

## **502 - BULLYING PREVENTION AND CYBERBULLYING**

### **I. Purpose**

The Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence (BASSE) recognizes that a safe learning environment is essential for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. BASSE strives to provide a safe learning environment for all students and employees.

### **II. Policy**

To comply with Delaware State Code (14 Del. C. 4112D), BASSE hereby prohibits the bullying of any person on school property, at school sponsored functions, or by use of data or electronic software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network or other electronic technology of the school. In addition, cyberbullying (as defined herein) is prohibited by students directed at other students or staff. BASSE further prohibits reprisal, retaliation, or false accusation against a target, witness, or one with reliable information about an act of bullying.

### **III. Rationale**

Having clear expectations for addressing bullying in any form is important for all students, staff, and stakeholders. Bullying is therefore deemed unacceptable, and a culture of openness is the best way to counter such behavior. It is the responsibility of each member of the BASSE community (pupils, staff and parents) to report incidents of bullying or suspicions of bullying to the school administration in writing, with the understanding that all such reports will be listened to, taken seriously and investigated. This policy requires that any school employee who suspects bullying must report it to the school administration.

### **IV. Definitions**

A. Bullying: any intentional written, electronic, verbal, or physical act or acts against a student, school employee, school volunteer that a reasonable person, under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

1. Placing a student, school employee, or volunteer in reasonable fear of substantial harm to her or his emotional, or physical wellbeing, or substantial damage to the individual's property, or
2. Creating a hostile, threatening, humiliating or abusive educational environment due to the pervasiveness or persistence of actions, or due to a power differential between the bully and the target, or
3. Interfering with a student having a safe school environment necessary to facilitate educational performance opportunities, or benefits, or

4. Perpetuating bullying by inciting, soliciting, or coercing an individual or group to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional, psychological, or physical harm to another student, a school employee, or a school volunteer.

B. Cyberbullying: the use of uninvited, or unwelcomed electronic communication directed at an identifiable individual, or group of individuals through means other than face-to-face interaction that:

1. Interferes with an individual's physical well-being, or

2. Is threatening or intimidating, or

3. Is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it is reasonably likely to limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational or extracurricular programs of BASSE. Communication shall be considered aimed at an identifiable student, or group of students if it is sent directly to that individual, or group, or posted in a medium that the initiator knows is likely to be available to a broad audience within the school community or the community at large. Whether free speech constitutes cyberbullying will be determined from the standpoint of a reasonable student of the same grade and other circumstances as the target. The place of origin of the speech otherwise constituting cyberbullying is not material to whether it is considered cyberbullying under this policy, nor is the use of school, district, or personal materials.

## V. Implementation Guidelines

A. BASSE is committed to supporting the adoption and implementation of a school-wide, research-based bully prevention initiative. All members of the BASSE learning community (students, teachers, staff, and parents/guardians) will participate in components of the program that will attempt to:

- Reduce existing bullying problems among students.
- Prevent the development of new bullying problems.
- Achieve better peer relations and staff-student connections at school.

B. The school shall develop and maintain a system of supervision of classroom and non-classroom areas.

C. The BASSE **National Junior Honor Society** will work with the **Director of Educational Excellence** to coordinate the school's bullying prevention program. The student representatives of this committee shall be appointed by members of the staff and representatives of the non-employee group will be appointed by the Head of School.

D. The program will be an annual, year-long initiative in collaboration with Positive Behavior Supports and the Student Code of Conduct.

E. All complaints shall be appropriately investigated and handled consistent with due process requirements. Disciplinary actions will follow any determination of bullying acts having occurred. The investigation of such instances will include an attempt to determine if the bullying of the target was wholly or in part due to the target's race, age, marital status, creed, religion, color, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, or other reasons or criteria why the person or group was a target of bullying.

F. All reported instances of bullying, whether substantiated or alleged, must be reported to the Delaware Department of Education within five working days. BASSE will follow all State and Federal reporting requirements. The Head of School may designate a person or persons to be responsible for responding to bullying complaints.

G. BASSE will provide a combined training each year totaling of at least one (1) hour for all members of the staff in the identification and reporting of criminal youth gang activity pursuant to § 617, Title 11 of the Delaware Code and bullying prevention pursuant to § 4112D, Title 14 of the Delaware Code.

H. A parent, guardian, or relative caregiver pursuant to 14 Del. C § 202 (f) or legal guardian of any target of bullying or person who has bullied others will be notified in a timely manner by the individual responsible for the investigation.

I. Should bullying issues at school impact the physical or emotional health of a student, the school will communicate with medical professionals as per the signed release signed by parent, guardian or relative caregiver.

J. The telephone number of the Department of Justice School Ombudsman shall be provided in writing to parents, students, faculty, and staff; and shall be on the BASSE website. The contact information shall also be prominently displayed in the school building.

K. Upon implementation of this policy, and again at the beginning of each academic year, BASSE shall inform students in writing the list of platforms and mediums where the posting of content will be presumed available to a broad audience within the school community, regardless of privacy settings, or other limitations on these postings. From the implementation of this policy, postings on TikTok, Instagram, X, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, WeChat, Telegram, Snapchat, Kuaishou, Sina Weibo, QQ, Pinterest, Reddit, Discord, Twitch, Tumblr, Threads, Mastodon, and Bluesky shall, at a minimum, be included in the list of social media presumed to be available to a broad audience.

L. The policy shall appear in the BASSE student and staff handbooks and if no handbook is available, or it is not practical to reprint new handbooks, a copy of the policy with updated social media will be distributed to all students, parents, staff, and stakeholders.

Related Policies:

Related Documents:

Policy Adoption Date:

Policy Review Date:

DRAFT