

Administrative Regulation

GCCS

Bullying

AR 5131.2

Students

Prohibited Bullying

Bullying is defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act. Bullying includes one or more acts committed by a student or group of students that may constitute sexual harassment, hate violence, or creates an intimidating and/or hostile educational environment, directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing a reasonable student¹ or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
2. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
3. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantial interference with the student's academic performance.
4. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantial interference with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by GCCS.

Cyberbullying is an electronic act that includes the transmission of harassing communication, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, video or images on the Internet, social media, or other technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

Electronic act means the creation or transmission originated on or off the schoolsite, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

1. A message, text, sound, video, or image.
2. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:

¹ "Reasonable student" is defined as a student, including, but not limited to, an exceptional needs student, who exercises care, skill and judgment in conduct for a person of the student's age, or for a person of the student's age with the student's exceptional needs.

- a. Posting to or creating a burn page. A “burn page” means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in the definition of “bullying,” above.
 - b. Creating a credible impersonation of another actual student for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of “bullying,” above. “Credible impersonation” means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a student for the purpose of bullying the student and such that another student would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the student was or is the student who was impersonated.
 - c. Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of “bullying,” above. “False profile” means a profile of a fictitious student or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual student other than the student who created the false profile.
3. An act of “Cyber sexual bullying” including, but not limited to:
- a. The dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a student to another student or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in definition of “bullying,” above. A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.
 - b. “Cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.
4. Notwithstanding the definitions of “bullying” and “electronic act” above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures

GCCS has adopted the following procedures for preventing acts of bullying, including cyberbullying.

1. Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures

GCCS advises students:

- a. To never share passwords, personal data, or private photos online.
- b. To think about what they are doing carefully before posting and by emphasizing that comments cannot be retracted once they are posted.

- c. That personal information revealed on social media can be shared with anyone including parents, teachers, administrators, and potential employers. Students should never reveal information that would make them uncomfortable if the world had access to it.
- d. To consider how it would feel receiving such comments before making comments about others online.

GCCS informs Charter School employees, students, and parents/guardians of GCCS's policies regarding the use of technology in and out of the classroom. GCCS encourages parents/guardians to discuss these policies with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with such policies.

2. Education

GCCS employees cannot always be present when bullying incidents occur, so educating students about bullying is a key prevention technique to limit bullying from happening. GCCS advises students that hateful and/or demeaning behavior is inappropriate and unacceptable in our society and at GCCS and encourages students to practice compassion and respect each other.

Charter School educates students to accept all student peers regardless of protected characteristics (including but not limited to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identification, physical or cognitive disabilities, race, ethnicity, religion, and immigration status) and about the negative impact of bullying other students based on protected characteristics.

GCCS's bullying prevention education also discusses the differences between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and includes sample situations to help students learn and practice appropriate behavior and to develop techniques and strategies to respond in a non-aggressive way to bullying-type behaviors. Students will also develop confidence and learn how to advocate for themselves and others, and when to go to an adult for help.

GCCS informs GCCS employees, students, and parents/guardians of this policy and encourages parents/guardians to discuss this policy with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with this policy.

3. Professional Development

GCCS annually makes available the online training module developed by the California Department of Education pursuant Education Code section 32283.5(a) to its certificated employees and all other GCCS employees who have regular interaction with students.

GCCS informs certificated employees about the common signs that a student is a target of bullying including:

- Physical cuts or injuries
- Lost or broken personal items
- Fear of going to school/practice/games

- Loss of interest in school, activities, or friends
- Trouble sleeping or eating
- Anxious/sick/nervous behavior or distracted appearance
- Self-destructiveness or displays of odd behavior
- Decreased self-esteem

The Charter School also informs certificated employees about the groups of students determined by GCCS, and available research, to be at elevated risk for bullying. These groups include but are not limited to:

- Students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth (“LGBTQ”) and those youth perceived as LGBTQ; and
- Students with physical or learning disabilities.

GCCS encourages its employees to demonstrate effective problem-solving, anger management, and self-confidence skills for GCCS’s students.

