



High Road Schools' Bullying Policy
(IL School Code 27-23.7 and Public Act 98-669)
Revised: 9/12/2022, 9/26/2024, 9/16/2025, 9/9/2026

I. POLICY

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important High Road goals.

II. PROCEDURE

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic **is prohibited** in each of the following situations:

1. During any school sponsored educational 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.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This paragraph (item #4) applies only when a director, social worker, or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require staff members to monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

Definitions from Section 27-23.7 of the School Code ([105 ILCS 5/27-23.7](#))

Bullying includes *cyberbullying* and means 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 student or students' person or property.
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance.
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Cyberbullying means 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, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. *Cyberbullying* includes the creation of 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 posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*. *Cyberbullying* also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of *bullying*. Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, cyberbullying also includes the posting or distribution by electronic means of an unauthorized digital replica if the posting or distribution creates any of the effects identified in the definition of bullying.

Bullying, intimidation, and/or harassment may take various forms, including without limitation: threats, 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.

Restorative measures means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, 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, (vii) Increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

School personnel means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in a school, including without limitation school and school district administrators, teachers, school social workers, school nurses, and district bus drivers.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

The Director or designee shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances High Road's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan must be consistent with the requirements listed below; each numbered requirement, 1-12, corresponds with the same number in the list of required policy components in [105 ILCS 5/27-23.7\(b\)](#) 1-12.

1. High Road uses the definition of *bullying* as provided in this policy.
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of High Road. However, nothing in the High Road Schools' bullying prevention and response plan is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the [First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution](#) or under [Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution](#).
3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Director, Social Worker, or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to High Road named officials or any staff member. High Road named officials and all school personnel are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anonymous reports are also accepted.

School	Director	Email	Phone
HRS of Belvidere	Kristen Heine	Kristen.heine@sesischools.com	815-597-8760
HRS of Hoffman Estates	Justine Cutro	Justine.cutro@sesischools.com	224-402-7406
HRS of Mt. Prospect	Samantha Volk	Samantha.volk@sesischools.com	224-612-8338

HRS of Naperville	Jenna Nicholas	Jenna.lucio@sesischools.com	630-355-0200
NWCA at HRS	Kimberly Ver Vooren	Kimberly.vervooren@sesischools.com	815-787-4144
HRS of Quad Cities	Kristin Fox	Kristin.fox@sesischools.com	309-517-6330
HRS of South Suburbs	Chelsi Owsley	Chelsi.owsley@sesischools.com	815-602-8200
HRS of Peoria	Shannon Hines	Shannon.hines@sesischools.com	309-276-0940
HRS of Bloomington	Katy Killian	Katy.killian@sesischools.com	309-276-0933
HRS of Darien	Jolene Delaney	Jolene.delaney@sesischools.com	630.387.4442
NewHope Academy East and West	Bethany Ortega	Bethany.arteaqa@sesischools.com	847-588-0463

**School directors, email addresses, and telephone numbers shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary prior to policy distribution.*

4. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Director or designee shall promptly inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of every student involved in an alleged incident of bullying within 24 hours after the school's administration is made aware of the students' involvement in the incident and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, other interventions, and restorative measures. The school shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent or legal guardian, utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained by the school within a 24-hour period.
5. The Director or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying, by, among other things:
 - a. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of a bullying incident was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported bullying incident.
 - b. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
 - c. Notifying the Director or designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
 - d. Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Director or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The Director or designee shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within permissible scope of High Road jurisdiction and shall require that High Road provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the school and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

6. The Director or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, that may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, and community-based services.
7. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying **is prohibited**. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as *bullying* for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
8. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if High Road's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as *bullying* for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
9. High Road's bullying prevention and response plan must be based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians. The bullying prevention and

response plan shall be developed, maintained, reviewed, and enhanced through an ongoing process that includes input from students, parents and guardians, school personnel, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

10. The Director or designee shall include this policy in the student handbook, school website, and where applicable, post it where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. The policy must also be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel, (including new employees when hired), and must also be provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty.

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11. The Director or designee shall assist with the evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, without limitation:
 - a. The frequency of victimization;
 - b. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
 - c. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
 - d. The types of bullying utilized; and
 - e. Bystander intervention or participation.

The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that High Road Schools already collects for other purposes.

High Road's bullying prevention plan must be consistent with other Board policies.

This policy shall be reviewed and reevaluated at least once every two years. Following each review, High Road Schools shall make any necessary revisions and file the updated policy with the Illinois State Board of Education as required by applicable law and administrative rule.

All instances of bullying, and all threats, indications, or instances of self-harm determined to be related to bullying, shall be reported to the parents or legal guardians of the students involved in accordance with the parent notification requirements of this policy.

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/22-110; 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7; 23 Ill. Admin. Code §1.295 and other applicable provisions of Illinois law.

CROSS REF.: 2:240 (Board Policy Development), 2:260 (Uniform Grievance Procedure), 4:170 (Safety), 5:230 (Maintaining Student Discipline), 6:60 (Curriculum Content), 6:65 (Student Social and Emotional Development), 6:235 (Access to Electronic Networks), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7:185 (Teen Dating Violence Prohibited), 7:190 (Student Behavior), 7:220 (Bus Conduct), 7:230 (Misconduct by Students with Disabilities), 7:240 (Conduct Code for Participants in Extracurricular Activities), 7:285 (Food Allergy Management Program), 7:310 (Restrictions on Publications; PreK-12)

Adopted: February 11, 2020

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