



KENT ACADEMY

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY - Parents & Students

What Is Bullying? Bullying is a repetitive behavior that abuses an imbalance of power to intentionally cause emotional or physical harm to another person or group of people. Bullying can take different forms, including:

- Being unfriendly, spreading rumors, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding bags or books)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, slapping or any form of violence
- Verbal name-calling, teasing, threats, sarcasm
- Cyber - All areas of internet misuse, including but not limited to, nasty and/or threatening emails, misuse of blogs, gaming websites, internet chat rooms and instant messaging
- Mobile threats by text messaging & unwanted calls

At Kent Academy, we believe that bullying is, at times, an isolated incident where a student simply lacks awareness of how his/her actions are affecting someone else. In such cases our response will include efforts to raise the student's awareness of how his/her actions negatively impact others.

there are also times where bullying stems from a student's frequent desire to elevate his own self- esteem by making others feel inferior. We may refer to this as "taking power from someone else" or "making others feel 'less-than' - less worthy of respect, of status/popularity, etc.". Bullying tendencies such as this indicate a lack of self-esteem and feeling a lack of personal power. In these cases, the treatment of the bully will include a recommendation to participate in a program designed to increase awareness, compassion, and feelings of individual empowerment.

In other words, the school's reaction will include investigating the motivation set behind the behavior, not just the behavior itself. The student who participated in bullying - as well as students who observed the bullying but did not intervene - will be asked to have accountability by openly discussing the motivation for his/her actions. The causes of bullying vary, but may include issues at home or other environments - situations where the child feels unheard, ignored, or dis-empowered in some way. This sadness/frustration/feeling of powerlessness gets projected outward in the form of bullying behavior; in an attempt to compensate for a lack of power in his life, he attempts to feel more powerful than another student

The Responsibilities of Kent Academy Staff

Our staff will:

- * Foster in our students high self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behavior we expect of our students.
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every student learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to administration by use of an incident report.
- Work as a team, with administration, to follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Help guide classmates to appropriate decisions and demonstrate respect to others at all times
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behavior in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- Advising their children not to retaliate in a physically or verbally violent manner, to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Avoid making quick judgments on others until information is gathered.
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying and informing the school of any suspected Bullying, even if their children are not involved.
- Co-operating with the school. If their children are bullied, accused of bullying, or a witness to bullying, parents must commit to participation in the investigation to ascertain the truth.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- The offering/opportunity to discuss the experience with a staff member whom the student feels comfortable with and chooses.
- Offering support with the goal of restoring self-esteem and confidence
- Knowing there are steps in place for an investigation and protocol for further action as needed
- Having the opportunity and choice to hear the bully's description of his motivations for his actions

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOR

Reporting an incident

Any student who believes he/she has been the target of bullying, or any other person in the school community who observes or receives notice that a student has or may have been the target of bullying, will report incidents verbally or in writing to any staff member.

All reports of intimidation or bullying should be recorded and submitted to the director. Students may remain anonymous or sign the report.

An incident may be reported in the following ways:

1. A student may write the incident on paper/index card and place it the black mailbox in the office lobby or in the comment box in the middle school lobby.
2. A student may tell a teacher about the incident and the teacher will file a written report
3. A student may tell a parent. It is our hope the parent will encourage the student to file a report at school but if they prefer, the student and parent may work together to let a staff member know about the incident and/or write a written report.

Please note that no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor based solely on a report. A full investigation and procedure will follow all written reports.

Investigation of Reported Bullying

- 1) When investigating the incident all of the surrounding facts, circumstances, severity, and age/developmental factors should be considered.
- 2) There will be documentation of interviews conducted by the investigating staff member with the alleged Victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses (interviews are confidential, and are conducted privately and separately). The alleged perpetrator and victim are not to be interviewed together.
- 3) Collection and evaluation of the facts will include, but not be limited to
 - a) where the alleged incident(s) occurred (time/date/place of incident);
 - b) the identity and number of individuals who participated in bullying or harassing behavior
 - c) a description of the incident(s) including the nature of the behavior and the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred;
 - d) how often the conduct occurred;
 - e) whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior;
 - f) the relationship between the parties involved;
 - g) the characteristics of parties involved (i.e., grade, age, gender, etc.);
 - h) whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or the educational environment;
 - i) whether an imbalance of power is evident; and
 - j) the date, time, and method of informing parents/legal guardians of all parties involved in the incident.

Results of Investigation

Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of the bullying prevention policy requires a determination based on facts and surrounding circumstances.

Whether conduct is "substantially interfering with a student's education" should be determined by considering a targeted student's grades, attendance, demeanor, interaction with peers, participation in school and extracurricular activities, and other performance or behavioral indicators. Negative changes in behavior would be particularly noteworthy.

Administrative Actions for Documented Bullying

Actions for documented bullying may include, but are not limited to:

- 1) recommended steps necessary to stop the bullying and/or harassing behavior,
- 2) consequences for the bully, established and documented and appropriate in relation to the incident.
- 3) a safety plan and follow-up with the targeted student
- 4) a final written report

These actions can involve multiple steps, consequences and plans. All of this will be documented in the final report.



ANTI-BULLYING CONTRACT – STUDENTS

We, the students of Kent Academy, agree to come together as a team to prevent bullying at our school. We believe that every student has the right to feel safe, secure, and accepted regardless of sexual orientation, color, race, gender, popularity, athletic ability, intelligence, religion, or nationality.

Bullying means any intentional written, electronic, verbal, or physical act against another student. Examples of bullying are:

- Placing a student in fear of substantial harm to his/her emotional or physical well-being.
- Creating a hostile, threatening, humiliating, or abusive environment due to persistent actions.
- Perpetuating bullying by soliciting or coercing an individual or group to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to another student.

Bullying causes pain and stress to victims and is never justified or excusable as “just teasing.” The victim is never responsible for being a target of bullying.

By signing this contract, we, the students, agree to:

1. Value student differences and treat others with respect.
2. Not become involved in bullying incidents or be a bully, but rather support students who have been, or are subjected to bullying.
3. Be aware of the school’s policies with regard to bullying and immediately report all incidents.
4. Talk to teachers and parents about concerns regarding bullying and work with other students and faculty to help the school stop bullying.
5. Be a good role model for younger students.

I acknowledge that whether I am being a bully or see someone being bullied, if I don’t stop or report bullying, I am just as guilty.

Printed Student Name: _____ Student Signature: _____

Print Parent/Guardian name: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____