

OSA BULLYING PROHIBITION POLICY SUMMARY

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn, develop their artistic talents, and to promote positive community at OSA. Bullying, including cyberbullying, is prohibited on school premises at school functions or activities.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

- Bullying means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a pupil or group of pupils as defined in Ed Code Section 48900.2, 48900.3, or 48900.4.
- **Bullying** is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms; physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organized, or it may be unintentional.
- **Cyberbullying** includes the transmission of harassing communications, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, 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.**

WHO DOES THE BULLYING POLICY APPLY TO?

- Students who directly engage in an act of bullying and students who condone or support another student's act of bullying.
- Teachers, administrators, volunteers or other employees of OSA.

REPORTING BULLYING

- Alleged acts should immediately be reported to the school Principal, Dean of Students, or Counselor, preferably on the report form available in Front Office, Principal and Dean's offices.
- Bullying can be reported anonymously but the school may not rely solely on an anonymous report to determine discipline or other remedial responses.
- **When the circumstances involve cyberbullying, individuals with information about the activity shall be encouraged to save and email any electronic or digital messages sent to them that they feel constitute cyberbullying and include in report so that the matter may be investigated.**
- Reports of bullying are classified as private data and are confidential.

SCHOOL RESPONSE

- After receipt of a report of bullying, the Dean of Students will begin an investigation.
- Immediate steps may be taken to protect the target of the bullying, the complainant, the reporter, or others.
- The alleged perpetrator of the bullying will be allowed the opportunity to address allegations.
- Upon completion of an investigation, administration will take appropriate action, **which may include, but is not limited to: warning, suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to the Oakland Police Department for greater legal and disciplinary action.**
- School administration will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students who have been involved in a reported and confirmed bullying incident.
- Retaliation or threats of retaliation meant to intimidate the victim of bullying or harassment or toward those investigating the incident will not be tolerated.

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will

- Create a school culture that fosters students' self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behavior we expect of our students.
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every student learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to OSA Administration.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Responsibilities of Students

We expect our students to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the student who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behavior in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to their teacher or OSA administration and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other students.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying