



Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying: File Code 5131

The Pride Academy Charter School ("Pride Academy") expects pupils and staff to treat others with civility and respect. A safe and civil environment in school is essential for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, and bullying ("HIB") like other disruptive or violent behaviors, interfere with pupils' ability to learn, the school's ability to educate, and employees' ability to work in an environment where all are safe and feel welcome.

The Pride Academy Student Code of Conduct prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" is defined as any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory handicap, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, during transit to and from school, or on a school bus or that:

- A. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of harming students or staff or damaging student or staff property, or placing students or staff in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
- B. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil, group of pupils, staff, group of staff; or
- C. Causes disruption in, or interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

"Electronic communication" is defined as any communication that is transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

Reporting and Retaliation

Any school employee, pupil, or volunteer, who has witnessed harassment, intimidation or bullying, or who has reliable information that a pupil or employee has been subject to such, must report the incident to school administration or an appropriate designee. The Pride Academy Board of Trustees and administration shall not tolerate any act of reprisal or retaliation against a person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Student Accountability and Discipline

The Board and administration of Pride Academy Charter School expect students to conduct themselves, in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and core values of the school community. Students are held accountable for demonstrating proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and staff, and respecting school facilities, equipment, and the educational purpose underlying all school activities.

Pride Academy staff and administrators use instances of violations of the Student Code of Conduct as opportunities to help students learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and to understand the consequences that result from their choices. Accountability consequences and remedial actions will be administered consistent with the guidelines in the existing Student Code of Conduct. Administrators and staff shall apply best practices designed to equip students with strategies that encourage and support positive behavior choices and self-discipline.

Consequences and Remediation – Student and Employee Offenses

Consequences and procedures for implementing remedial responses for harassment, bullying, and intimidation committed by students are addressed in the Pride Academy Charter School Student Code of Conduct. The following factors shall be given full consideration by school administrators in the implementation of appropriate consequences and remedial measures for each act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying by students. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions are determined according to the severity of the offense(s) and consider the developmental age of the student offender and the student's history of inappropriate behavior per the standards set forth in the Student Code of Conduct. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for a detailed description of remedial actions/consequences.

Consequences and procedures for implementing remedial responses for harassment, bullying, and intimidation committed by staff members are addressed in the Pride Academy Charter School Employee Handbook. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions for Pride Academy employees who commit acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying are graded according to the severity of the offense(s), the actual or potential liability or risk of liability to students, staff, and the school resulting from the incident(s), and the employee's performance history and history of inappropriate behaviors, in accordance with case law, Federal and State statutes and regulations, and school policies and procedures.

The Board recognizes that some acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may be isolated incidents requiring that school officials respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or representative of parts of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation or bullying that they require a response either at the classroom or school-wide level or by law enforcement officials. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student who commits an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as permitted under N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1, Discipline of Pupils and as set forth in N.J.A.C 6A:16-7.2, Short-term suspensions, N.J.A.C 6A-7.3, Long-term Suspensions and N.J.A.C 6A:16-7.5, Expulsions.

In considering whether a response beyond the individual is appropriate, the lead administrator or principal shall consider the nature and circumstances of the act, the degree of harm, the nature and severity of the behavior, past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior, and the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred. Institutional (i.e. classroom and school-wide) responses can range from school and community surveys, to mailings, focus groups, adoption of research-based bullying prevention program models, staff training, parent and staff presentations, and the involvement of law enforcement.

Reprisal and Retaliation

Pride Academy prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the lead administrator after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, Federal and State statutes and regulations, and school policies and procedures.

False Accusations

A person may not falsely accuse another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Students: The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have falsely accused another, as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as permitted under N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1, Discipline of Pupils and as set forth in N.J.A.C 6A:16-7.2, Short-term suspensions, N.J.A.C 6A-7.3, Long-term Suspensions, and N.J.A.C 6A:16-7.5, Expulsions.

Employees: The consequences and appropriate remedial action for an employee found to have falsely accused another, as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying will be disciplined, administered in accordance with school policies and procedures.

Visitors/

Volunteers: Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

Reporting

The principal or the principal's designee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees as well as all other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal and/or the principal's designee. While submission of the report form is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to use the report form available from the school website, the main office, the principal and the principal's designee. Oral reports will also be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously via mail, e-mail, or telephone, but formal action for violations of the Student Code of Conduct or school policies contained in the Employee Handbook may not be based solely on an anonymous report.

Supportive Actions for Victims of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

Pride Academy is committed to providing a safe, non-threatening environment in which all members of the school community can learn and work. Victims of harassment, intimidation, and bullying will be provided support services including reporting access, school wide anti-discrimination, harassment and bullying initiatives, consistent enforcement of student accountability and discipline measures, a school-wide zero tolerance policy for bullying and harassment, individual counseling and, if appropriate, changes in class or reporting assignments for the purpose of separating HIB victims from persons who commit reported acts of HIB.

Annual Policy Dissemination

School officials will distribute this policy each year to school staff, students, and parents, along with a statement explaining to parents and students that the complete policy may be found on the school website and that it applies to all applicable acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions, during transit to and from school, or on a school bus. Pride Academy administration shall develop and implement an annual process for discussing the policy on harassment, intimidation and bullying with students in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A16-7.9 (d) 2.

Implementation of Bullying Prevention Policies and Procedures

Statutory and Regulatory Provisions: Information regarding the district's policy against harassment, intimidation and bullying will be incorporated in Pride Academy's employee training program. N.J.S.A.:37-17(5)(c) and N.J.A.C. 6A16-7.9 (d) 1i.

The district will annually review the extent and characteristics of harassment, intimidation and bullying behavior in the school and implement programmatic responses as appropriate. N.J.A.C. 6A16-7.9 (d) 3.

The district will annually review staff training needs for the effective implementation of the harassment, intimidation and bullying policy, procedures, programs and initiatives and implement appropriate staff training programs and update the Student Code of Conduct consistent with the annual review and related findings pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A16-7.1 (a) 3. N.J.A.C. 6A16-7.9 (d)1.