Grievance Procedures

1. Scope of Grievance Procedures

GCCS shall investigate and appropriately respond to all allegations of bullying.

GCCS will comply with its Uniform Complaint Procedures (“UCP”) policy when investigating and responding to complaints alleging unlawful bullying against a protected group or on the basis of a person’s association with a person or group with one or more of the protected characteristics set forth in the UCP. These include: mental or physical disability, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions, and parental status), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, nationality (including national origin, country of origin, and citizenship), race or ethnicity (including ancestry, color, ethnic group identification, ethnic background, and traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twist), religion (including agnosticism and atheism), religious affiliation, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, age or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics or based on any other characteristic protected under applicable state or federal law or local ordinance.

2. Reporting

All staff are expected to provide appropriate supervision to enforce standards of conduct and, if they observe or become aware of misconduct prohibited by this policy, to intervene when safe to do so, call for assistance, and report such incidents. The Board requires staff to follow the procedures in this policy for reporting alleged acts of misconduct prohibited by this policy.

Any student who believes they have been subject to misconduct prohibited by this policy or has witnessed such prohibited misconduct is encouraged to immediately report such misconduct to:

Katherine Aaron
Assistant Superintendent, San Luis Obispo County Office of Education
3350 Education Drive, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405
805-782-7321
kaaron@slocoe.org

A complainant is encouraged to complete and submit your complaint via the Bullying/Harassment Complaint form, located on the school website, or at the main office.

Complaints regarding such misconduct may also be made to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders may also be available to complainants.

While submission of a written report is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to submit a written report to the Coordinator. GCCS will investigate and respond to all oral and written reports of misconduct prohibited by this policy in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action cannot be based solely on an anonymous report.

Students are expected to report all incidents of misconduct prohibited by this policy or other verbal, or physical abuses. Any student who feels they are a target of such behavior should immediately contact a teacher, counselor, the Principal, Coordinator, a staff person or a family member so that the student can get assistance in resolving the issue in a manner that is consistent with this policy.

GCCS acknowledges and respects every individual's right to privacy. All reports shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process to the greatest extent possible. This includes keeping the identity of the reporter confidential, as appropriate, except to the extent necessary to comply with the law, carry out the investigation and/or to resolve the issue, as determined by the Coordinator or administrative designee on a case-by-case basis.

GCCS prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who files a report or complaint, testifies, assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any investigation or proceeding related to misconduct prohibited by this policy. Such participation or lack of participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades, or work assignments of the individual. Individuals alleging retaliation in violation of this policy may file a grievance using the procedures set forth in this policy. Knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

3. Investigation and Response

Upon receipt of a report of misconduct prohibited by this policy from a student, staff member, parent, volunteer, visitor or affiliate of GCCS, the Coordinator (or administrative designee) will promptly initiate an investigation. In most cases, a thorough investigation will take no more than twenty-five (25) school days. If the Coordinator (or administrative designee) determines that an

investigation will take longer than twenty-five (25) school days and needs to be delayed or extended due to good cause, the Coordinator (or administrative designee) will inform the complainant of the reasons for the delay or extension and provide an approximate date when the investigation will be complete.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Coordinator (or administrative designee) will meet with the complainant and, to the extent possible with respect to confidentiality laws, provide the complainant with information about the investigation, including any actions necessary to resolve the incident/situation. However, the Coordinator (or administrative designee) will not reveal confidential information related to other students or employees.

4. Discipline/Corrective Actions

A victim of bullying, witness, perpetrator, or other student affected by an act of bullying may be referred to a school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, school nurse, or other school support service personnel for case management, counseling, and/or participation in a restorative justice program as appropriate. (Education Code 48900.9)

In addition, corrective actions for a student who commits an act of bullying may include notification of the student's parent/guardian, behavioral intervention and education and, if the behavior is severe or pervasive, may include additional discipline including suspension or expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement in accordance with the law and Charter School policies and regulations.