



## **Bullying Policy And Prevention Plan**

### **Prohibited Conduct**

Bullying, intimidation, hazing, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important Wheaton Montessori School goals.

Bullying based on actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program, or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Wheaton Montessori School, if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This paragraph (#4) applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require staff members to monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

### **Definitions**

(As provided from Section 27-23.7 of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7))

### **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:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.



## **Cyber-bullying**

This means bullying using 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, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. 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. 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.

## **Restorative Measures**

A continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.

## **School Personnel**

Includes persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school, Wheaton Montessori School, including, without limitation, Wheaton Montessori School administrators, teachers, assistants, playground supervisors, and custodians.

## **Bullying Prevention and Response Plan**

The Head of School or designee shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the Wheaton Montessori School's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan must be consistent with the requirements listed below; each numbered requirement, 1-12, corresponds with the same number in the list of required policy components in 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7(b) 1-12.

1. Wheaton Montessori School uses the definition of bullying as provided in this policy.
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of Wheaton Montessori School. However, nothing in the Wheaton Montessori School's bullying prevention and response plan 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 U.S. Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.



3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Wheaton Montessori School Complaint Manager or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the Wheaton Montessori School Complaint Manager or any staff member. Anonymous reports are also accepted.

**Complaint Manager:**

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4. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Head of School or designee shall promptly inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of every student involved in an alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.
5. The Head of School or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying by, among other things:
  - a. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of a bullying incident was received, and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported bullying incident.
  - b. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
  - c. Notifying the school administrator or designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
  - d. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Building 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.
  - e. The Head of School or designee shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the Wheaton Montessori School's jurisdiction and shall require that the Wheaton Montessori School provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the Wheaton Montessori School and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.
6. The Head of School or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.



7. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
8. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the Wheaton Montessori School's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
9. You can access this policy on the Wheaton Montessori website, [www.wheatonmontessori.org/school](http://www.wheatonmontessori.org/school), as a downloadable PDF.



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