

Washington Global Public Charter School

Bullying Prevention Policy

SY 2023-2024

Objectives and Purpose

A key responsibility of Washington Global Public Charter School is to provide services in a respectful and positive environment. Acts of bullying, harassment and intimidation are an attack on core Washington Global values. Thus, to facilitate our mission, Washington Global, in consultation with youth, families and staff, has established this comprehensive bullying prevention policy. This policy protects the dignity and safety of the Washington Global community and describes Washington Global's prevention strategies to identify and prevent incidents by connecting youth to necessary services. Washington Global will promptly report and investigate all incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation and provide appropriate remedies for victims of an incident.

This policy serves as Washington Global's bullying prevention plan.

Definitions (DC Code § 2-1535.03(b)(1))

Washington Global defines bullying as any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct whether physical, electronic, or verbal that:

1. May be based on a youth's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place or residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a youth's association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and
2. Can reasonably be predicted to:
 - a. Place the youth in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person or property;
 - b. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the youth's physical or mental health;
 - c. Substantially interfere with the youth's academic performance or attendance; or
 - d. Substantially interfere with the youth's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by an agency, educational institution, or grantee.

Prohibition against Bullying (DC Code § 2-1535.03(b)(2-3;9))

Acts of bullying, including cyberbullying, whether by youth, volunteers or staff, are prohibited:

1. On Washington Global grounds and immediately adjacent property, at Washington Global - sponsored or related events on and off Washington Global grounds, on any vehicle used for Washington Global business, at any transit stop at which youth wait to be transported to Washington Global business, or through the use of any electronic devices owned by the Washington Global, leased by the Washington Global or used for Washington Global business; and
2. At a location or function unrelated to the Washington Global, through the use of any electronic devices, including those not owned or leased by the Washington Global, if the acts of bullying or cyberbullying create a hostile environment at the agency for the victim or witnesses, infringe on their rights at the Washington Global, or materially and substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the Washington Global. If any act materially and substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the agency to include off-site instances of bullying, reported to the agency, to which the policy applies.

Retaliation against a youth, volunteer or staff member who reports bullying, provides information about an act of bullying, or witnesses an act of bullying is also prohibited.

Policy Development and Resource Mapping

Engaging the Community

- Washington Global will create and update its policy with feedback from the community, as follows:
1. Prior to adopting, or making any changes to the policy, Washington Global will make a draft copy of the proposed changes available to the public at least two weeks before the policy is adopted or changes to the policy are finalized and shall, in that time period, provide the public with the ability to submit feedback on the changes in the form of questions, comments and recommendations which Washington Global must be taken into consideration.
 2. Washington Global will convene an advisory panel composed of community stakeholders in regular contact with Washington Global. This panel may be made permanent to serve as an ongoing resource for Washington Global's bullying prevention efforts.

Youth Advisory Panel

As part of the process of soliciting stakeholder feedback, Washington Global will convene a Youth Advisory Panel composed of students attending Washington Global. This panel will advise the drafting and implementation of this policy and assist in its implementation through peer outreach and education. This panel will be consulted prior to the approval of the policy or any changes to the policy. The Youth Advisory Panel will be consulted annually as part of Washington Global's policy evaluation and updating process.

Publication and Contact Information (DC Code § 2-1535.03(f))

This policy will be made available on Washington Global's website. The policy, and age appropriate versions thereof, will be distributed to youth and parents of youth in contact with Washington Global annually, and Washington Global will emphasize that the policy applies to participation in functions sponsored by Washington Global. Additionally, this policy will be included in all publications of agency rules, regulations, and solicitations and agreements for contracts and grants.

Washington Global Public Charter School is responsible for coordinating Washington Global's bullying

prevention efforts. All questions, comments and concerns about the bullying policy and Washington Global prevention efforts should be able to be directed to Howard Mebane, Chief Student Affairs Officer at hmebane@washingtonglobal.org.

