or photo-optical system (including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications).

Alternative High School: 534 N. Sacramento Blvd – Chicago, Illinois 60612-2367
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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 in this Section. 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 if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.”

Incidents of bullying in any form should be reported to school staff immediately. West Town Academy prohibits the reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying and will enforce necessary consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.

Upon receiving a report of bullying West Town Academy will:

- Make 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.
- Involve appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- Notify the Dean of Students (Travonne Jackson, tjackson@gwtp.edu, 872 248-4325) of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- Remain 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.

Students that are found to be victims or victimizers of bullying will be encouraged to participate in school social work services, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, community-based and “restorative measures” (means a continuum of school based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that

- 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

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- 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
- 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

Any student found to be making false accusations of bullying as means of retaliation or as a means of bullying will be subject to consequences and appropriate remedial actions.

As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating the policy under subsection (d) of this section, contains a policy evaluation process to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy that includes, but is not limited to, factors such as 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. West Town Academy may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation must be made available on the Internet website of the school. If an Internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students

West Town Academy bullying/ cyber bullying is consistent with the policies of the school board, charter school, or non public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school.