



2024-25 Bullying Policy (Rev. September 2024)

Bullying Prohibited

Galapagos Rockford Charter School strives to ensure a learning environment that is physically and emotionally safe for all scholars. The Galapagos mission is to ensure that all scholars become responsible, college-educated adults capable of adapting and prospering in a changing global economy. Bullying challenges the school's ability to fulfill this mission and creates an environment in which some scholars may feel unsafe. As a result, Galapagos Rockford Charter School prohibits acts of bullying. Bullying is contrary to school policy as well as contrary to state law.

Nothing in this Section 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 United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

This policy is consistent with the policies of the Galapagos Rockford Charter School and the Galapagos Rockford Charter School board. This policy is based upon the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including scholars and parents/guardians.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a scholar or scholars that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- places a scholar or scholars in reasonable fear of harm to the scholar's or scholars' person or property;
- causes a substantially detrimental effect on the scholar's or scholars' physical or mental health;
- interferes substantially with the scholar's or scholars' academic performance; or
- interferes substantially with the scholar's or scholars' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a Galapagos Rockford Charter School.

Bullying may take various forms, including, without limitation, one of more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, public humiliations, destruction of property, theft or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying.

Bullying includes cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication. It includes, without limitation, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, social media communications or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or



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knowingly impersonates another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated above.

Coverage of this Policy

Any bullying, including cyber bullying, is covered under this policy if the incident results in a substantial disruption of the school learning environment or the orderly day-to-day operations of Galapagos or any Galapagos program.

Cyber bullying is covered whether it is initiated from school devices or devices that are accessed at a non-school related location, activity, function or program.

Reporting and Investigations

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all scholars involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

Any act of bullying should be immediately reported to an administrator (Dean of Culture at the appropriated campus). The scholar or parent may also report an act of bullying to an instructor or social worker, who must then notify the Dean of Culture. Complaints against an administrator should be reported to the CEO. Complaints against the CEO should be reported to the President of the Galapagos Rockford Charter School Board.

Reports of bullying should be directed to the Dean of School Culture:

Lower Academy: John Oliver- joliver@galapagoscharter.org

Upper Academy: Stacey Puckett: spuckett@galapagoscharter.org

Similarly, you may call the Lower Academy at 815-708-7946 ext. 402 or the Upper Academy at 779-368-0852 ext. 653

The Dean of Culture or designee shall promptly investigate any reported act of bullying. Galapagos shall take all reasonable efforts to conclude the investigation within ten days. Following the investigation, the Dean of Culture or the designee shall determine whether a verified act of bullying occurred and will document all verified acts of bullying. The Dean of Culture or designee shall also promptly notify the parent or legal guardian of the victim of a verified act of bullying. If the perpetrator of the bullying is a minor, the Dean of Culture or designee shall also promptly notify the minor's parent or legal guardian. A verified act of bullying will result in prompt and appropriate disciplinary action as is written in the Galapagos Rockford Parent/Scholar Handbook. This may include discipline up to suspension or, in severe cases, lead to an expulsion hearing for a scholar; discipline up to and including termination for an



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employee, prohibition to enter the school's premises for a parent, guest, or volunteer. Under certain, albeit rare, circumstances an individual may also be reported to appropriate law enforcement officials.

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, GRCS will provide parents and guardians of the scholars who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the dean or school administrator or his/her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

Consequences for bullying will be instituted with the below-listed factors taken into account.

- adapted to the particular needs of the school and community,
- contribute to maintain school safety,
- protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate,
- teach scholars the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society,
- serve to build and restore relationships among scholars, families, schools, and communities, and
- reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of scholars' behavioral health needs in order to keep scholars in school.
- increase scholar 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.

Retaliation

Retaliation or false accusations against anyone who is a target of bullying, a witness to bullying, or who has reported reliable information about an act of bullying is strictly prohibited. Suspected retaliation or false accusations should be reported in the same manner as bullying. Retaliation or false accusations may result in disciplinary action.

False Accusations

An individual who falsely accuses another individual of bullying as an attempt to bully or as an attempt to retaliate shall be reported to the administration and an appropriate investigation shall ensue.

Interventions

As appropriate, Galapagos shall use a variety of interventions to address bullying. These interventions may include, but are not limited to counseling, social work services, social-emotional skill building, psychological services and community based services.

Assessment



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The Dean or the Dean’s designee must annually report to the Galapagos Rockford Charter School Board all verified incidents of bullying and any resulting consequences, discipline, or referrals. The CEO shall be responsible for implementing this policy’s provisions and procedures and shall develop administrative guidelines as necessary. Galapagos shall evaluate its bullying policy by collecting and analyzing the frequency and nature of bully activities throughout the school year.

The evaluation will include an evaluation process to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy that includes, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; scholar, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation will be made available on the Galapagos website (www.galapagoscharter.org).

Notifications

Galapagos Rockford Charter School makes this policy available through its website at www.galapagoscharter.org/legalnotices and posts it in conspicuous places on both campuses. This Policy is also incorporated into instructor, scholar, and parent/guardian handbooks and codes of conduct. The Dean or the Dean’s designee must annually.