Prevention Leadership

Responsibility for the implementation and execution of this policy is vested with Washington Global's administrative team who shall have responsibility for:

1. Planning and organizing the prevention plan's professional development activities and coordinating these activities with the Department of Human Resources;
2. Designing or choosing and implementing the programming and curricula the agency uses to address bullying;
3. Receiving and recording incidents of bullying;
4. Responding to incidents of bullying and addressing the needs of victims and bullies;
5. Managing the data collaboration and collection process in cooperation with the District citywide prevention coordinator;
6. Coordinating community engagement efforts and;
7. Regularly reviewing and updating the policy and any procedures developed as part of it.

If Washington Global chooses to delegate responsibility for any of these areas, it must be done in consultation with the administrative team. All such decisions will be recorded to ensure that there are clear lines of responsibility for each prevention activity.

Policy Evaluation

Washington Global will annually review and update this policy with new prevention strategies developed after consultation with community stakeholders, continuing research on best practices in bullying prevention, and the agency's data collaboration with the citywide coordinator. Policy changes will be made to rectify gaps identified in the current prevention effort and to build on successful strategies. They will be further informed by whether or not Washington Global successfully met or is on track to meet performance goals described in its "prevention goals" section.

Create Positive Agency Atmosphere

Washington Global will establish a culture of respect and safety. As part of this commitment, Washington Global will incorporate bullying prevention messages and efforts into all aspects of its operations that serve youth or that support youth serving operations.

Staff must be committed to creating a positive and respectful environment. Accordingly, Washington Global will include, in all employment application interviews, questions about how prospective employees would support bullying prevention and the creation of a positive Washington Global environment at their job.

Community Education

Safe, positive environments are best supported by an active partnership between Washington Global and the community. This begins with parents and guardians. Accordingly, Washington Global will provide the parents and guardians of young people regular bulletins, presentations and/or workshops to educate them on:

1. How parents and guardians can use activities at home to build on the bullying prevention lessons taught at Washington Global;
2. The dynamics of bullying and its impact on youth;

3. Information about internet safety and cyberbullying;
4. Washington Global's legal and administrative responses to bullying;
5. Information on parent and guardian relevant sections of Washington Global's prevention policy.

Such information will also be made available by Washington Global to the community, and in particular to Washington Global youth and community advisory panels. These educational opportunities will be made available at six month intervals.

Where possible Washington Global will coordinate education efforts with other District agencies to effect citywide community education and awareness.

Code of Conduct DC Code (§ 2-1535.03(4))

§4.b.4 of the Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012 requires that all youth serving agencies adopt a code of conduct.

Washington Global expects youth to behave in a way that supports Washington Global's objective to provide a safe and welcoming environment for other youth, Washington Global staff, and community members. Youth who are part of the Washington Global community are expected to:

1. Treat all members of the Washington Global community with respect;

2. Respect the property of Washington Global, its staff, and other youth connected to Washington Global;
3. Respond appropriately to instructions from Washington Global staff.

Training and Professional Development (DC Code § 2-1535.06(3))

Per DC Code § 2-1535.06(3) agencies may provide training on bullying prevention to all employees and volunteers who have significant contact with youth.

Training

Washington Global will provide to all personnel whose duties consistently bring them into contact with youth by design or incident, training on Washington Global's prevention curriculum, as well as the procedures for responding to and reporting an incident of bullying. Staff will also learn to engage with each other and youth reflectively to build an agency-wide atmosphere of respect. These training efforts will be assisted, at Washington Global request, by the citywide coordinator. This training will be provided regularly to Washington Global staff by the opening of the District academic school year immediately following the publication of this policy.

Staff assigned to Washington Global's bullying prevention team will receive additional training on how to provide immediate support for victims and witnesses during or after an incident and may obtain District citywide coordinator support to provide this training. This additional training will be provided regularly to Washington Global staff by the opening of the District academic school year immediately following the publication of this policy.

Staff tasked with carrying out investigations into an incident of bullying as described in "Investigating Incidents of Bullying" will receive additional training on how to carry out these investigations.

