

The Village Charter School No. 473

STUDENTS

3295P

Hazing, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Cyber Bullying

The following definitions and procedures shall be used for reporting, investigating, and resolving complaints of hazing, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and cyber bullying.

Definitions

1. "Third parties" include, but are not limited to, coaches, Charter School volunteers, parents, School visitors, service contractors or others engaged in School business, such as employees of businesses or organizations participating in cooperative work programs with the School and others not directly subject to School control at inter-school and intra-School athletic competitions or other School events.
2. "Charter School" includes School facilities, School property, buses (if applicable), electronic technology or electronic communication equipment on School computers, networks, or forums and non-School property if the student or employee is at any School-sponsored, School-approved or School-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the control of the School or where the employee is engaged in School business.
3. "Hazing" includes, but is not limited to, any act that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health, or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or as a condition or precondition of attaining membership in, or affiliation with, any Charter School-sponsored activity or grade level attainment, such as forced consumption of any drink, alcoholic beverage, drug, or controlled substance; forced exposure to the elements; forced prolonged exclusion from social contact; sleep deprivation or any other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental or physical health or safety of a student; requires, encourages, authorizes, or permits another to be subject to wearing or carrying any obscene or physically burdensome article, assignment of pranks to be performed or other such activities intended to degrade or humiliate.
4. "Harassment" includes, but is not limited to, any act which subjects an individual or group to unwanted, abusive behavior of a nonverbal, verbal, written, electronic, or physical nature on the basis of an actual or perceived characteristic, including but not limited to age, race, religion, color, national origin, disability, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical characteristic, cultural background, socioeconomic status, geographic location, familial status, or weight.

5. “Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” means any act that substantially interferes with or disrupts the educational environment or impinges on the rights of other students at the School, a student’s opportunities or performance, that takes place on or immediately adjacent to School grounds or School property or at any School-sponsored activity, and that has the effect of:
 - A. Harming a student or damaging a student’s property;
 - B. Knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student or damage to the student’s property; or
 - C. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive so that it creates an intimidating, threatening, abusive, or hostile educational environment.

6. “Cyber bullying” includes, but is not limited to the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including blogs through the Charter School’s computer network and the internet, whether accessed on campus or off campus, during or after School hours or through any private electronic device done when the student is present at School. In the situation that cyber bullying originated from a non-School computer, but has been brought to the attention of School officials, any disciplinary actions shall be based on whether the conduct is determined to be reasonably expected to materially and substantially interfere with or disrupt educational environment of the School or impinge on the rights of other students at School and/or in violation of School policy or state law. The Administration shall, at their discretion, contact local law enforcement.

7. “Intimidation” includes, but is not limited to, any threat or act intended to tamper, substantially damage or interfere with another’s property, cause substantial inconvenience, subject another to offensive physical contact or inflict serious physical injury on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity and expression, or sexual orientation.

Retaliation/False Charges

Retaliation against any person who reports or is thought to have reported, filed a complaint, or otherwise participated in an investigation or inquiry is prohibited. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy, independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. False charges shall also be regarded as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.

Confidentiality

It is recognized that harassment, hazing, intimidation, bullying, and cyber bullying is often very distressing for the victim and those who suffer as a result of such actions may be reluctant to make their concerns known. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that all inquiries and complaints are dealt with allowing for as much confidentiality as can be provided while, at the

same time, allowing for a thorough and appropriate investigation and reporting, where appropriate.

Policy Distribution

Information about this policy must be distributed to the Charter School community annually, including parents, students, and all School personnel. Information about the School's policies and procedures will be included in student orientation material and in the student handbook.

Complaint Procedures

The building principal and the School Administrator have responsibility for investigations concerning hazing, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying. The investigator(s) shall be a neutral party having had no involvement in the complaint presented.

Any student, employee, or third party who has knowledge of conduct in violation of this policy or feels he or she has been a victim of hazing, harassment, intimidation, or cyber-bullying, in violation of this policy shall immediately report his or her concerns.

All complaints will be promptly investigated in accordance with the following procedures:

- Step I: Any hazing, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying information (complaints, rumors, etc.) shall be presented to the School Administrator. Complaints against the School Administrator shall be filed with the Board Chair. All such information will be reduced to writing and will include the specific nature of the offense and corresponding dates.

- Step II: The School official receiving the complaint shall promptly investigate or refer the complaint to an appropriate colleague or outside party for investigation. Parents will be notified of the nature of any complaint involving their student. The School official will arrange such meetings as may be necessary with all concerned parties within five working days after receipt of the information or complaint. The parties will have an opportunity to submit evidence and a list of witnesses. All findings related to the complaint will be reduced to writing. The School official(s) conducting the investigation shall notify the complainant and parents as appropriate, in writing, when the investigation is concluded and a decision regarding disciplinary action, as warranted, is determined. Due to the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, it will often not be possible to provide complainants and parents with detailed information on disciplinary actions taken against another student.

A copy of the notification letter or the date and details of notification to the complainant, together with any other documentation related to the incident, including

disciplinary action taken or recommended, shall be forwarded to the School Administrator or their designee.

- Step III: If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision at Step II, he or she may submit a written appeal to the School Administrator or designee. Such appeal must be filed within ten working days after receipt of the Step II decision. The School Administrator or designee will arrange such meetings with the complainant and other affected parties as deemed necessary to discuss the appeal. The School Administrator or designee shall provide a written decision to the complainant's appeal within ten working days.
- Step IV: If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision at Step III, a written appeal may be filed with the Board. Such appeal must be filed within ten working days after receipt of the Step III decision. The Board shall, within 20 working days, conduct an informal review at which time the complainant shall be given an opportunity to present the complaint and the School's administration to respond if they so desire. The course and conduct of this proceeding shall be informal and shall be at the sole discretion of the Board. The Board shall provide a written decision to the complainant within ten working days following completion of the informal review.

Direct complaints related to educational programs and services may be made to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

Documentation and Reporting

Documentation related to the incident may be maintained as a part of the student's education records. Additionally, a copy of all hazing, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying, complaints and documentation will be maintained as a confidential file in the Charter School Office and reported as required by the State Department of Education.

Procedure History:

Promulgated on: April 15, 2021

Revised on:

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