



**MICHIGAN
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Bay City Academy
Anti-Bullying Policy
2026-2027**

I. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

The Bay City Academy Board of Directors recognizes that a physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe and secure school environment promotes good citizenship, increases student attendance and engagement, and supports academic achievement.

To protect the rights of all students and provide a safe and supportive learning environment, the Board prohibits bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, retaliation, and other forms of aggression and violence.

Bullying and harassment interfere with a school's ability to educate its students and with a student's ability to learn. All administrators, faculty, staff, parents, volunteers, contractors, and students are expected to reject bullying and harassment and to demonstrate respectful and civil behavior.

All adults in the school community are responsible for modeling respectful and civil behavior, including when addressing student misconduct or administering discipline. Positive adult behavior is an important influence on student behavior and contributes to a healthy school culture.

II. PROHIBITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is prohibited at Bay City Academy.

All pupils are protected under this policy. Bullying is prohibited regardless of the subject matter, motivation, or motivating animus underlying the conduct.

Bullying is prohibited whether it occurs:

- On school property;
- At a school-sponsored activity or event;
- On a school bus or other school transportation;
- On the way to or from school or a school-sponsored activity;
- Through the use of school technology or communication systems; or
- Off school property, including through electronic communication, when the conduct substantially disrupts the educational environment or the orderly operation of the school or school program, or otherwise falls within the scope of Michigan law.

Cyberbullying is considered a form of bullying and is prohibited under this policy.

III. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

For purposes of this policy, "**bullying**" means any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, cyberbullying, that is intended, or that a reasonable person would know is likely, to harm one or more pupils either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

1. Substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more pupils;
2. Adversely affecting the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the educational programs or activities of the school by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress;
3. Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a pupil's physical or mental health; or
4. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying may occur through physical, verbal, social, emotional, technological, or other means.

Bullying may include, but is not limited to, conduct that is intimidating, threatening, humiliating, degrading, hostile, or intended to cause fear, emotional distress, or physical harm.

Bullying does not have to be based upon a student's race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or any other distinguishing characteristic in order to be prohibited under this policy.

IV. CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is bullying carried out through electronic communication, including, but not limited to, the use of the internet, social media, text messages, cellular telephones, computers, tablets, personal digital assistants, wireless handheld devices, gaming systems, or any other current or future electronic communication technology.

Cyberbullying is prohibited whether the electronic communication originates on or off school property when the conduct meets the definition of bullying or otherwise substantially disrupts or interferes with the educational environment or orderly operation of the school.

Students are expected to use electronic communication in a manner consistent with this policy and all other school policies governing technology and student conduct.

V. HARASSMENT AND OTHER AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

Bay City Academy prohibits harassment and other aggressive behavior directed toward students, staff, volunteers, parents, contractors, or other members of the school community.

Harassment may include conduct that is demeaning, intimidating, hostile, humiliating, threatening, or otherwise reasonably likely to cause fear, emotional distress, or interference with a person's participation in the school environment.

Harassment based on a protected characteristic may also violate federal or state civil rights laws and other Board policies. Such conduct shall be addressed under all applicable policies and legal requirements.

Conduct does not need to meet the legal definition of bullying to violate school expectations or result in school intervention or discipline.

VI. RETALIATION AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Retaliation or reprisal against any person who:

- Reports bullying;
- Is the target of bullying;
- Provides information concerning an alleged bullying incident;
- Participates in an investigation; or
- Otherwise assists in addressing a bullying concern

is strictly prohibited.

False accusations made knowingly or intentionally for the purpose of harming another person are also prohibited.

A person who engages in retaliation, reprisal, or a knowingly false accusation may be subject to appropriate consequences and remedial measures consistent with this policy, the Code of Student Conduct, applicable employee policies, and applicable law.

VII. REPORTING BULLYING

The Principal or the Principal's designee shall be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy and for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

All school employees are required to report any suspected violation of this policy to the Principal or the Principal's designee.

Students, parents or guardians, volunteers, contractors, visitors, and other members of the school community are strongly encouraged to report suspected bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, retaliation, or other aggressive behavior.

Reports may be made verbally or in writing and may be made anonymously.

A person making a report should provide as much information as reasonably possible, including the individuals involved, the nature of the conduct, when and where it occurred, witnesses, and any available documentation or electronic evidence.

An anonymous report may be investigated; however, formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report when the school is unable to independently substantiate the allegation.

Reports involving an immediate threat to safety should be made immediately to school administration or emergency services, as appropriate.

VIII. CONFIDENTIALITY

Bay City Academy will make reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality of individuals who report bullying and individuals who participate in an investigation.

Information regarding a report or investigation shall be shared only with individuals who have a legitimate educational, supervisory, investigative, or legal need to know, consistent with applicable law and the school's responsibility to conduct a thorough investigation and protect student and staff safety.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed when disclosure is required by law or is necessary to address an immediate safety concern.

IX. INVESTIGATION

The Principal or Principal's designee shall be responsible for investigating alleged violations of this policy.

Upon receiving a report or complaint, the Principal or designee shall initiate a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation.

The investigation may include:

- Interviews with the individuals involved;
- Interviews with witnesses;
- Review of relevant records or communications;
- Review of electronic evidence;
- Consultation with appropriate school personnel; and
- Other reasonable steps necessary to determine the facts.

The school will make reasonable efforts to complete an investigation within three school days of receiving a report or complaint. When circumstances require additional time, the investigation shall continue as promptly as reasonably possible.

The school shall take appropriate interim measures when necessary to protect the safety and well-being of students or staff while an investigation is pending.

X. PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION

The parent or legal guardian of a student who is the target of an alleged bullying incident shall be notified of the allegation and, as appropriate, the outcome of the investigation.

The parent or legal guardian of a student alleged to have engaged in bullying shall also be notified of the allegation and, as appropriate, the outcome of the investigation.

Notifications shall be made in a manner consistent with applicable privacy laws and regulations. Information concerning other students shall not be disclosed when prohibited by law.

The school may delay or modify notification when reasonably necessary to protect the safety of a student, preserve the integrity of an investigation, comply with legal requirements, or address other circumstances in which immediate notification would not be appropriate.

XI. CONSEQUENCES AND REMEDIAL MEASURES

Bay City Academy shall establish and implement appropriate consequences and remedial measures for students or staff members who engage in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, retaliation, or other prohibited conduct.

Consequences shall be consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, employee policies, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and applicable law.

When determining appropriate consequences and remedial measures, administrators may consider:

- The age, developmental level, and maturity of the individuals involved;
- The nature, severity, and frequency of the behavior;
- The degree of physical or emotional harm;
- The circumstances surrounding the incident;
- Whether there is a prior or continuing pattern of behavior;
- The relationship between the individuals involved;
- The context in which the conduct occurred;
- The student's demonstrated ability to understand and modify the behavior; and
- Any other factors permitted or required by law or Board policy.

Academic or athletic status shall not be used as a basis for providing preferential treatment or lesser consequences for bullying or harassment.

Consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal or written admonishment;
- Guided reflection or corrective instruction;
- Loss of privileges;
- Classroom or administrative consequences;
- Parent/guardian conferences;

- Restorative practices;
- Counseling or other appropriate interventions;
- Behavioral intervention or support plans;
- Increased supervision;
- Changes to schedules, routes, or other environmental conditions;
- In-school suspension;
- Out-of-school suspension;
- Expulsion, when permitted by law;
- Employee disciplinary action; and
- Referral to law enforcement or other appropriate agencies when warranted.

Remedial measures shall be designed, as appropriate, to correct the behavior, prevent recurrence, promote accountability, restore the school environment, and protect the target of the conduct.

Nothing in this policy limits the school's authority to address conduct that violates other Board policies, the Code of Student Conduct, state or federal law, or a student's educational rights.

XII. PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR TARGETS AND WITNESSES

The school shall take reasonable steps to protect students and employees who report bullying, participate in an investigation, or are the target of bullying from retaliation or further prohibited conduct.

Appropriate supports may include:

- Increased supervision;
- Schedule or seating adjustments;
- Safety planning;
- Counseling or other support services;
- Adult check-ins;
- Academic support;
- Social-emotional or behavioral supports; and
- Other reasonable measures appropriate to the circumstances.

The school shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the response to a bullying incident does not place the target at additional risk or unnecessarily disrupt the target's access to educational opportunities.

