

**Bullying Policy: Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7
(Revised 2/2024)**

Purpose:

The Illinois General Assembly has found that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve and that bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with their ability to learn and participate in school activities. Bullying has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, using drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment, and violence. JTC Academy's goal is to create a learning environment in all its school communities where students are protected from bullying. Hence, they feel safe and supported in their efforts to succeed academically and develop emotionally into responsible, caring individuals. JTC asks every student, with the support of his/her parent(s), guardian(s), and the adults at the school, to commit to the three R's (Ready, Respectful, and Responsible), which will apply to everyone on school property and at school-related activities:

- Ready: I will recognize the signs of bullying
- Respectful: I will not bully others
- Responsible: If someone is being bullied, I will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

Scope:

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of the non-sectarian nonpublic school and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this Section [free exercise of religion]. Nothing in this Section 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 United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

This Policy is based on the engagement of various school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians. The Executive Director or its designee will reevaluate this Policy every two (2) years based on an assessment of its outcomes and effectiveness, including, but not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The information developed will be made available on the JTC Academy's website at <https://jtcacademy.com/>

Definitions from Section 27-23.7 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7)

“Bullying” means any severe or pervasive (repeated over time) 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 one or more of the following effects:

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

Bullying may take various forms, including, without limitation, one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive. Bullying may also qualify as inappropriate behavior in the Student Code of Conduct. When deciding whether inappropriate behavior constitutes bullying, administrators should consider the student's intent, the frequency or recurrence of the inappropriate behavior, and whether there are power imbalances between the students involved. While bullying is often characterized by repeated acts, sometimes a single incident constitutes bullying depending on the student's intent and power imbalances.

“Cyberbullying,” as defined in 105 ILCS 5/27- 23.7, is bullying through the use of 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, photoelectronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyberbullying" 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 "Cyberbullying" 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 one or more persons may access if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in [105 ILCS 5/27- 23.7(b)].

“Retaliation” means any form of intimidation reprisal, including but not limited to the submission of knowingly false bullying allegations or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation is prohibited and will result in the imposition of appropriate interventions/consequences according to this Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

"Restorative measures" means 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 understanding students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.
- (vii) increase student accountability if the bullying incident is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

Bullying is prohibited:

- ❖ During any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned program or activity
- ❖ In school, on school property, on school buses, or other JTC Academy-provided transportation
- ❖ Through the transmission of information from a school computer or computer network, or other electronic school equipment
- ❖ When communicated through any electronic technology or personal electronic device while on school property, on school buses or other JTC Academy-provided transportation, at bus stops, and at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities when it is conveyed that a threat will be carried out in a school setting, including threats made outside school hours with intent to carry them out during any school-related or sponsored program or activity or on JTC Academy provided transportation when it is a Student Code of Conduct behavior that occurs off campus but substantially disrupts any student's education.

Reporting Bullying:

Any student(s) who feels bullied, harassed, or has witnessed bullying or harassment is encouraged to report the incident immediately. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Executive Director, School Clinical Director, Male Complaint Manager, or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. All school staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anyone with information about actual or threatened bullying, including staff members and parents/guardians, is encouraged to report it to the JTC Academy named officials or any staff member. Anonymous reports are also accepted by phone call or in writing; however, this shall not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely based on an anonymous report unless the investigation finds it founded.

- ❖ **Executive Director:** Mrs. Amy Polt, 353 N 88th St, Centreville, IL 62203 (618) 610-8188 apol@jtc-academy.com
- ❖ **Male Complaint Manager:** Mr. Hunter Hebron, 353 N 88th St, Centreville, IL 62203 (618) 398-2524 hhebron@jtc-academy.com
- ❖ **Clinical Director:** Mrs. Mary Wilborn, 353 N 88th St, Centreville, IL 62203 (618) 398-2524, mwilborn@jtc-academy.com

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Amy Polt, Executive Director
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Procedure:

- a) Fill out a grievance and or anonymous report.
- b) Fill out a grievance or anonymous report as thoroughly as possible and submit it to an assigned counselor.
- c) The Executive Director (Amy Polt) or the director's designee (the Assigned Counselor) shall inform all parents of the students involved in the "alleged" incident, not only if it was found.
- d) The Executive Director (Amy Polt) or the director's designee (Assigned Counselor) shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident (see procedure below). The investigation will be completed within three school days after a report or complaint is made. The parents of the students involved shall receive written notice from the school on the outcome of the investigation (in compliance with current privacy laws and regulations). The school must record all reports on instances of bullying and/or harassment for annual data review.
- e) JTC Academy prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying or harassment or cooperates in an investigation.
- f) The administrator shall determine the consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation after considering the act's nature, severity, and circumstances.
- g) JTC Academy prohibits anyone from falsely accusing another as a means of bullying or harassment. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another as a means of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Notification:

