



Bullying Policy

September 2023

Chicago Autism Academy
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Frankfort, IL 60423
(815) 806-2900

Chicago Autism Academy Bullying Policy for Students and Staff

Chicago Autism Academy will not tolerate the bullying of staff or students by any member of the Chicago Autism Academy community. All members of the Chicago Autism Academy community have the right to learn and work in a secure and caring environment, free from any form of bullying. All members of the Chicago Autism Academy community also have the responsibility to contribute, in any way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. Bullying can result in a student's inability to receive a free and appropriate education (FAPE), and is in violation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Chicago Autism Academy strives to create a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone that it serves, both as students and staff.

Definition:

Bullying includes Cyberbullying, and is defined 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 reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following: (1) placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the students' person or property; (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the students' physical or mental health; (3) substantially interfering with the students' academic performance; or (4) substantially interfering with the students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by a school.

Some examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

Bullying based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited at Chicago Autism Academy.

Bullying may 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.

Cyberbullying, as defined in 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7, is 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, photoelectric system, or photo optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications.

"Cyberbullying" includes the creation or 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 the posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of Chicago Autism Academy.

Bullying Will Not be Tolerated:

- (1) During any school-sponsored education program or activity;
- (2) While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, 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; or
- (4) Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or 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 district or school to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

Reporting Process:

Victims of bullying, or anyone who witnesses bullying, should report every incident of bullying to Michele Talley, or any one of the other Administrative Personnel at Chicago Autism Academy immediately. This can be done through one of the following methods, and can be done anonymously if preferred:

Email: mtalleycaa@gmail.com

Phone: (815) 806-2900

In-Person Meeting with any Admin Team Member

Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is strictly prohibited. Consequences for retaliation or reprisal will be determined by the Building Principal on a case-by-case basis.

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 Building Principal on a case-by-case basis.

Consequences of Bullying:

Bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with students' ability to learn and participate in school activities, and because of this, will not be tolerated.

Chicago Autism Academy will promptly inform parents or guardians if there is a case of bullying at Chicago Autism Academy. This will include discussion of the availability of counseling or other interventions (as appropriate), as well as restorative measures.

Restorative measures are school based alternatives to exclusionary discipline (suspension, expulsion, etc.) 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, and (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. The restorative measures employed in each incident will be selected on a case by case basis, based on the nature and severity of the incident.

Staff members that are engaged in bullying or cyberbullying are subject to company employee disciplinary actions.

Chicago Autism Academy recommends that all parents and staff watch for signs of distress that may be caused by bullying. It is the responsibility of parents, staff, and students to inform the Chicago Autism Academy Administration if bullying is suspected.

Investigation Measures:

(1) Chicago Autism Academy 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.

(2) Chicago Autism Academy 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.

(3) Chicago Autism Academy will investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction. Chicago Autism Academy will provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the district and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

(4) The Building Principal will be informed of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.

(5) Chicago Autism Academy will provide 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.

Bullying Interventions:

Some options that Chicago Autism Academy may use when bullying is found to or suspected to have occurred are, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, community-based services, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). The option that Chicago Autism Academy will use will be determined on a case by case basis, based on the nature and circumstances of the incident.

Policy Development, Notification, and Posting

Chicago Autism Academy has developed its bullying policy based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, including students, staff and parents or guardians.

The bullying policy is maintained in the Administration Office and is available upon request. In addition, the bullying policy is distributed annually in student handbooks and staff policy manuals.

Policy Evaluation Process:

Every other year an evaluation process is conducted to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the Chicago Autism Academy Bullying Policy that 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 Chicago Autism Academy community.

In the event of bullying:

- (1) Keep a detailed, written record of the observed bullying
- (2) Report immediately
- (3) Do not encourage retaliation
- (4) Take steps to **safely** intervene to stop the event if the victim is in immediate danger

Consequences of bullying will be determined solely by the Building Principal.

Alignment:

Chicago Autism Academy's bullying policies aligns with 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7