

Bullying Policy

Bullying Policy

It is the policy of Genesis Innovation Academy that scholars shall not engage in bullying behaviors. As per the Georgia Code section 20-2-751.4, the term "bullying" means an act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, that is:

- Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
- Any intentional exhibition or display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
- Any intentional written (handwritten or via electronic messaging), verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass or intimidate that:
 - Causes substantial physical harm or bodily harm capable of being perceived by a person other than the victim and may include, but is not limited to, substantially blackened eyes, substantially swollen lips or other facial or body parts, or substantial bruises to body parts
 - It has the effect of substantially interfering with the victim scholar's education.
 - Is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; OR
 - It has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling on a school bus to and from school or a school-sponsored activity and during a school-sponsored activity.

This policy applies to Genesis students who bully other Genesis students even when not engaged in a school-sponsored activity or on school grounds.

Genesis will consider anyone who encourages bullying (as defined above) as being guilty of bullying

Cyber bullying is a form of harassment. Any defaming information posted on social networks about fellow Genesis scholars will be determined to be engaging in cyber-bullying.

Anyone who is aware that a scholar is being exposed to any form of harassment or bullying is expected to report it to a teacher or administrator immediately.

Parents/guardians of scholars who are victims of bullying or are found to have committed bullying behaviors will be notified by Genesis Administration.

Upon a finding by the Independent Disciplinary Hearing Officer that a scholar in grades 6 or higher has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such scholar shall be assigned to an alternative education program per the finding of the Hearing Officer, in compliance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4. Scholars in grades K-5 who are found to be engaged in bullying behavior by school administration will be given age-appropriate consequences in line with progressive discipline practices outlined elsewhere in this Handbook.

Bullying Policy

School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur and are expected to report the incident to Administration.

Each complaint of bullying shall be promptly investigated by Administration

Records of such investigations will be maintained by Administration and remain confidential

All staff, students and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year as part of the student code of conduct.

Response to Harassment Procedures

Genesis Academy is committed to equitable and swift resolution of harassment issues. Any scholar should follow any or all these measures:

1. Let the offender know you want the behavior to stop. Be clear and direct. Do not apologize.
2. Pay attention to when, where and how you were mistreated; try to remember who else may have witnessed the incident.
3. Notify a school administrator or teacher. If uncomfortable doing so, a scholar should speak with a parent or another adult (who should then notify school personnel).
4. After the initial report is made, an investigation should take place by school administration

Parents/guardians and other stakeholders may report incidents of bullying to an administrator, teacher, counselor, or other Genesis staff member.

Students, parents/guardians and other stakeholders may report incidents of bullying by calling the Georgia Department of Education's 1-877 SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline.

Grievance Procedure

If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached after consulting the teacher or an Academy Director, the student or the parent of the student should contact the Head of Schools or his or her designee.

The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

Administrative Response

1. Investigate

Upon receipt of any report of bullying, schools will direct an immediate investigation involving appropriate personnel. The investigation should begin no later than the following school day.

The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s) and staff members and reviewing video surveillance. School counselors or social workers and/or other support staff should be utilized for their expertise as determined by the circumstances of the matter.

Bullying Policy

2. Notify

At an appropriate time during or after the investigation, parents/guardians of the accused and the victim must be notified. If the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical attention should be provided, and the parent/guardian should be notified immediately.

3. Discipline

Bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. A singly incident of verifiable bullying is considered a level 2 offense as per the Genesis Code of Conduct. Disciplinary action will be taken after each incident of bullying and upon a finding of guilt. Disciplinary action after the first incident of bullying will be in line with level 2 disciplinary actions as per the Code of Conduct.

Further incidences of bullying will lead to, at minimum, a suspension and possible consideration of alternative placement. A third instance of verifiable bullying will be automatic grounds for an alternative placement recommendation to the Independent Hearing Officer

Counseling and other interventions will be provided to address the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of students who are victims of bullying and students, as needed.

4. Follow Up

Genesis will follow up with the accused and the victim. The victim will be assessed by the counselor/social worker for lingering issues and concerns and an intervention plan will be developed as needed. If the accused is found to have engaged in bullying and remains at Genesis, behavioral interventions will be developed to mitigate the risk of the behavior recurring. All involved scholars will be reminded of the stated prohibition on retaliation.