

**Bullying Policy:
Anti- Harassment**

Directive Title:	Bullying Policy
Applicable Divisions:	ChanceLight Education – Illinois Programs and Schools
Brief Description:	Policy and procedures related to bullying in ChanceLight, Spectrum Schools and Programs, and Ombudsman Educational Services
Effective:	October 19, 2016
Approved by:	Emily Langfeldt
Responsible parties:	All employees
Last Reviewed/Updated:	May 22, 2023

Definition

Bullying is defined by the Illinois School Code as “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 predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- a. placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s or students’ person or property
- b. causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s or students’ physical or mental health
- c. substantially interfering with the student's or students’ academic performance
- d. substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by the school.”

Bullying can 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.

Cyber-bullying 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, photoelectronic 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 in this Section. 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 in this Section.

Bullying and Cyber-bullying are serious offenses, contrary to state law and prohibited in ChanceLight Education programs and schools.

Procedure

Bullying of any type should be reported immediately. Students, employees, and parents may report bullying directly to:

Stephanie Walters
Regional Program Administrator - Illinois Special
Education
ChanceLight Education
(224) 760-1161
Stephanie.bloyd@chancelight.com

Sue Leuser
Senior Vice President Operations
ChanceLight Education
(847) 276-1183
Sue.Leuser@chancelight.com

Any student, staff member or adult can report bullying using the contact information above. However, if it is more expeditious or appropriate to report it to another member of the staff, that staff member should report it immediately to the persons listed above. Anonymous reports can be made using: [Report Bullying - Chancelight Education Services](#).

Any reprisal or act of retaliation against a person for reporting bullying is prohibited and can be treated as bullying with accompanying consequences and remedial actions.

Additionally, consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying will be determined by the Regional Program Administrator on a case-by-case basis.

Once bullying has been reported all reasonable efforts will be made to complete the investigation within 10 school days of the receipt of the bullying report. (Anonymous reports of bullying follow the same procedure. However, consequences cannot be based solely on an anonymous report.) The appropriate school personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, will be included in the investigation process. The Program Director and Regional Program Administrator will be notified as soon as a report is received.

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation will be provided information about the investigation and have an opportunity to meet with the program director or regional 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. Available school social work, counseling, and psychological services, as well as other interventions and restorative measures, should also be shared with parents.

Interventions and Restorative Measures

ChanceLight employs a wide variety of interventions and restorative measures including a continuum of school-based alternatives, adapted to school, community, and individual needs. They are designed to contribute to maintaining school safety and protecting the integrity of the learning environment. The goal is to teach students skills to be successful in school and society by building and restoring relationships. The likelihood of future disruptions is reduced by balancing accountability with the behavioral needs of students to keep them in school.

Interventions and restorative measures include, but are not limited to, the following individual and school-wide programs and activities:

- Pro social skills groups and lessons
- Curriculum topics on anti-bullying
- Staff and student training on bullying recognition and intervention
- Group and Individual student counseling
- Restorative Justice Practices
- Schedule adjustments

- Administrative review
- Expulsions

Regular evaluation and assessment of this bullying policy will include frequency of victimization, types of bullying utilized, observations of school safety (by students, staff, and parents), identification of school areas where bullying occurs and bystander intervention or participation.

Investigation and Addressing Reports of Bullying Process

- ChanceLight will make a reasonable effort to complete the investigation within ten (10) school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
- ChanceLight will involve the appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- ChanceLight will investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction. ChanceLight will provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the district and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.
- The Program Director Regional Program Administrator will be informed of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- Consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights and providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

Policy Development, Notification, and Evaluation Process

The bullying policy is consistent with other ChanceLight Policies, including Discrimination/Anti-Harassment Policy, Intimidation and Bullying Prevention, Student and Staff Safety, Student Conduct, Standards of Professional Conduct. ChanceLight has developed its bullying policy based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, including students, parents/guardians, and staff.

The bullying policy is posted on the ChanceLight website under [Report Bullying - Chancelight Education Services](#). In addition, the bullying policy is distributed annually in student handbooks and staff policy manuals and be posted in the classroom and employee breakrooms. It is distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

Annually, ChanceLight evaluates the outcomes and effectiveness of this Bullying Policy. This includes, but is not limited to, factors such as:

- (1) The frequency of victimization.
- (2) Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school.
- (3) Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs.
- (4) The types of bullying that are common or occurring.
- (5) Bystander intervention or participation.

The information from the biannual evaluation will be distributed to the ChanceLight stakeholders.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED IN CHANCELIGHT'S EDUCATION DIVISIONS

Whenever a bullying incident involves a student with an IEP or 504 Plan a meeting should be scheduled to review any relationships to the student's disability, educational needs and services as related the IEP or 504 Plan. Specific language from the U.S. Department of Education states: *Ultimately, unless it is clear from the school's investigation into the bullying conduct that there was no effect on the student with a disability's receipt of FAPE, the school should, as a best practice, promptly convene the IEP team or the Section 504 team to determine whether, and to what extent: (1) the student's educational needs have changed; (2) the bullying impacted the student's receipt of IDEA FAPE services or Section 504 FAPE services; and (3) additional or different services, if any, are needed, and to ensure any needed changes are made promptly. By doing so, the school will be in the best position to ensure the student's ongoing receipt of FAPE.*

Bullying of a student with a disability that results in the student not receiving meaningful educational benefit constitutes a denial of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Even when situations do not rise to a level that constitutes a denial of FAPE, bullying can undermine a student's ability to achieve his or her full academic potential. Therefore, specific strategies that schools, IEP teams, and/or Section 504 teams can implement to effectively prevent and respond to bullying are provided.

Schools have an obligation under the IDEA to ensure that a student with a disability who is the target of bullying behavior continues to receive FAPE in accordance with his or her IEP. The school should, as part of its appropriate response to the bullying:

1. Convene the IEP (or Section 504) team to determine whether, as a result of the effects of the bullying, the student's needs have changed such that the IEP is no longer designed to provide meaningful benefit to the student.
2. The IEP team must then determine to what extent additional or different special education or related services are needed to address the student's individual needs and revise the IEP accordingly.

The IEP team should exercise caution when considering a change in the placement or the location of services provided to the student with a disability who was the target of the bullying behavior and should keep the student in the original placement unless the student can no longer receive FAPE in the current LRE placement.

If the student who engaged in the bullying behavior is also a student with a disability, the IEP team should:

1. Review the student's IEP to determine if additional supports and services are needed to address the inappropriate behavior.
2. Consider examining the environment in which the bullying occurred to determine if changes to the environment are warranted.

As discussed above, any bullying of a student with a disability that results in the student not receiving meaningful educational benefit from the special education and related services provided by the school is a denial of FAPE. A student must feel safe in school to fulfill his or her full academic potential.

The following document, *Effective Evidence-Based Practices for Preventing and Addressing Bullying*, published by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, includes practices for use as part of any bullying prevention program. Further, it helps ensure that school and classroom settings are positive, safe, and nurturing environments for all children and adults.

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/bullyingdcl-enclosure-8-20-13.pdf>

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