Ongoing Professional Development

Washington Global recognizes that in addition to training, staff members require ongoing professional

development to build the tools and knowledge needed to prevent, identify, and respond to incidents of bullying. Therefore, Washington Global will ensure that staff has ongoing access to professional development opportunities that include information on:

1. The specific locations and dynamics of youth and bullying interactions at Washington Global
2. Age and developmentally appropriate strategies for identifying, preventing, and responding constructively to incidents of bullying;
3. Specific populations that may be particularly at-risk in the Washington Global environment;
4. Internet safety and cyberbullying issues;
5. The components and delivery of the agency's prevention curriculum.

Curriculum (DC Code § 2-1535.06(1-2))

Per DC Code § 2-1535.06(1-2) agencies may establish an annual prevention program for youth aligned with established health education standards and inform youth about their right to be free from discrimination in public accommodations and education, and of the redress available for a violation of their rights.

Washington Global will implement a comprehensive bullying prevention curriculum, the components of which will be integrated into all youth related Washington Global activities. This curriculum will teach youth¹:

1. Self-regulation (controlling impulses; focusing, sustaining and shifting attention; listening to and remembering information; empathy training);
2. Perspective-taking (appreciating similarities and differences; recognizing and identifying feelings of others; understanding that feelings can change and are complex);
3. Emotion management (recognizing and identifying one's own feelings; learning strategies for calming down strong emotions; managing stress/anxiety);
4. Problem-solving (learning a process for solving problems; goal setting);
5. Communication skills (being assertive; being respectful; negotiating and compromising);
6. Friendship skills (cooperation, including others, joining in with others).

Incident Database

Washington Global will collect the following pieces of information about reported incidents of bullying:

1. Name(s) of the victim, bully, and any witnesses
 - a. Reliable contact information for the victim, bully and any witnesses
2. Relevant attributes about the victim, bully and any witnesses including:
 - a. Any prior incidents involving either the victim or bully
 - b. Connection of the victim, bully, and any witnesses to the incident (i.e. are they students, staff, volunteers, etc.)
3. The nature of the bullying incident
 - a. Where the incident took place
 - b. What time the incident took place
 - c. What type(s) of bullying it was (physical, verbal, cyber, relational, etc.?)

- d. What factors drove the incident of bullying (social status, personal appearance, race, sexual orientation, etc.)
- e. What adult supervision was in place
- f. Context of the incident

Washington Global will only attempt to collect this information insofar as it does not jeopardize the safety of the victim and witness(es) and allows non-staff reports of bullying to be made anonymously.

Prevention Goals

At the beginning of the District public school academic year, Washington Global's administrative team will update goals for Washington Global's prevention efforts. Washington Global will set out clear, reasonable goals to be achieved in incident reduction, training and curriculum development and Washington Global climate improvement at the 6 month, one year, and three year marks. Each goal created should have clear data measures being collected to track the progress toward these goals.

Strategies to Avoid in Primary Prevention

Primary prevention strategies should avoid overly punitive policies that are often adopted as part of creating a "zero-tolerance" environment. While sanctions are an important part of a bullying prevention plan, certainty of detection has been shown to be a much more important component of a successful prevention policy than severity of response; harsh sanctions make certainty of detection more unlikely because they deter victims and witnesses from reporting bullying. Effective prevention policies include graduated sanctions as a component of a comprehensive plan and avoid stigmatizing youth who bully. The policy should avoid punishing non-reporting youth witnesses. While these sanctions are intended to increase the frequency of witness reporting, research suggests that these policies have precisely the opposite effect— discouraging the reporting of incidents by students who fear potential sanctions. Research suggests cyberbullying is as or more common than physical violence.