XIII. BYSTANDER RESPONSIBILITIES

Bay City Academy recognizes that students who witness bullying can play an important role in preventing and interrupting such behavior.

Students are encouraged to:

- Refuse to participate in bullying;

- Avoid spreading rumors, derogatory messages, images, or other harmful content;
- Seek assistance from a trusted adult;
- Report bullying or suspected bullying;
- Support students who are targeted; and
- Intervene only when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Students shall not be required to place themselves in physical danger to intervene in a bullying situation.

The school may provide classroom instruction, activities, or other educational opportunities to teach students how to recognize bullying, respond appropriately, support peers, and report concerns.

XIV. PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

Bay City Academy is committed to maintaining a positive school climate in which students and adults are treated with dignity and respect.

The school may implement age-appropriate prevention and education programs addressing:

- Bullying and cyberbullying;
- Conflict resolution;
- Respectful communication;
- Digital citizenship;
- Bystander intervention;
- Social-emotional skills;
- Cultural competency;
- Healthy relationships; and
- Safe and responsible use of technology.

The school shall provide appropriate information to students and parents or guardians regarding the prevention, identification, response to, and reporting of bullying and cyberbullying.

XV. STAFF AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Bay City Academy shall provide, at least annually, appropriate training for administrators, school employees, and volunteers who have significant contact with pupils regarding the prevention, identification, response to, and reporting of bullying and cyberbullying.

School employees shall receive information regarding their responsibilities under this policy and the procedures for reporting suspected bullying.

XVI. SPECIAL EDUCATION AND OTHER STUDENT SUPPORTS

Implementation of this policy shall be consistent with applicable federal and state laws and regulations governing students with disabilities and students receiving accommodations or services under an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or other applicable educational plan.

When bullying or harassment involves a student with a disability, the school shall consider the student's individual needs and applicable educational plans when determining appropriate interventions and supports.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to limit any student's rights under applicable special education, disability, civil rights, or other laws.

XVII. MANDATORY REPORTING AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Nothing in this policy shall prevent or prohibit school employees from fulfilling any mandatory reporting obligation under state or federal law.

When conduct may constitute a crime, present an immediate threat to safety, or otherwise require involvement of law enforcement or another governmental agency, the school shall make appropriate referrals or reports as required or permitted by law.

School disciplinary procedures do not replace mandatory reporting requirements.

XVIII. DOCUMENTATION AND ANNUAL REPORTING

Bay City Academy shall document reported incidents of bullying and maintain records in accordance with applicable law and school record-retention requirements.

The school shall report all **verified incidents of bullying**, including resulting consequences, discipline, and referrals, to the Bay City Academy Board of Directors on an annual basis.

The school shall also complete any bullying-related reporting required by the Michigan Department of Education.

XIX. PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Bay City Academy shall annually disseminate this Anti-Bullying Policy to:

- School employees;
- Students;
- Parents and legal guardians; and
- Other individuals or groups as appropriate.

The policy shall be included or referenced in appropriate student and parent

handbooks and employee materials and shall be made available through the school's website or other publicly accessible means.

The school shall provide an annual opportunity for students and staff to review and discuss the policy and understand their responsibilities for preventing, reporting, and responding to bullying and cyberbullying.

XX. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The Principal or Principal's designee shall develop and maintain administrative procedures necessary to implement this policy.

Administrative procedures may address:

- Reporting and investigation forms;
- Investigation protocols;
- Documentation requirements;
- Parent/guardian notification;
- Interim safety measures;
- Consequences and remedial measures;
- Staff training;
- Student education;
- Cyberbullying response;
- Confidentiality and records;
- Annual reporting; and
- Other procedures necessary to effectively implement this policy.

XXI. POLICY NON-EXCLUSIVITY

This policy is not intended to create or limit any rights or remedies available under state or federal law or other Board policies.

Conduct that does not meet the definition of bullying may nevertheless violate other school rules, policies, or laws and may result in appropriate intervention, consequences, or remedial measures.

This policy shall be interpreted and implemented consistent with applicable Michigan and federal law.

Legal Authority: MCL 380.1310b (Matt Epling Safe School Law)

Adopted: _____

Last Revised: _____

Board Approval Date: _____