On the same day the investigation is initiated, the Executive Director/Designee shall report to the parent/legal guardian of all involved students, via telephone, personal conference, and/or in writing, the occurrence of any alleged bullying incident and shall document these notifications in SWIS. When the investigation is complete, the Executive Director/Designee shall notify the parents/legal guardians of all students involved of the outcome of the investigation. Parents/legal guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation may request a personal conference with the Executive Director/Designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying, and any resources available in or outside the school to help the students address the underlying reasons for the bullying.

If the investigation results in the imposition of consequences, the Executive Director/Designee may advise the parent/legal guardian of students other than the perpetrator that the Student Code of Conduct was followed. S/he may not advise them of the specific consequence imposed, as that would violate the confidentiality of school-record information required by law. When communicating bullying incidents to the target's parent/guardian, the Executive Director/Designee should consider whether the student may want to keep certain information confidential. The Executive Director/Designee shall comply with the Procedural Safeguards for Discipline of Students with Disabilities/ Impairments when considering interventions and consequences for students with disabilities.

Investigation:

The Executive Director or designee shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the district's jurisdiction and shall require that the district provide the victim with the information regarding services that are available within the district and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

The Executive Director or designee shall use interventions to address bullying that 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.

A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student's reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying to determine any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

- 1) The Executive Director shall select a designee knowledgeable about bullying prevention and intervention to perform the investigation.
- 2) Notify the executive director or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the bullying incident as soon as possible after the report is received.
- 3) An Investigation of a bullying incident shall be initiated within five school days of receiving a report and completed within ten school days. The Executive Director/ Designee shall document the extension in the investigation report and notify the parties involved.

The investigation shall include:

1. Identifying the perpetrator(s), target(s), and bystander(s), as well as any adult who witnessed the incident or may have reliable information about it.
2. Conducting an individual interview in a private setting with the alleged perpetrator and target. The alleged perpetrator and target should never be interviewed together or in public. Individual interviews shall also be conducted in private with student and adult bystanders. Students can speak to a specific staff member or include another staff member as a witness for the student's comfort.
3. Assessing the individual and school-wide effects of the incident relating to safety and assigning school staff to create and implement a safety plan that will restore a sense of safety for the target and other students who have been impacted.
4. When appropriate, prepare a report identifying his/her recommendation for individual consequences.
5. Comprehensively documenting the details of the investigation.
6. When the investigation is complete, the Executive Director or designee shall ensure that the investigation report is entered in SWIS.

Procedures for Promptly Investigating and Addressing Reports of Bullying Including the Following:

(A) Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within ten school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and considering additional relevant information received during the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.

(B) Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.

(C) Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the bullying incident as soon as possible after the report is received.

(D) Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the 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.

Assigning Interventions and/or Consequences:

JTC Academy will respond to bullying in a manner tailored to the individual incident, considering the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. The Student Code of Conduct outlines appropriate instructive, corrective, and restorative interventions. JTC Academy will avoid using punitive discipline (detention, suspensions, and expulsions) if any other method or consequence can be used with fidelity. When an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the Executive Director/Designee shall explain the consequences non-hostilely and impose any consequence immediately and consistently. The Executive Director/Designee shall keep communicating and working with all parties involved until the situation is resolved. Some key indicators of resolution include:

- The perpetrator is no longer bullying and interacts civilly with the target.
- The target reports feeling safe and interacting civilly with the perpetrator.
- School staff notices an increase in positive behavior and social-emotional competency in the perpetrator and/or the target
- School staff noticed a more positive climate in the areas where bullying incidents were high.

What Not to Do:

- Solicit an apology from the perpetrator to the target, use peace circles, victim/offender conferences, or any form of mediation that puts the perpetrator and target in contact with one another in an immediate attempt to resolve the bullying. Restorative measures may be helpful to repair relationships between the perpetrator and target, but only if used after other interventions have balanced the power differential between the perpetrator and target.
- Dismiss bullying as typical student behavior or assume it is not serious.