Secondary Prevention Strategies

Identifying At-Risk Groups

All staff at Washington Global will actively seek out youth who are at risk of being victims or bullies to proactively remedy incidents of bullying before they occur. In determining whether a youth is at risk of being a **victim** of aggression, staff will consider the following risk factors:

1. Individual factors
 - a. Cautious, sensitive, insecure personality
 - b. Difficulty asserting themselves among peers
 - c. Physical weakness, particularly in boys
2. Parental factors
 - a. Possible overprotective parents
3. Peer risk factors
 - a. Lack of close friends

Risk factors for being a **bully** in an incident include:

4. Individual factors
 - a. Impulsive, hot-headed, dominant personality lacking empathy
 - b. Difficulty conforming to rules and low frustration tolerance
 - c. Positive attitudes toward violence
 - d. Gradually decreasing interest in school or academic achievement
5. Parental factors
 - a. Lack of parental warmth and involvement
 - b. Overly-permissive or excessively harsh discipline/physical punishment by parents
 - c. Lack of parental supervision
6. Peer risk factors
 - a. Friends/peers with positive attitudes towards violence
 - b. Exposure to models of bullying

Referral to Secondary Service for At-Risk Youth

Washington Global staff who believe that a youth is at risk of being a victim or bully will send the youth to the designated staff member who will refer them to the appropriate services based on the agency's resource mapping effort. Resources will be given directly to the youth. If outside agencies are contacted, the youth's and/or parent or guardian's written consent must first be obtained.

Referral to service as part of a secondary prevention measure is not a disciplinary action and will never be noted on a youth's record as such.

Controlling At-Risk Areas

If a location on Washington Global premises is identified by Washington Global's data collection efforts as being particularly prone to hosting incidents of bullying, the administrative team will take steps to improve the safety and security of that location for Washington Global youth. These steps will include:

1. Reducing youth traffic to these areas by altering schedules or activities;
2. Reducing the number of youth of different ages or activity groups in an at-risk area by altering schedules or activities;
3. Increasing supervision in these areas, and training supervising staff in the identification of bullying behaviors particularly common in that place.

Washington Global will take measures to address an at-risk location no more than one month after receiving information on the presence of such an area on Washington Global premises.

Secondary Services for At-Risk Youth

Secondary services provided to at-risk youth are not designed to punish and will not be reported on Washington Global records as such. Rather, the objective of secondary services is to support at-risk youth and address risk behaviors before they become serious safety or disciplinary issues. To this end, remedial measures will be tailored to the youth receiving them to build on youth strengths while addressing skills and behavior deficits.

When considering what remedial services should be offered to a youth, Washington Global will take into account: life skill competencies and deficiencies, extracurricular and academic strengths and weaknesses, available peer and home support networks, and personal traits. Based on these attributes and information from resource mapping, Washington Global will determine the appropriate remedial services. If Washington Global does not have access to services appropriate to a youth's needs, they will refer the youth to an outside agency who can address these needs rather than substituting other services that Washington Global can provide.

Resources will be given directly to youth. If outside agencies are contacted, the youth's and/or parent or guardian's written consent will first be obtained. In all cases of remedial action, Washington Global will take all possible steps to actively involve the youth's parents or guardians in the skill-building process, as long as the youth's written assent is obtained.

Examples of remedial services Washington Global will provide directly or refer a youth to include but are not limited to: **[peer support groups, alternative educational or institutional placement, youth treatment, therapy or counseling, closely monitored behavioral management plans, parent conferences or service learning experiences.]** Services will be provided to an at-risk youth no more than one month after such a determination is made by Washington Global.

Reporting Incidents of Bullying or Retaliation (DC Code § 2-1535.03(b)(6)) Washington Global expects all staff members and volunteers to report incidents of bullying or retaliation they witness or are made aware of. Staff members should immediately report all such incidents to the administrative team who will create a written report of a bullying incident and include the incident in Washington Global reports of bullying incidents to the citywide coordinator.

Youth, parents, guardians, and community members are encouraged by Washington Global to report any incidents of bullying that they witness or become aware of. Reports of bullying may be made to Washington Global's main office located at 525 School Street SW DC 20024.

Reports of bullying by youth, parents, guardians and community members may be made anonymously, but disciplinary action cannot be taken by Washington Global solely on the basis of an anonymous report, though such a report may trigger an investigation that will provide actionable information. All oral reports received as part of this process will be transcribed into writing and included in Washington Global's bullying database.

Washington Global will ensure that there are reporting materials available in a wide variety of languages and that information about reporting is communicated to youth connected to Washington Global in an age appropriate manner. Information on how to report incidents of bullying will also be included as appropriate in Washington Global mailings to youth and their families. Washington Global staff is available to assist in reporting incidents of bullying. The Chief Student Affairs is available to assist in reporting incidents of bullying and can be reached at hmebane@washingtonglobal.otg.

Investigating Incidents of Bullying (DC Code § 2-1535.03(b)(7))

Prior to the investigation of an incident, Washington Global will take steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim referenced in a reported bullying incident. These steps will be designed to restore a sense of safety to the victim and to protect them from further incidents if necessary. Examples of such steps taken include designating a staff member to serve as that alleged victim's "safe" person, altering the alleged bully/bullies' seating or schedule to reduce access to the alleged victim or creating a safety plan in consultation with the alleged victim. Once an investigation is concluded, further steps will be taken as needed to assure the continued safety of the victim from additional incidents of bullying or retaliation.

Parents and guardians: Washington Global will notify the parents or guardians of victims, bullies, and if appropriate, witnesses to an incident of bullying behavior about the nature of the incident and the procedures and steps in place for responding to it. Washington Global administration will determine if parents or guardians should be informed prior to or after the investigation of an incident.

Schools: Washington Global will notify the schools of all victims and bullies in an incident of bullying to ensure that youth are not victimized across agencies and that comprehensive service and protection can be provided to bullies and victims.

Law enforcement agencies: If Washington Global determines that the reported incident may involve criminal activity or the basis for criminal charges, information about the incident must be conveyed to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. As part of making this determination Washington Global may wish to consult with either a law enforcement officer or legal counsel. Law enforcement shall only be contacted if all other available remedies have been exhausted.

Washington Global will notify these groups of incidents of bullying only to the extent allowed by law. Notification will be undertaken solely to ensure that services are provided to victims and bullies and to protect victims from further or sustained victimization. Washington Global will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of those who report bullying incidents.

Washington Global will provide confidentiality as far as possible to relevant parties as part of the investigation, and inform all relevant parties that retaliation for reporting acts of bullying is prohibited. Written records of the investigation process should be maintained and may be included in the prevention database to generate a more accurate picture of bullying behaviors at Washington Global. Where necessary, provisions will be made to include the advice of legal counsel.

In investigating an incident of bullying, Washington Global will seek to ensure that the reported incident is one of victimization, a sign of bullying, rather than of conflict. Thus when investigating a reported incident Washington Global will attempt to determine, through interviewing the victim, what mechanisms the victim had and has access to for halting the incident that occurred, and preventing future such instances. If the victim reports a few or no mechanisms for ending the incident or constructively dealing with future instances, that information will serve as compelling, though not

conclusive evidence that the reported incident was an incident of bullying.

Washington Global is charged with making determinations as to whether a reported incident constitutes a case of bullying. The Principal, alongside the Dean of Students will investigate all bullying claims as well: info@washingtonglobal.org/(202) 534-7894. These determinations will be made in consideration of the totality of the facts and the circumstances surrounding the incident. If Washington Global determines that an incident of bullying has occurred, they should take the response steps enumerated in Washington Global's tertiary prevention plan to prevent the recurrence of an incident and restore the safety of a victim.

If Washington Global determines that additional support is needed to conduct a thorough and equitable investigation they will contact the citywide prevention coordinator.

