Anti-Bullying Policy

Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School is fully committed to preventing bullying in its community. Each and every member of our community has the right to feel safe, and bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. The following policy will be administered, interpreted, and applied consistently by the School in accordance with An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37O. Any conduct or behavior that constitutes bullying, as defined hereafter, is strictly prohibited.

Definitions

Based on An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School defines “bullying” as follows:

- **“Bullying”** is the repeated use by one or more students of written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at another student that (a) causes physical or emotional harm to the student or damages the student’s property, (b) places the student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or damage to his property, (c) creates a hostile school environment for the student, (d) infringes on the student’s rights at school, or (e) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Unwanted teasing or ridicule
- Threatening
- Intimidating
- Stalking
- Theft
- Physical violence
- Harassment
- Public humiliation
- Destruction of property
- Coercion
- Rumor spreading
- Publication of false facts
Bullying may occur directly in person, indirectly through others, on or off campus and even online in cyberspace. “Cyber-bullying” is defined as follows:

- **“Cyber-bullying”** is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, the transfer of writings, images, sounds, data, or intelligence in whole or in part by means including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, cellular phone calls or messages, or facsimile communication. Cyber-bullying also includes the creation of a webpage or other Internet communication in which the author impersonates the identity of another person or falsely identifies another person as the author of posted content in instances where such behaviors violate the clauses set forth in the definition of “bullying.”

Please refer to the Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School Acceptable Use Policy for more information regarding appropriate use of technology.

Other important terms that will be used throughout this policy are defined as follows:

- **“Accused”** is a student who is reported, whether formally or informally, to have committed an act of bullying.
- **“Complainant”** is any member of the School community or other person attending or involved in School-sponsored events who formally or informally makes a report of bullying, verbally or in writing.
- **“Target”** is a student at the School against whom the alleged bullying is directed.

**Expectations**

Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall expects all members of the School community to conduct themselves in a manner that honors and protects the rights and welfare of other students, faculty, staff, visitors, and others, and the educational purpose of the School and the School’s facilities and equipment.

Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School strictly prohibits bullying:

- On School grounds.
- During any educational program or activity conducted or sponsored by the School (class, Extra Help, field trips, etc.).
- During any School-related or School-sponsored program or activity or in a School vehicle (athletic event, weekend trip, etc.).
- Through any electronic device (computer, cellular phone, etc.) while on School grounds or while participating in a School-related event or activity.
- Through threats made verbally, electronically, or in writing to be carried out on School grounds or during a School-related activity or event.
- At any time or place, on or off campus, in which the act of bullying creates a hostile school environment or disrupts the educational process.

**Roles & Responsibilities**

The Grade Level Program Director’s Office, in collaboration with the Administration of Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School, will work with all community members and community families to best use this Policy and its procedures in a way that ensures students’ academic success, physical and emotional safety, and overall growth and development. All community members have the responsibility to contribute to the success and effectiveness of bullying prevention and intervention at Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School.
The following are descriptions of ways in which different constituencies can collaborate with the School to maximize the effectiveness of this Policy

- **School Administration, faculty, and staff** will receive annual training on identifying, preventing, and intervening in situations where bullying has occurred or may occur. School employees will take an active role in Student Life activities aimed to prevent bullying. All School employees will receive a copy of this policy, and applicable sections will become part of the Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School Employee Handbook. Any member of the School staff is responsible for reporting an act of bullying to the Grade Level Program Director. The Grade Level Program Director, or another administrator appointed by the Grade Level Program Director, is responsible for investigating a bullying situation and overseeing any subsequent disciplinary action or intervention.

- **Students** at Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School are responsible for knowing the contents of and acting in accordance with this Policy. At the beginning of each academic year, the School will provide students with age-appropriate programming on identifying and preventing bullying, as well as the procedures in this Policy for reporting incidents, investigation, and possible disciplinary consequences. This Policy will be printed in its entirety in the Student Handbook and posted on the CH-CH website.

- **Parents and guardians** will be notified of this Policy via the Student Handbook and CH-CH website. Additionally, parents and guardians will be provided an opportunity to comment on the School’s Policy during a pre-arranged event. If parents/guardians are made aware of an instance of bullying, they should report it directly to the student’s advisor or the Grade Level Program Director. Where instances of bullying have occurred, the parents/guardians of both the target and accused will be notified.

The administrators, faculty, and staff of Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School share accountability for the implementation of student support services in accordance with the standards of this Policy.

**Reporting an Act of Bullying**

The Grade Level Program Director is responsible for receiving oral or written reports that accuse a person of violating this Policy. The following are the requirements and procedures for filing a report of bullying:

- All School employees are required to complete, in writing, a Bullying Report Form for any allegations of bullying or violations of this Policy. All Bullying Reports are to be sent directly to the Grade Level Program Director in a timely fashion.

- Any other community member, whether a complainant or bystander, who has credible information that a violation of this Policy has occurred may submit a report, either orally or in writing.

- Any student, parent, or guardian who believes that a student is a victim of an act of bullying is strongly encouraged to submit a report, orally or in writing, with an appropriate member of the School administration, faculty, or staff (e.g., Grade Level Program Director, School Counselor, teacher, advisor). Additionally, bystanders who have credible information about an act of bullying are encouraged to do the same.