Referrals:

Interventions with bullies should not focus on feelings but on changing thinking. The Executive Director/Designee may refer students who bully to positive-behavior small-group interventions (for anger management, trauma, or social skills), social work, counseling, or school psychological services within the school, if necessary, to reinforce the behavioral expectation they violated and increase their social-emotional competency. The targets of bullying need protection from bullies but may also need support and help to change their behavior. The Executive Director/Designee shall ask a school mental health professional to refer these students to individual or group therapy where they can openly express their feelings about their bullying experience, social-skills training and/or groups where they can practice assertiveness and coping mechanisms, or social work, counseling or school psychological services available within the school.

Appeal:

Any party unsatisfied with the investigation's outcome may appeal within 15 calendar days of notification of the principal's decision. When it is determined that an employee or contractor was aware that bullying was occurring but failed to report it, the employee/contractor will be considered to have violated this Policy. The Executive Director/Designee shall consider employee discipline for such violations, referring to any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Remedies for offending contractors should be imposed according to their school contracts.

Notice and Dissemination of Requirements:

This Anti-Bullying Policy will be posted on the school's website <https://jtcacademy.com/>, in the school building, and disseminating and presenting this Policy to school staff and new hires as part of pre-school-year professional development. Notices will also be sent home for students and parents to review.

Procedure:

- A. Students are to conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their levels of development and maturity and demonstrate capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school staff, volunteers, and contractors.
- B. Students will participate in groups that teach skills that include anticipating the consequences of choices, making informed decisions, communicating effectively, resolving conflicts, and developing cultural competency.
- C. Annual training on school policies and procedures regarding bullying and harassment will occur for school employees and volunteers with significant contact with pupils. Training will provide school employees with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the necessary skills to fulfill them.
- D. Students and staff members will maintain a tone and set standards that promote positive interaction among students, parents, guardians, all building staff, and community members.
- E. Students are to avoid being part of the problem and are required not to pass on the rumor or derogatory message; to walk away from these acts when they see them; to constructively attempt to stop them; to report them to the designated authority, and to reach out in friendship to the target.
- F. Group therapy meetings will be conducted to teach bystanders how and when to respond to bullying and harassment incidents.
- G. Informal classroom discussions and activities designed to provide awareness and increase student connectedness promote a positive shift in peer norms that will support empowered bystanders. When bystanders report or cooperate in an investigation, they must be protected from retaliation with the same procedures used to respond to bullying and harassment.
- H. Students will be disciplined based on the following factors:
 - a. Age, development, and maturity levels of the parties involved
 - b. Degree of harm (physical and/or emotional distress)
 - c. Surrounding circumstances
 - d. Nature and severity of the behavior(s)
 - e. Incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behavior
 - f. Relationship between the parties involved
 - g. The context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred
 - h. School employees will also be held accountable for bullying or harassing behavior directed toward school employees, volunteers, parents, or students.
- I. Consequences may include any of the following but will follow the Class I, II, and III level of offenses on page 43 of this handbook:

Examples of Remedial Measures:

Strategies for Individual Behavioral Change:

- ❖ Transformative conferencing/restorative justice practices
- ❖ Supervised peer support group
- ❖ Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience
- ❖ Supportive discipline to increase accountability for the bullying offense
- ❖ Supportive interventions, including participation of an Intervention and Referral Services team, peer mediation, etc.
- ❖ Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored
- ❖ Student counseling
- ❖ Participation in a group therapy meeting designed to teach alternative behavior

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Evaluation Process:

The Executive Director or designee will review the policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, without limitation:

- A. The frequency of victimization;
- B. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
- C. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
- D. The types of bullying utilized and
- E. Bystander intervention or participation.
- F. Relevant data will be distributed by leadership annually to all stakeholders.

Alignment with JTC ACADEMY Policies:

The Executive Director or Designee shall fully implement the policies, including, without limitation, the following:

- ❖ *11.1 Suggestions, Grievances, and Complaints.* A student may use this policy to complain about bullying.
- ❖ *XI Section C Bullying and Harassment.* This policy prohibits the use of bullying and harassment by any students.
- ❖ *XII Sections Physical Abuse A-D.* This policy defines abuse as the procedure of eliminating abuse, promoting positive behavior, and reporting abuse.
- ❖ *XIII Privacy and Confidentiality Policies Sections A-E.* This policy states the privacy and dignity of all students.
- ❖ *XIV Student Behavior Sections A-G.* This policy section explains JTC Academy's expectations of student behavior and following the three R's.
- ❖ *XV Student Policies and Procedures Section Anti-Bullying Policy.* This policy explains the policy and procedures for any bullying.