Sanctions and Remedies for Bullying

Sanctions (DC Code § 2-1535.03(b)(5))

Washington Global recognizes that for sanctions to be an effective component of a bullying prevention plan, they must be applied consistently, fairly, and equitably. To this end, Washington Global shall ensure that staff follow these guidelines as closely as possible, while allowing for flexibility to adapt sanctions to individual contexts. Furthermore, to ensure equitability in applying sanctions, measures will be applied on a graduated basis determined by the nature of the offense, the disciplinary history of the youth involved, and the age and developmental status of the youth involved. Responses to incidents of bullying may include, but are not limited to:

- Reprimand
- Deprivation of Washington Global privileges
- Bans on participating in optional Washington Global activities
- Deprivation of Washington Global services
- Ban or suspension from Washington Global facilities

Sanctions will be applied within one day of the determination that an incident of bullying has occurred, unless an appeal of the incident by the bully has been received in that time as described in the Appeals section of this policy. To ensure that single incidents of bullying do not become recurring problems, Washington Global will always refer victims and bullies involved in an incident to services in addition to imposing sanctions on bullies.

Appeals

Parties dissatisfied by the outcome of a bullying investigation may appeal the determination of the prevention specialist to the Chief Student Affairs Officer. This appeal should be submitted no later than

30 days after the initial determination. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Chief Student Affairs Officer must conduct a secondary investigation within 30 days of the receipt of an appeal. This 30 days may be extended by up to an additional 15 days if the Chief Student Affairs Officer sets forth in writing the reasons why more time is needed to conduct an investigation. Additionally, upon the receipt of an appeal, the Chief Student Affairs Officer must inform the party making the submission of their ability to seek additional redress under the DC Human Rights Act.

Washington Global does not endorse the use of punitive strategies associated with “zero-tolerance” policies when applying sanctions to an incident of bullying.

Washington Global shall communicate to youth in contact with Washington Global, the consequences that youth can expect for participating in bullying behavior.

Referral to Services.

Washington Global response to an active incident of bullying will always include the referral of both victim(s) and bully/bullies to remedial services. If an investigation determines that a youth was involved in an incident of bullying as a bully, victim, or witness the Washington Global will refer them to the appropriate services based on the Washington Global resource mapping effort.

At the time of a referral Washington Global will inform the youth’s parents or guardian about referring the youth to services with the youth’s assent if they have not already been informed as part of the investigation and determination process. Washington Global will also explain the reasons they are referring a student, the type of service they are referring the youth to and the reason they think that particular service(s) will meet the youth’s needs. Resources will be given directly to the youth. If outside agencies are contacted, the youth’s and/or parent or guardian’s written consent must first be obtained. If parents or guardians do not consent to contact outside services then such services will only be applied to bullies in conjunction with any sanctions applied.

Services for Bullies, Victims and Witnesses

Remedial services to which youth are referred are not designed to be punitive and will never be noted on a youth’s Washington Global records as such.

Remedial services provided to the bully are designed to correct the thinking patterns, behaviors, and skill deficiencies that led to the incident, turning a bullying incident into a teachable moment.

Remedial services provided to the victim and witnesses are designed to restore youths’ sense of safety and to empower them to address bullying incidents in a constructive and non-violent manner.

Remedial services are designed to help youth build the skills to participate safely and constructively in

Washington Global and will be tailored to youth based on: life skill competencies and deficiencies, extracurricular and academic strengths and weaknesses, available peer and home support networks, mental and behavioral health concerns, and personal traits. Based on these attributes and information from resource mapping indicating what Washington Global resources are best suited to address and remedy these deficiencies.

Rewards for Third Party Prevention

Washington Global encourages third party reporting of bullying and constructive intervention in incidents, and recognizes that it may take considerable courage for a youth to intervene in an act of bullying in a way that does not exacerbate the situation. Therefore, Washington Global will recognize and reward youth who make a positive contribution to Washington Global climate by intervening in an act of bullying. Examples of such rewards include, but are not limited to praise, granting of special or additional privileges at Washington Global or rewards. Provided public recognition will not create harm for the youth, rewards may be provided in a public forum to serve as a positive example and encourage other youth who might be encouraged to intervene in a bullying incident and to further promote a positive agency atmosphere.