

Anti-Bullying Policy

The German International School Washington D. C. (following: The School) believes that all students and staff are entitled to a safe, respectful, and harassment-free school environment. The School will not tolerate bullying, discrimination, or harassment and will take appropriate action, according to its discipline policy, against such forms of misconduct.

Definition

Although there is no universal definition of bullying, it is widely agreed upon that:

"Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. "

This definition includes three important components:

- 1. Bullying is intentional aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.**
- 2. Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.**
- 3. Bullying involves a real or perceived imbalance of power or strength.**

This policy recognizes that the prohibition of bullying in schools and reprisal and retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying, requires an education program which includes prevention, intervention/remediation, and consequences.

Prevention, Intervention and Remediation at the GISW include but are not limited to:

- Targeted Social Skills training with the counselor beginning in Elementary School.
- The Social Skills Training Program called "**act.now**" (since 2008) for students grades 5-10 (http://www.giswashington.org/files/dswashington/Dateien/2016-17/Counseling/17_02_01_ACTNOW_Introduction_E.pdf)
- Workshops for students and staff from Elementary School through High School on how to recognize and respond appropriately to students who bully, are bullied, and are bystanders who report bullying.

- Education/intervention for the students exhibiting bullying behaviors will include teaching replacement behaviors, empathy, tolerance and sensitivity to diversity.
- Remedial measures designed to correct the bullying behavior, prevent another occurrence, and protect the victim.
- Support/counseling for the victim with protection from retaliation and further episodes of bullying.
- A continuum of interventions developed to prevent bullying by addressing the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who bully in order to prevent further incidents, while taking great care to ensure the safety of the victim.
- Utilizing community health and mental health resources for those students involved in bullying behaviors as perpetrators, victims, or witnesses whose mental or physical health, safety, or academic performance has been impacted.

Consequences:

Consequences and remedial actions for students committing acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, for students engaged in reprisal or retaliation, and for students found to have made false accusations should be consistently and fairly applied after the school has determined that such an offense has occurred.

The determination of age-appropriate consequences will be based on the school's existing discipline policy and in accordance with existing disciplinary procedures in the context of age and circumstances.

Reporting Acts of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation:

Reports of incidences of bullying, harassment, or intimidation can be made to any staff member in verbal or written form.

- If a student complains that he/she is currently the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, the staff member will respond quickly and appropriately to investigate and intervene, as safety permits.
- If a student expresses a desire to discuss an incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation with a staff member, the staff member will make an effort to provide the student with a practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate way of doing so.
- If a parent suspects their child may be the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, they may contact their child's class teacher and/or the Counselor, so that the school may follow up appropriately.

Investigating reports of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation:

Note: Although the school does not minimize any student's experience with inappropriate behavior, it is important to distinguish between rude behavior (inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else), mean behavior (purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone once [or maybe twice]), and bullying (intentional aggressive behavior, repeated over time, that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power).

1. School administrators or the administrative designee determine whether bullying, harassment, or intimidation actually occurred by taking steps to verify who committed the act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and whether others played a role in perpetuating this act. Other related complaints, if any, will be reviewed in making this determination.
2. Neither victim nor witnesses should be promised confidentiality at the onset of an investigation. It cannot be predicted what will be discovered or if a hearing may result from the ultimate outcome of the investigation. Efforts should be made to increase the confidence and trust of the victim and any witnesses. They will be informed that any information discussed and recorded will be confined to "need to know" status.
3. If an investigation determines that there is evidence of bullying, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the school's disciplinary policy.
4. School administrators or the administrative designee will apply consequences and/or remedial actions consistent with the German International School's discipline policy using the range of listed consequences as a guide.

References

Annotated Code of Maryland, Education, 2008.

Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), Title 13A State Board of Education.

Delaware's Model Bully Prevention Policy, Title 14, Section 4112D, Delaware Code Annotated.

DRAFT – *Towards A Maryland's Model Bully Prevention Policy*, Jorge Srabstein, MD and Members of the Coalition for the Prevention of Bullying and Related Health Risks, September, 2008.

Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2007, U.S. Department of Education NCES 2008-021, U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs NCJ 219553.

Maryland State Department of Education (2005), Safe Schools Reporting Act, Directions for Students and Parents Completing Bullying/Harassment Referral Form.

Maryland State Department of Education (2008), Suspensions, Expulsions, and Health Related Exclusions Maryland Public Schools, 2007-2008, MSDE-DPA 11/08.

Maryland Youth Risk Behavioral Survey, Maryland State Department of Education, September, 2008.

New Jersey's Model Policy and Guidelines for Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying on School Property, At School-Sponsored Functions and On School Buses, New Jersey Administrative Code §6A:16-7.9.

The Broward County Public Schools Anti-Bullying Policy ADOPTED: 7/22/08, 6/15/10

Is it Rude, Is it Mean, or is it Bullying?, Signe Whitson, L.S.W. Psychology Today, 2012

My signature indicates that I have reviewed the Anti-Bullying Policy and understand the actions that can be taken for a violation of these school rules. I understand that the commission of any offense may also result in the loss of privileges and membership in school organizations (i.e. SMV), I further understand that under the laws of Maryland, that if authorized personnel have reasonable belief that a student has possession of a disallowed item, object, or material, authorized personnel may decide to conduct a self-search of the student, his/her possessions, vehicle, and/or locker.

Signature Box		
Printed Name of Student: _____	Printed Name of Parent/Guardian: _____	
Signature Student: _____	Parent/Guardian Signature: _____	
Grade: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____