

TWIN LAKES STEM ACADEMY BULLYING PROHIBITION POLICY (514)

I. PURPOSE

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, is conduct that interferes with students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to educate students in a safe environment. Twin Lakes STEM Academy cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under the direct supervision of school personnel. However, to the extent such conduct affects the educational environment of Twin Lakes STEM Academy and the rights and welfare of its students and is within the control of Twin Lakes STEM Academy in its normal operations, it is Twin Lakes STEM Academy's intent to prevent bullying and to take action to investigate, respond, remediate, and discipline those acts of bullying which have not been successfully prevented. The purpose of this policy is to assist Twin Lakes STEM Academy in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, and other similar disruptive behavior.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on Twin Lakes STEM Academy property or at school-related functions. This policy applies not only to students who directly engage in an act of bullying but also to students who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another student's act of bullying. This policy also applies to any student whose conduct at any time or in any place constitutes bullying that interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of Twin Lakes STEM Academy or the safety or welfare of the student, other students, or employees. The misuse of technology including, but not limited to, teasing, intimidating, defaming, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of Twin Lakes STEM Academy by sending or posting e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or Website postings, including blogs, also may constitute an act of bullying regardless of whether such acts are committed on or off Twin Lakes STEM Academy property and/or with or without the use of Twin Lakes STEM Academy resources.
- B. No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of Twin Lakes STEM Academy shall permit, condone, or tolerate bullying.
- C. Apparent permission or consent by a student being bullied does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- D. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of bullying is

prohibited.

- E. False accusations or reports of bullying against another student are prohibited.
- F. A person who engages in an act of bullying, reprisal, or false reporting of bullying or permits, condones, or tolerates bullying shall be subject to discipline for that act in accordance with Twin Lakes STEM Academy's policies and procedures. Twin Lakes STEM Academy may take into account the following factors:
 - 1. The developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved;
 - 2. The levels of harm, surrounding circumstances, and nature of the behavior;
 - 3. Past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior;
 - 4. The relationship between the parties involved; and
 - 5. The context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

Consequences for students who commit prohibited acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. Consequences for employees who permit, condone, or tolerate bullying or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of bullying may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge. Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of bullying may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from Twin Lakes STEM Academy property and events and/or termination of services and/or contracts.

- G. Twin Lakes STEM Academy will act to investigate all complaints of bullying and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of Twin Lakes STEM Academy who is found to have violated this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the definitions included in this section apply.

- A. "Bullying" means any written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture, or pattern thereof, by a student that is intended to cause or is perceived as causing distress to a student or group of students and which substantially interferes with another student's or students' educational benefits, opportunities, or performance. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, conduct by a student against another student or a group of students that a reasonable person under the circumstances knows or should know has the effect of:

1. harming a student or a group of students;
 2. damaging a student's property or a group of students' property;
 3. placing a student or a group of students in reasonable fear of harm to person or property; or
 4. creating a hostile educational environment for a student or a group of students; or
 5. intimidating a student or a group of students
- B. "Immediately" means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.
- C. "On Twin Lakes STEM Academy property or at school-related functions" means all Twin Lakes STEM Academy buildings, school grounds, and school property or property immediately adjacent to school grounds, school bus stops, school buses, school vehicles, school contracted vehicles, or any other vehicles approved for Twin Lakes STEM Academy purposes, the area of entrance or departure from school grounds, premises, or events, and all school-related functions, school-sponsored activities, events, or trips. Twin Lakes STEM Academy property also may mean a student's walking route to or from school for purposes of attending school or school-related functions, activities, or events. While prohibiting bullying at these locations and events, Twin Lakes STEM Academy does not represent that it will provide supervision or assume liability at these locations and events.

IV. REPORTING PROCEDURE

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall report the alleged acts immediately to the director or assistant director. A person may report bullying anonymously. However, Twin Lakes STEM Academy's ability to take action against an alleged perpetrator based solely on an anonymous report may be limited.
- B. Twin Lakes STEM Academy encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available from the director or available from the Twin Lakes STEM Academy office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well.
- C. The director and/or assistant director are the persons responsible for receiving reports of bullying. If the complaint involves the assistant director, the complaint shall be made directly to the director. If the complaint involves the director, the complaint shall be made directly to the board chair.
- D. A teacher, school administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other school employee

shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include bullying. Any such person who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall inform the director or assistant director immediately. School personnel who fail to inform the director or assistant director of conduct that may constitute bullying in a timely manner may be subject to disciplinary action.

- E. Reports of bullying are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as
- F. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying will not affect the complainant's or reporter's future employment, grades, or work assignments, or educational or work environment.
- G. Twin Lakes STEM Academy will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with Twin Lakes STEM Academy's obligation to investigate, take appropriate action, and comply with any legal disclosure obligations.

V. Twin Lakes STEM Academy ACTION

- A. Upon receipt of a complaint or report of bullying, Twin Lakes STEM Academy shall undertake or authorize an investigation by Twin Lakes STEM Academy officials or a third party designated by Twin Lakes STEM Academy.
- B. Twin Lakes STEM Academy may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, reporter, students, or others pending completion of an investigation of bullying, consistent with applicable law.
- C. Upon completion of the investigation, Twin Lakes STEM Academy will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. Twin Lakes STEM Academy action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements; applicable statutory authority, including the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act; Twin Lakes STEM Academy policies; and regulations.
- D. Twin Lakes STEM Academy is not authorized to disclose to a victim private educational or personnel data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of Twin Lakes STEM Academy. School officials will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students involved in a bullying incident and the remedial action taken, to the extent permitted by law, based on a confirmed report.

VI. REPRISAL

Twin Lakes STEM Academy will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of Twin Lakes STEM Academy who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, harassment or intentional disparate treatment.

VII. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- A. Twin Lakes STEM Academy annually will provide information and any applicable training to Twin Lakes STEM Academy staff regarding this policy.
- B. Twin Lakes STEM Academy annually will provide education and information to students regarding bullying, including information regarding this Twin Lakes STEM Academy policy prohibiting bullying, the harmful effects of bullying, and other applicable initiatives to prevent bullying.
- C. The administration of Twin Lakes STEM Academy is directed to implement programs and other initiatives to prevent bullying, to respond to bullying in a manner that does not stigmatize the victim, and to make resources or referrals to resources available to victims of bullying.
- D. Twin Lakes STEM Academy may implement violence prevention and character development education programs to prevent and reduce policy violations. Such programs may offer instruction on character education including, but not limited to, character qualities such as attentiveness, truthfulness, respect for authority, diligence, gratefulness, self-discipline, patience, forgiveness, respect for others, peacemaking, and resourcefulness.

VIII. NOTICE

Twin Lakes STEM Academy will give annual notice of this policy to students, parents or guardians, and staff, and this policy shall appear in the student handbook.

Adopted: 12/02/14