

**Guiding Light Academy**

7155 Janes Ave  
Woodridge, IL 60517  
P: 630-328-0438  
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**Guiding Light Academy West**

247 Brook Forest Ave  
Shorewood, IL 60404  
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**Guiding Light Academy Central**

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**An Illinois State Board of Education Approved Facility**

Offering services to students with Autism, Other Health Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech/Language Impairment, Social/Emotional Disorder, and Developmental Delay.

# GLA Bullying & Harassment Policy

**Preventing Bullying, Intimidation and Harassment of Students**

Bullying, intimidation, 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 school goals.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, academic status, military status, unfavorable discharge status from military service, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, age, 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.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policies of Guiding Light Academy. No student shall be subject to bullying:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, 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.

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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 the school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and does not require a school to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

Nothing in this 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 United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.

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

*Bullying* includes *cyber-bullying* and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act of 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 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 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, 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 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, 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* mean 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, (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, and (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

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*School personnel* means persons employed by, in contract with, or who volunteer for Guiding Light Academy, including without limitation school administrators, teachers, counselors, social workers, psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, nurses, administrative assistants, custodians, and bus drivers.

**Policy Implementation**

The Principal, administrator, or his/her designee shall fully implement this policy through, but not limited to, the following:

1. *Uniform Grievance Procedure.* A student may use this policy to complain about bullying.
2. *Curriculum Context.* Bullying prevention and character instruction is provided in all grades in accordance with State law.
3. *Student Social and Emotional Development.* Student social and emotional development is incorporated into the school's educational program as required by State law.
4. *Access to Electronic Networks.* This policy states that the use of the school's electronic networks is limited to: (1) support of education and/or research, or (2) a legitimate business use.
5. *Harassment of Students is Prohibited.* This policy prohibits *any* person from harassing, intimidating, or bullying a student based on an identified actual or perceived characteristic.
6. *Restrictions on Publications.* This policy prohibits students from and provides consequences for: (1) accessing and/or distributing at school any written, printed, or electronic material, including material from the Internet, that will cause substantial disruption of the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the school or school activities, and (2) creating and/or distributing written, printed, or electronic material, including photographic material and blogs, that causes substantial disruption to school operations or interferes with the rights of other students or staff members.
7. *Distribution.* Guiding Light Academy will communicate this policy on bullying to its students and their parents or guardians on an annual basis.

Full implementation of the above policies includes each school's adoption of formal Bullying/Harassment Investigation Procedures requiring: (a) a prompt and thorough investigation of alleged incidents of bullying, intimidation, harassing behavior, or similar conduct; (b) a determination by a preponderance of the evidence that bullying or harassment has occurred; (c) the provision of appropriate consequences and remedial action to students who violate one or more of these policies; (d) protection of students against retaliation for reporting such conduct; and (e) notification of all involved parties the outcome of the school's investigation. Such notification must be consistent with the requirements of the Illinois School Student Records Act.

**Bullying Report Process**

Students, parents, and school personnel are encouraged to immediately report bullying as soon as possible. A report may be made orally or in writing to the principal, clinical coordinator, staff and student supports coordinator, or any other staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking with.

**GLA Central**

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Anonymous reports are also accepted by calling the contact listed above and specifically indicating that you would like to remain anonymous. However, formal disciplinary action cannot be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Additionally, reports are also accepted in the grievance box at each location.

**Response to Bullying Reports:**

Upon receipt of a report of bullying, administrators will investigate whether such reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of its jurisdiction.

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Principal or designee shall promptly inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students involved in an alleged incident of bullying will be notified of such, along with threats, suggestions, or instance of self-harm determined to be the result of bullying, within 24 hours after the school's administration is made aware of the the student's involvement in the incident. As appropriate, the school's administration shall also discuss the availability of counseling services, social work services, other interventions, and therapeutic measures. The school shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent or legal guardian, utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained by the school within the 24-hour period.

Further, the administrator or report manager will promptly investigate and address the report of bullying by doing the following:

1. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 5 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.
2. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
3. Notify the Building Principal or school administrator or designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
4. 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 as opportunity to meet with the building principal, school administrator, or his/her designee to discuss the investigation, its findings, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The Principal, administrator, or his/her designee may implement interventions to address reports of bullying. These may include, but are not limited to, counseling services, social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, and community-based services. Additionally, Guiding Light shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction and shall require that the school provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the school and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying **is prohibited**. Such reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for the purpose of determining appropriate consequences or other appropriate remedial actions. No person will be subject to consequences for making a good-faith report or bullying or supplying information, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation of bullying or providing knowingly false information as a

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means of retaliation or as a means of bullying is prohibited and will be treated as bullying for the purpose of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

Upon the request of a parent or legal guardian of a child enrolled in Guiding Light Academy, the State Board of Education must provide non-identifiable data on the number of bullying allegations and incidents in a given year to the requesting parent or legal guardian.

**Policy Evaluation**

This policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians. The policy will be posted on the Guiding Light Academy website. Additionally, it will be included in the student handbook and where applicable, posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted in the school. The policy will be provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty and will be distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired. This policy will be presented yearly at staff in-service training and new hire orientation.

The Principal, administrator, or his/her designee shall conduct a review and re-evaluation of this policy yearly to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of this policy and shall make any necessary and appropriate revisions. The process shall include, without limitation:

1. The frequency of victimization.
2. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at school.
3. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs.
4. The types of bullying utilized.
5. Bystander intervention or participation.
6. The cognitive and social emotional abilities of the parties involved.

Guiding Light Academy may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation, such as incident reports and physical restraint data. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation will be posted on the school's website. If an internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

Guiding Light Academy encourages all members of the school community, including students, parents/guardians, volunteers and visitors, to report alleged acts of bullying, intimidation, harassment, and other acts of actual or threatened violence.

**References:**

405 ILCS 49/, Children's Mental Health Act.  
105 ILCS 5/10-20.14, 5/24-24, and 5/27-23.7.  
23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.240, §1.280, and §1.295

**Date of Adoption:** 09/01/2022

**Date of Most Recent Review/Re-evaluation:** 11/13/2024



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# GLA Bullying Policy

I have read and understood the Bullying Policy. Failure to comply with company policies may result in written warnings, unpaid suspension or termination of employment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Name (Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature