

BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING POLICY

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

The act of Bullying is defined as any pattern of repetitive and intentional actions by one or more students aimed at causing harm or discomfort, to another student (the victim), and where there may be a perception of or an actual imbalance of power. However, a single act could be considered harassment or intimidation because of the severity of it; this includes, but is not limited to harassment based on race, color, gender, sexual orientation, birth, social, political or religious beliefs, age, and/or mental or physical functionality.

Bullying often refers to verbal, physical or other acts, committed by a student to harass, intimidate, or create harm to another student, or any combination thereof, directed at another student which:

- Physically harms a student or damages the student's property;
- Causes emotional distress to a student;
- Interferes with a student's educational opportunities;
- Creates a hostile educational environment; or
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying shall include actions motivated by an imbalance of power based on a student's actual or perceived characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs, or motivated by the student's association with another person and based on the other person's characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs.

Bullying can't be defined as interpersonal incidents or conflicts between peers in the school setting. If there is no evidence of the three main elements of the definition, namely repetitive behavior, intentionality and power imbalance actual or perceived by the victim then bullying has not occurred.

Cyberbullying means conduct defined above undertaken through the use of electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are limited to, telephone, cellular phones, computers, pagers, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, and websites.

Bullying or Cyberbullying is strictly forbidden and will not be tolerated whether it occurs on or off school premises, and in addition to school-sponsored activities or events. This type of conduct is considered a serious violation of our code of conduct, and immediate disciplinary action will be taken, not excluding suspension or expulsion from school.

INTERVENTION

1. Any member of the school community who experiences or witnesses any type of "bullying" or inappropriate behavior is to report it immediately to the student's teacher, Dean of Students, the Counselor and/or the Principal. The School will conduct a thorough and confidential investigation.
2. The student (victim), parent or guardian who becomes aware of an act of harassment and/or intimidation shall refer this concern to the Dean of Students, the Counselor and/or the Principal. The School will conduct a thorough and confidential investigation.

PROCEDURE FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF THE COMPLAINT

1. The Dean of Students and/or Principal will be responsible for leading the investigation and use resources provided by the school to lead a thorough inquiry.

- The Dean of Students and/or Principal will perform the process of interviewing potential victims, alleged perpetrators, bystanders, and witnesses. The Dean of Students and/or Principal will prepare a written report for each interview.
 - Each interview will be held separately to protect the parties involved.
2. After evaluation of the interviews, it will be important that the Dean of Students or the Principal determines whether the behavior can be defined as bullying, harassment or intimidation according to the parameters established in this protocol.
 3. Once the parties are interviewed, Dean of Students and/or Principal will notify the parent or guardian of each student involved in the situation. These will be informed that there is an ongoing investigation of an allegation of bullying, thus, documenting all steps that have been taken.
 4. The Dean of Students and/or Principal will inform all parties concerned of the decision taken. A copy of the decision will be filed in each student's case file. The school reserves the right to hand a copy of the reports and/or the investigation file to third parties, including parents of the children involved.
 5. Disciplinary measures will be taken in cases where it is concluded that an act of bullying occurred.
 6. The Dean of Students and/or Principal shall refer the case to the School Counselor to offer support services to both the offender and the victim, and if necessary, to refer to specialists. If necessary, parents will be required to present evidence of any aid of a health specialist which they have sought for their child's progress.
 7. The School Counselor shall conduct follow-up interviews with the students involved and if necessary include parents and guardians.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Students of Dorado Academy will be subject to the following disciplinary measures concerning violations of the rule and regulations regarding "Bullying", "Cyberbullying" or Harassment.

- **Step 1:** Depending on the seriousness of the case, the Dean of Students, the School Counselor and/or School Principal together with the student and his/her parents will discuss the facts involved in a confidential meeting.
- **Step 2:** The student and his/her parents will be formally advised either verbally or in writing of the charges involved and the evidence to sustain the charges.

First offense: The student will be referred for counseling and will be suspended from school for a day.

Second offense: The student will be suspended from school for about 2 – 5 days, depending on the severity of the incident. The suspension means that the student will not participate in any extracurricular activity or sport, and whatever school work, test, quiz or project he/she misses will be given a zero.

Third offense: Immediate expulsion without the right to re-apply to Dorado Academy.

Note: The School reserves the right to immediately suspend or expel the student if the offense warrants it.

NON-DISCIPLINARY INTERVENTIONS

When verified acts of bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying. Students may also be subject to other forms of restorative discipline or remedial actions, appropriate to the age of the students and the nature of the behavior.

IN ADDITION TO PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Administrators, teachers, and staff may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. Administrators, teachers and staff should intervene promptly whenever they observe mean-spirited student conduct, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “bullying”.

Important terminology:

SCHOOL CONFLICT	BULLYING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An isolated event that occurs accidentally – accidental conduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A repetitive event that occurs during an extended length of time – intentional conduct.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct not necessarily meant to harm or inflict pain – lacks a clear objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An event that is deliberate and meant to cause pain and suffering. The objective is to have control over another person through verbal or physical aggression.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict occurs between equal parties; there is an equal balance of power and/or strength. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict is power imbalanced, where one party may be weaker or less powerful than the other party/ parties involved.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict will be managed by the steps established in day-to-day conflict-solution scenarios that occur in any given school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The situation will require more specific strategies and a more aggressive approach to the solution.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is not a clear pattern of bullying by the party/parties involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The party/parties are identified in their roles and the way they have persistently carried out these – victim, perpetrator(s), and bystanders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the conflict is solved there is a positive learning experience that results in the intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the conflict is not expediently resolved, it tends to have short-term effects on the victim’s academic achievement, socialization, and overall health. When it transcends to a long-term scenario, the victim has self-esteem issues, possibly decide to desert school, contemplates suicide, delinquent behavior begins, sexual abuse, and/or threatened with weapons.