

NOVATO CHARTER SCHOOL
BULLYING – HARRASSMENT POLICY

I. PURPOSE

- A. To affirm the right of every student to attend a school that is safe and secure.
- B. To promote mutual respect, and safe, harmonious relations that support dignity and equality.
- C. To reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment and develop processes and procedures to address incidents of bullying and harassment when they occur.
- D. To define enforceable standards designed to prevent bullying.
- E. To define procedures to be followed should the enforceable standards be violated.

II. AUTHORITY

- A. **EDUCATION CODE**
 - 200-262.4 Prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex
 - 48900.2 Additional grounds for suspension or expulsion; sexual harassment
 - 48904 Liability of parent/guardian for willful student misconduct
 - 48980 Notice at beginning of term

III. BACKGROUND

- A. This policy has been developed after extensive comment from Faculty, Parents and the Board of Trustees.

IV. DEFINITION

- A. **Bullying** is defined as aggressive or unwanted and unwelcome behavior by an individual or groups of individuals who ridicule, harass, humiliate, or intimidate another while on school grounds, at school sponsored activities, while traveling to or from school, or during any activity related to school attendance. Typically, the behavior is repeated over time and includes the use of hurtful words and/or acts.

V. POLICY

The Novato Charter School will not tolerate bullying or any behavior that infringes on the safety or well-being of students, staff, or any other persons within the school's jurisdiction whether directed at an individual or group. This includes but is not limited to bullying or harassment based on race, color, creed, national origin, ethnicity, religion, gender, language, sexual orientation, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, academic or athletic ability, physical appearance, or economic status.

The following are enforceable standards which include, but are not limited to:

- A. **Verbal:** Hurtful name-calling, teasing, gossiping, making threats, making slurs or epithets, making rude noises, or spreading hurtful rumors.
- B. **Nonverbal:** Posturing, making gang signs, leering, staring, stalking, destroying property, insulting or threatening notes, using graffiti or graphic images, or exhibiting inappropriate and/or threatening gestures or actions.
- C. **Physical:** Hitting, punching, pushing, shoving, poking, kicking, tripping, strangling, hair pulling, fighting, beating, "pantsing", pinching, slapping, biting, spitting, or destroying property.
- D. **Emotional (Psychological):** Rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, intimidating, humiliating, blackmailing, manipulating friendships, isolating, shunning, ostracizing, using peer pressure, or rating or ranking personal characteristics.
- E. **Cyber Bullying:** Sending insulting or threatening messages by phone, e-mail, Websites, or any other electronic or written communication. This policy pertains to cyber bullying which takes place while on school grounds, at school sponsored activities, while traveling to or from school, during lunch, or through the use of school property such as a computer or other electronic or wireless device. Acts of cyber bullying that are not related to school activity or school attendance are not within the jurisdiction of this policy.

VI. PROCEDURE

- A. The Director or designee shall be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy.

- B. All staff are expected to provide appropriate supervision to enforce standards of conduct and, if they observe or become aware of bullying or harassing behavior, to immediately intervene, call for assistance, and report such incidents.
- C. The Board requires that all member of the school's community (teachers, parents, students, volunteers, etc) follow the procedures set forth in the school's Uniform Complaint Procedure for reporting alleged acts of bullying.
- D. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report.
- E. Prompt and reasonable investigation of alleged acts of bullying is expected.
- F. Students are expected to report all incidents of bullying, teasing, or other verbal or physical abuse.
- G. Any student who feels she/he is a victim of such behavior should immediately contact a teacher, counselor, principal, or staff person.
- H. If the student who was bullied (or parent on behalf of the student) believes the situation has not been remedied, she/he may file a complaint in accordance with the Charter School's Uniform Complaint policy and procedures.
- I. Students are to be informed annually of the process by which they may make report of bullying or harassment.

Retaliation is Prohibited

Retaliation against a student because the student has filed a bullying complaint or assisted or participated in a bullying or harassment investigation or proceeding is also prohibited. Students who knowingly file false bullying or harassment complaints or give false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by measures up to and including suspension and expulsion, as shall any student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy.

Confidentiality

An allegation of bullying that involves sexual harassment, and the results of the investigation, shall be kept confidential to the extent reasonably possible.