

## **Harassment/Bullying (Addendum 2-14-19)**

A safe environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Norwood-Fontbonne Academy maintains a healthy, safe and positive school environment that is conducive to learning and ensures that school administrators and staff take appropriate measures to prevent and intervene in incidents of harassment and bullying, as well as prohibiting reprisals or retaliation against individuals who report these actions. Any form of harassment or bullying is strictly prohibited. Harassment, bullying, and like behaviors will not be tolerated, as they are contrary to our mission to educate the whole child in a God-centered environment and to facilitate growth and self-actualization. Harassment and bullying are serious incidents that amount to more than annoyances, disagreements, or disputes typical of a particular age group.

Harassment is unwelcomed verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's religion, gender, age, race, color, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), national origin, disability, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status and/or political beliefs. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed to a specific person or involve repeated incidents. Harassment affects an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from educational programs or activities, has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's education, and otherwise adversely affects an individual's learning opportunities, health, safety or well-being.

Bullying is defined as repeatedly and purposely trying to harm someone physically, socially, emotionally, and/or spiritually. Bullying is unfair and one-sided, decreasing self-esteem and increasing stress and anxiety. Bullying substantially interferes with a student's education, creates a threatening and hostile learning environment, and substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

### **Cyber-bullying**

Cyber-bullying is a form of harassment and/or bullying. Examples of cyber-bullying include, but are not limited to: posting inappropriate pictures or personal information of a student or individual on the internet, using social media to post or send harassing or inappropriate messages about or to another student or individual, and sending harassing or inappropriate text messages or email about or to another student or individual. In some cases, violations of the Acceptable Use Policy for Technology may also violate this policy.

### **Reporting**

Students who believe they have been harassed or bullied, or know of harassment or bullying are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to a teacher or their respective principal. Any school staff member who has a reasonable belief that a student is being harassed or bullied shall report it immediately. The school's administration shall investigate complaints of harassment or bullying and take corrective action including, but not limited to, disciplinary action that may include suspension or dismissal from school. We will use our best efforts to protect the confidentiality of all parties.

### **Response and Resolution**

In the course of resolving a complaint under this policy, the school will strive to balance the need to fully investigate the allegations with the privacy of the individuals involved. Therefore, information gathered during the investigation and resolution process will be shared on a “need-to-know” basis only. Resolution of a complaint of harassment and/or bullying depends on the context and circumstances of each case. The school will strive to balance the interests of students involved, as well as the needs of the school as a whole, when confronting these issues. Disciplinary measures will be consistent with the school’s disciplinary policies for student discipline. In addition, the school may consider implementing appropriate remedial and preventative measures in response to a finding that harassment or bullying has occurred.

When determining that harassment/bullying has occurred, grade appropriate, equitable, and progressive disciplinary consequences will be enforced. Consequences are determined according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student’s history of prior behaviors and performance, and may include counseling, detention, suspension, dismissal and/or referral to law enforcement.

### **Threats and Violence**

Norwood-Fontbonne Academy seeks to maintain a safe community for all its members. In keeping with the school's philosophy, the school is committed to teaching nonviolence and to creating a community in which all members seek peaceful resolution to conflict.

Therefore, fighting, use of violence, threats of violence, possession of weapons or threats of using them (whether communicated through speech, writing, electronic means, or physical action) are unacceptable actions or responses in the school community. Assessment of the degree to which such actions or threatening behavior warrant disciplinary action is up to the discretion of the school's administration and will be made with the interest of the greater good of the community in mind. Additionally, the definition of a weapon will be determined by the school administration within the context of the incident.

All threats of (or actual) violence, both direct and indirect, should be reported as soon as possible to a teacher or respective principal.

All suspicious individuals or activities should also be reported as soon as possible to administration.

The school will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of (or actual) violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. Such actions or threats involving students may result in the suspension or dismissal of the students involved.