



Bullying Policy – Pine Lake Preparatory

The Pine Lake Preparatory Board of Directors, school leadership, Academic Partners, students, and families recognize we all have a responsibility to promote and maintain a healthy, safe, orderly, and caring learning environment. This atmosphere must be free from bullying, and is inclusive of all students and employees.

The Pine Lake Bullying Policy includes, but is not limited to, the following activities: bullying based on an individual's race, color, sex, religion, creed, ethnicity, political belief, age, national origin, linguistic and language differences, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, socioeconomic status, physical characteristics, marital status, or disability. It is possible for bullying to occur at various levels: between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or imposed by non-employees, including visitors, on employees, and/or students.

The Pine Lake Board of Directors prohibits acts of bullying. Like other disruptive or violent behaviors, bullying, harassment, or discrimination is conduct that impedes both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and orderly environment.

This policy will apply, including but not limited to, the following circumstances:

1. While at school or on school grounds before, during, and after school hours.
2. While being transported to or attending any school activity.
3. During any and all school functions, extracurricular, co-curricular, or other school activity or event.
4. During any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate impact on maintaining order and discipline at school.

Definitions:

- **Bullying:** unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying often includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.
- **Imbalance of Power:** individuals who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
- **Intentional:** the purposeful or deliberate act or behavior.

Types of Bullying:

1. **Verbal bullying:** saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes but is not limited to: teasing, name-calling, insults, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, and/or threatening to cause harm.
2. **Social or relational bullying:** involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes but is not limited to: leaving someone out on purpose, telling other students not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors or lies about someone, and/or embarrassing someone in public purposefully.
3. **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes but is not limited to: hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, tripping or pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, and/or making mean or rude hand gestures.

Cyber Bullying:

Cyber bullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Cyber bullying can include but is not limited to mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles. Per NC GS 115C-390.2(c) Board of Education policies may authorize suspensions for conduct not occurring on educational property, but only if student's conduct otherwise violates the Schools Code of Student Conduct and the conduct has or is reasonably expected to have a direct and immediate impact on the orderly and efficient operation of the schools or the safety of individuals in the school environment.

Responses/Consequences:

When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior they send the message that it is not acceptable. Research shows this can stop bullying behavior over time. There are simple steps adults can take to stop bullying on the spot and keep students safe. They include but are not limited to: Immediate intervention to stop the immediate behaviors, separate the kids involved, make sure everyone is safe, meet any immediate medical or mental health needs, stay calm, reassure the students involved, including bystanders, and model respectful behaviors during the intervention.

Consequences for students violating the Bullying policy will depend on the severity of the behavior and be determined by the appropriate Head of School. Parents and students should carefully review the Pine Lake Student Conduct and Discipline.