

Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination

Bullying

Prep Charter High School recognizes the negative impact that bullying has on student health, welfare, and safety and on the learning environment at school. Prep Charter also recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation and detracts from a safe environment.

Prep Charter High School defines bullying as an intentional electronic, written, verbal, nonverbal, psychological, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

- Substantially interfering with a student's education.
- Creating a threatening school environment.
- Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying is further characterized by the following three (3) criteria:

- It is aggressive behavior or causing intentional harm.
- It is carried out repeatedly and over time.
- It occurs between people where there is an imbalance of power (I.e., physical strength, mental capacity, popularity, or social skills).

Harassment

It is Prep Charter High School's policy to maintain an educational environment in which harassment including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual violence in any form is not tolerated.

Prep Charter High School defines harassment as verbal, nonverbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's known or perceived race, color, ethnicity, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, English language proficiency, veteran status, disability, or other protected classification.

Harassment includes unwelcome conduct such as graphic, written, electronic, verbal, or nonverbal acts, including offensive jokes, slurs, epithets, and name-calling; ridicule or mockery; insults or put-downs; offensive objects or pictures; physical assaults or threats; intimidation; sexual misconduct; or other conduct that may be harmful or humiliating or interfere with a person's school or school-related performance when:

- Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive and;
- A reasonable person in the complainant's position would find that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment such that it deprives or adversely interferes with or limits an individual or group of the ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by a school.

Harassment does not have to include the intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents.

Discrimination

To treat individuals differently based on a protected classification, including race, color, ethnicity, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, English-language proficiency, veteran status, disability, or other protected classification. A single incident of discrimination may implicate more than one protected class.

Prep Charter High School does not discriminate in employment, education programs, or activities based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity, expression (known or perceived), sex, handicap, disability, nationality, citizenship, union membership, or limited English proficient.

Prep Charter High School's policy of non-discrimination extends to all other legally protected classifications as listed below:

- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA), is a federal law prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities and, together with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), ensures deaf and hard-of-hearing students, parents, staff, and community members the right of equal access to services and accommodations provided by Prep Charter High School through enhanced communications.

Parents/Guardians and Authorized Visitors Board Policy 904 states that a disabled parent/guardian or authorized visitor to a school event that requires a reasonable accommodation to assist in his/her attendance/participation in the event should contact the event administrative organizer at least three (3) business days in advance of the scheduled event or three (3) days following receipt of notice of the event, whichever accomplishes the earliest notice to the school.

Requests should be made as early as possible because some accommodations require additional time to prepare/arrange. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex and gender-based discrimination. In line with federal regulations (Title IX), the district defines Title IX sexual harassment as any instance of quid pro quo harassment by a school's employee, any unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would find so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it denies a person equal educational access; any instance of sexual assault (as defined in the Clery Act), dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as defined in the Violence Against Women Act). Examples of potential Title IX Sexual Harassment violations are:

- Bullying or harassment based on sex or gender identity or expression.
- Bullying or harassment based on pregnant or parenting status.
- Bullying or harassment in the form of comments, threats, gestures, or rumors of a sexual nature, including, but not limited to:
 - o Sharing/showing images/videos of a sexual nature.
 - o Non-consensual sex acts and sexual violence.

Such conduct must have taken place during a school education program or activity and against a person in the United States to qualify as sexual harassment subject to Title IX regulations.

*NOTE: Not all unwelcome sexual conduct meets the definition of Title IX sexual harassment. Conduct that does not meet this definition might be considered harassment as defined in the Behavior Matrix of the Code of Conduct.

Reporting

Any school community member can report bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination, and all reports will be investigated. There are numerous ways to make a report:

Call the Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination hotline at 215-400-SAFE.

Submitting a complaint via Safe2Say or by phone at 844-SAF2SAY (844-723-2729) Reporting the incident to the building principal or designee or to any other member of the school staff, including teachers, guidance counselors, coaches, and administrators.

Investigations

Prep Charter High School takes all violations of the Code of Conduct seriously, including allegations of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. A school administrator or designee will conduct investigations into any alleged Code of Conduct (in some instances, the Director of School Safety may collaborate in the investigation). This includes conduct that occurs off-grounds, virtually, and/or after-hours (including weekends), if the conduct materially impacts the school community (meaning the conduct has a noticeable or considerable impact).

Important Notes:

- Some alleged conduct may require a notification to the Philadelphia Police Department the administrator should collaborate with the Director of School Safety prior to making any police contact.
- Some alleged conduct may require a notification to Childline as Prep Charter High School employees are mandated reporters.
- If the complaint includes allegations of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or harassment based on sexual orientation, notify the Title IX Coordinator before proceeding with an investigation or discipline.
- Parents/guardians must be notified of all serious incidents involving their students; however, the school does not need parental permission to conduct an investigation or obtain statements related to alleged misconduct.
- At times, sharing some information about a serious incident with the school community (parents and students) may be necessary.
- In some cases, the CEO and Human Resources Director will lead or be involved in a school's investigation.

Student Behavior and Discipline

The behavior infraction levels of the Code of Conduct defines behaviors considered dangerous and/or disruptive to the school learning environment and community. The behavior infraction levels also provide guidance as to the levels of interventions and consequences that school administrators can implement for specific violations.

Prep Charter High School is committed to achieving educational equity and reducing disproportionality in exclusionary discipline. It is expected that PCHS will follow the MTSS process to ensure students are receiving appropriate support prior to a serious incident. Parents/guardians who have any questions or concerns related to discipline are encouraged to contact the school principal and/or the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Suspension Procedures

According to Pennsylvania law, suspension is defined as the denial of the right to attend school and to take part in any school function for any period of up to ten (10) days. Suspensions must be preceded by notification to the student and parent/guardian in writing. For the purposes of the Code of Conduct, suspensions are comprised of two categories: short-term and long-term.

Out-of-School Suspensions

Students in 3rd through 12th grade may be suspended when they have violated the Code of Conduct and suspension is deemed appropriate for the offense. Suspensions vary in length:

- Short-term suspension is an exclusion from school and/or any school activity or function for a period of one to three days.
- Long-term suspension is an exclusion from school and/or any school activity or function for a period of four to ten school days.

Students who are suspended must meet with the principal or designee prior to the suspension unless the health, safety, or welfare of the school community is compromised. During the conference, the student should be given a suspension notice. The parent/guardian must also be notified and a parent conference should be scheduled before or upon the student's reinstatement to school after suspension.

Parent Conference Procedures

At parent conferences, parents/guardians can expect that school administrators will adhere to the following protocols: