

## Bullying Prevention Policy

### Bullying Prohibited

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school sponsored or school related activities, functions or programs whether on or off school grounds, on or off school bus or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school, at any transit stop at which youth wait to be transported to the school or an event sponsored by the school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school.

Bullying is also prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school, if the act or acts in question create a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringe on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a youth, volunteer or staff member who reports bullying, provides information about an act of bullying, or witnesses an act of bullying is also prohibited.

Administrators will make expectations clear to students and staff that bullying will not be tolerated and will be the grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and dismissal for students. Retaliation against anyone who reports bullying, provides information about an act of bullying, or witnesses an act of bullying is also prohibited.

### Definitions

Bullying means any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct whether physical, electronic, or verbal that:

1. May be based on a youth's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place or residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a youth's association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and
2. Can reasonably be predicted to:
  - a. Place the youth in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person or property;
  - b. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the youth's physical or mental health;
  - c. Substantially interfere with the youth's academic performance or attendance; or
  - d. Substantially interfere with the youth's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by an agency, educational institution, or grantee.

Cyberbullying is defined as any bullying done through electronic means which meets the definition of bullying above, including, but not limited to, social media, electronic mail (email), texting or tweeting.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.



### **Investigations**

Kingsman Academy will investigate and address all incidents of bullying that school personnel know or reasonably should have known are occurring. Incidents of bullying will be promptly investigated by the Director of Student Culture and Engagement or a designee. If the investigation reveals that bullying occurred, Kingsman Academy will take prompt and effective steps to end the bullying, eliminate its effects and prevent it from recurring.

Prior to the investigation of an incident, the Director of Student Culture and Engagement will take steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim referenced in a reported bullying incident. Once an investigation is concluded, further steps will be taken as needed to assure the continued safety of the victim from additional incidents of bullying or retaliation.

### **Reporting Bullying**

All staff members are required to report any bullying they witness or are made aware of. Staff members should immediately record all such incidents in accordance with school procedures for reporting behavior incidents and notify the Director of Student Culture and Engagement or other administrator on duty.

Any student who believes that they have been the target of bullying or who is aware of bullying is strongly encouraged to promptly report the matter orally or in writing to the Director of Student Culture and Engagement or another administrator, or to any other faculty or staff member or member of Kingsman Academy with whom the student is comfortable speaking.

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Also, any student who is subject to retaliation in violation of this policy or who knows of another student who has been subject to retaliation is urged to report it as soon as possible.

A parent who witnesses or becomes aware of bullying /retaliation is strongly urged to promptly notify the Director of Student Culture and Engagement or another administrator.

### **Anonymous Reporting**

Reports may be made anonymously, although no formal response will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. However, such a report may trigger an investigation.

### **Training and Professional Development**

Kingsman Academy will provide to all personnel training on Kingsman Academy's bullying prevention curriculum, as well as the procedures for responding to and reporting an incident of bullying/sexual harassment. This training will be provided annually to Kingsman Academy staff at the start of each academic school year.

## **Investigation**

All reports of bullying will be promptly investigated by the Program Leader, under the direction of the Director of Student Culture and Engagement. When a bullying incident is reported, Kingsman Academy will take the following steps:

- The appropriate Program Leader will meet with the student who was bullied. In this conversation, the Program Leader will find out what happened, how long it has been going on, and the impact on this student. The Program Leader will also determine the best way to support the student, including, but not limited to, referring the student to a member of the clinical staff.
- The Program Leader will then investigate the claim by talking to witnesses (including any staff that may have witnessed the incident) and the student(s) who did the bullying.
- The Program Leader will continue conducting interviews until there is a clear picture of what happened.
- If the Program Leader determines that the incident was bullying they will then meet again with the student(s) responsible for the acts of bullying to discuss consequences. The consequences will be designed to protect the target of the bullying and to address the individual needs of the student(s) in order to prevent the behavior from recurring and to ensure that he or she has support in the effort to change the pattern of behavior. Consequences will be determined on a case by case basis, taking into account the nature of the incident, the developmental age of the perpetrator of the bullying, and any history of problem behavior from the perpetrator of the bullying. Possible consequences and/or supports include:
  - Informal talk
  - Parent conference
  - Referral to clinical services
  - Loss of privileges
  - Community service
  - Discipline conference
  - Lunch or after school detention
  - In-school suspension (1-10 days)
  - Out of school suspension (1-10 days)
  - Expulsion
  - Discipline conference to discuss placement
- If the Program Leader concludes that there was not a bullying incident, they will meet again with the student who felt that he or she was bullied to discuss the incident and to determine the appropriate ways to support this student.



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Public Charter School

- Note: Even if it is determined that the incident was not bullying, there still may be consequences assigned. Disrespect towards others, physical threats, and other behaviors are violations of the Kingsman Academy Code of Conduct even if they do not amount to bullying.
- After the investigation is complete, the parents of the students will be contacted to explain the situation and to discuss strategies to support both students. Additionally, the Program Leader will notify the assigned clinician to provide support as needed.

Kingsman Academy may notify appropriate law enforcement agencies if school staff determine that the behavior cannot be safely and appropriately handled through school-based disciplinary action. Law enforcement agencies will be notified if mandatory reporting requirements are triggered.

## Appeals Process

The person accused of bullying, the target of bullying, or anyone else who is not satisfied with the outcome of an initial bullying investigation may appeal the decision. To file an appeal, the person must submit his or her complaint in writing to the Executive Director within 30 calendar days of the decision. The Executive Director will review the facts of the case and the results of the investigation and will make a final decision within 30 calendar days of receiving the appeal (the Executive Director may take an additional 15 days, for a total of 45 days, if circumstances require and if he or she sets forth those circumstances in writing to the person who filed the appeal) A party who is dissatisfied with the results of the appeal can seek further redress under the District of Columbia Human Rights Act, available at: <https://ohr.dc.gov/publication/dc-human-rights-act-1977-english>.

Kingsman Academy will track all incidents of bullying in order to determine if there is a systemic issue or trend that needs to be addressed. Upon analysis, staff and student training will be conducted as needed.

## Sanctions and Remedies for Bullying

Kingsman Academy expects all students to abide by the Code of Conduct and takes a tiered approach to responding to inappropriate behavior. The same approach will be taken when responding to bullying. Kingsman Academy's levels of discipline are designed to (a) appropriately correct the bullying behavior; (b) prevent another occurrence of bullying or retaliation; (c) protect the target of bullying; and are flexible and can be varied in method and severity based on: (i) nature of the incident; (ii) developmental age of the person committing the act at issue, and; (iii) any history of problem behavior from the person committing the act at issue. The Director of Student Culture and Engagement will confer with the Executive Director to determine what disciplinary consequences are appropriate.

## Bystander Policy

Students are expected to report rumors of bullying, planned bullying, as well as bullying actually observed. Students who watch and laugh, but do not report what they have witnessed, are considered bystanders and will be treated as participants.

## Publication and Contact Information

This policy will be made available on Kingsman Academy's website and in the Kingsman Academy Student Handbook. The policy will be distributed annually to all Kingsman Academy students and parents.

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