- Anonymous reports of bullying may be made using the Bullying Report Form. These forms are available from the Grade Level Program Director’s Office (Wilkins Hall), outside of the Health Center, and online via the CH-CH website. Anonymous reports may be delivered to the School’s reporting box located outside of the Grade Level Program Director’s Office. Filing an anonymous report will lead to further investigation, but disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

- Reports of bullying should be filed as soon as possible after the alleged incident has occurred. All reports must be filed within 30 days after the alleged incident; failure to file a report of an incident within the required 30 days may make it difficult or impossible to conduct a fair investigation.

- The Grade Level Program Director will document, in writing, all reports regarding bullying, as well as steps of investigation, intervention, and any disciplinary action.

The success and effectiveness of this Policy requires that all reports be made accurately, honestly, and in good faith. Any student who is found to have deliberately filed a false report may be subject to disciplinary action.
Investigating a Report of Bullying

The Grade Level Program Director, or another administrator appointed by the Grade Level Program Director, will oversee the investigation of all reports of bullying. All investigations will be completed in accordance with this Policy.

The following steps will be taken to ensure a thorough investigation into all reports of bullying:

- The Grade Level Program Director or other appointed administrator will begin the investigation within two school days of receiving the report. All investigations will begin with interviews with the complainant, the target, the accused, and witnesses.
- The Grade Level Program Director or other appointed administrator, in consultation with other School officials, will assess the target’s need for protection and what interim safeguards (such as no contact instructions, change in schedule, etc.) are warranted to protect the students and prevent further disruption of the learning environment.
- The Grade Level Program Director will notify the parents/guardians of the target and accused when an investigation has begun.
- During the course of the investigation, the target is expected to attend school; however, if necessary, arrangements can be made for working remotely or taking a leave of absence.
- An investigation may lead to a variety of outcomes, including disciplinary measures. The School will use its standard procedures for determining restorative actions. For further information regarding possible outcomes, please see the following section “Restorative Actions.” The Head of School retains final authority in all student conduct decisions.
- At the conclusion of the investigation and after any restorative actions have been determined, all relevant parties will be notified by the Grade Level Program Director.
- If bullying is found to have occurred, restorative actions will include terms for monitoring and re-evaluating the situation at regular intervals.
- Retaliation of any kind is strictly prohibited during or after an investigation of an act of bullying. Any form of retaliation will be considered an act of bullying as defined in this Policy.

If and when necessary, the School will inform local law enforcement when criminal charges may be pursued.

Restorative Actions

The Grade Level Program Director is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the response to all student misconduct situations, including acts of bullying. The Grade Level Program Director may choose to respond to such situations by personally adjudicating consequences, convening an Honor Committee, assembling an Administrative Honor Committee, or referring to a more appropriate designee. The Head of School retains final authority in all disciplinary decisions and reserves the right to deal directly with any student conduct matter, in the Head’s discretion, without the involvement of other persons, groups or committees.

Based on the investigation performed by the Grade Level Program Director, or his designee, it will be determined what, if any, actions are necessary to restore a sense of safety and justice. Restorative actions will be determined on an individual basis with consideration given to the target’s needs, the frequency and severity of the bullying, the accused student’s attitude and cooperation, and other factors. Depending on the circumstances of the offense and the investigation, students may be referred to the School Counselor for appropriate intervention and mediation.

The following list includes, but is not limited to, possible restorative actions that may be taken in an instance of bullying:

- Verbal reprimand and warning, with written record noted in student’s file
- Letter of apology to the appropriate party(ies)
- Written or artistic reflection
• Supplemental education
• Phone conference with Grade Level Program Director and parents/guardian
• Temporary or permanent removal from class or other activity
• Required Campus Improvement Program (CIP) hours (Saturday mornings)
• Required parent conference with Grade Level Program Director and Assistant Head of School
• Restitution for stolen or damaged property
• Modifications to class schedule
• In-School Suspension
• Out-of-School Suspension
• Required behavioral counseling with professional provider
• Monitoring
• Expulsion

Based on the nature of the offense, a student may be required to complete any combination of the above listed actions, or other actions.

**Preventing Bullying**

Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School recognizes that some perceived differentiating characteristics may increase the likelihood that certain students become the target of bullying or harassment. To provide these students with additional support, the Class Dean in conjunction with students’ teachers and advisors will identify students who are at heightened risk to be the target of bullying. Once identified, grade level deans will inform the school counselor and the Student Life Committee of both the names of at-risk students and the factors that contribute to their increased susceptibility. After an initial evaluation, the school counselor will collaborate with the Student Life Committee and Grade Level Program Director to develop and implement support plans for identified students.

**Confidentiality**

Reports of bullying will be treated as confidential in accordance with School policies, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

It is important to note the following exceptions in regards to confidentiality:

• Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation as described previously in this Policy. The School’s obligation to investigate and take preventive or corrective action supersedes an individual's right to privacy.
• The identity of the accused will be protected, but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. A complainant’s identity will be protected to the extent possible.

**Constitutional Safeguard**

This Policy does not imply to prohibit expressive activity protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

**Right to Amend**

Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School reserves the right to amend this Policy at any time in accordance with state and/or federal laws. Students, families, and all community members will be notified of any changes in writing and provided an opportunity to offer feedback.