

ILH Bullying Policy

Definition of Bullying

“Bullying,” as defined in Indiana Code 20-330800.2 (a), means overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), physical acts committed, aggression, or any other behaviors, that are committed by a student or group of students against another student with intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:

- (1) Places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student’s person or property;
- (2) Has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student’s physical or mental health;
- (3) Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student’s academic performance; or
- (4) Has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school.

As is directly stated in Indiana Code 20-330800.2 (b), the term may not be interpreted to impose any burden or sanction on, or include in the definition of the term, the following:

- (1) Participating in a religious event.
- (2) Acting in an emergency involving the protection of a person or property from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or substantial danger.
- (3) Participating in an activity consisting of the exercise of a student’s rights protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article 1, Section 31 of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, or both.
- (4) Participating in an activity conducted by a nonprofit or governmental entity that provides recreation, education, training, or other care under the supervision of one (1) or more adults.
- (5) Participating in an activity undertaken at the prior written direction of the student’s parent.
- (6) Engaging in interstate or international travel from a location outside Indiana to another location outside of Indiana.

Bullying Incident Reporting

At Invent Learning Hub, bullying is strictly prohibited. This stance holds firm for each of the four categories of bullying as outlined by the Indiana Department of Education: verbal bullying, physical bullying, social/relational bullying, and electronic or written communication bullying (IC 5-2-10.1-12). Reporting, whether overt or anonymous, is welcomed and encouraged by *anyone* with the slightest suspicion that bullying is occurring. With the moral principle of nonmaleficence in mind, reporting procedures have been designed to protect the privacy and dignity of all parties involved in the incident. All members of the Invent Learning Hub leadership team are privy to the information acquired in these reports, but all reporting must go directly to Aleicha Ostler, Executive Director of Invent Learning Hub. To report an incident of bullying, the following methods may be employed depending on the reporter's comfort level and/or preference:

- (1) At each amygdala reset station, *Tell My Counselor* forms and writing utensils will be supplied. On these forms, *bullying* will be a check-box option, and lines will be provided for students to document the names of the suspected perpetrators and victims. Other check-box options will also be available for students to utilize on the form so that the user's intent is not automatically known to onlookers. These forms will be placed in Ms. Chambers' "mailbox" in the front office, which will be checked daily. Forms that pertain to bullying in any regard will immediately be given to Mrs. Ostler.
- (2) Suspected bullying can be reported via email to Mrs. Ostler at aostler@inventlearning.org. It is preferable for these emails to contain the names and/or initials and grade levels of the perpetrators and victims, as well as any details that could aid in the investigative process.
- (3) For ILH grownups who would like to report suspected bullying directly, any form of verbal and/or written communication can be expressed to any ILH staff member. The ILH staff member who receives this information will then provide Mrs. Ostler with an email that details what the grownup shared within a twelve hour time window.

Bullying Investigation Procedures

Investigations of bullying will be headed by Aleicha Ostler, Executive Director of Invent Learning Hub. At her discretion, other ILH personnel may be utilized to assist in any investigative responsibilities. Upon receiving a bullying incident report (as outlined above), a preliminary assessment will determine if the alleged incident aligns with the definition of bullying (as stated above). If it is concluded that the incident may fall under

the four categories of bullying as stipulated by the Indiana Department of Education (see above), a formal investigation will be conducted that may involve (but is not limited to) the following tasks:

- (1) Throughout the investigative process, the potential perpetrator and the victim will be kept separate as much as possible by all ILH staff members. Absolutely **no** restorative conversations will be had between the involved students so as to protect the emotional safety of the victim. The following interventions may also be utilized to further support the victim: creating a personal intervention/safety plan, adapting seating arrangements and line order placements, and adjusting staff supervision techniques.
- (2) Both students will be interviewed by Mrs. Ostler (or other designated ILH staff) to provide the students with an opportunity to speak on their own behalfs and share their perspectives. Leadership team members, school counselor(s), and/or Adult and Child personnel may be consulted, if appropriate. Other students may be interviewed as witnesses to provide further evidence and/or documentation of the alleged bullying incident. Throughout the interviewing process, all efforts will be made to maintain the confidentiality of students who serve as witnesses.
- (3) The guardians of both the alleged perpetrator and the victim will be notified of the investigative process and its results. Contact will be made by Mrs. Ostler (or whomever conducts the investigation) through the preferred medium of the guardians. This could include a phone call, dojo message, email, and/or face-to-face conversation.
- (4) Disciplinary action may be taken at the discretion of Mrs. Ostler based on the findings of the investigation. Factors such as the nature of the conduct, the age of the students, and the need for accountability will be considered when determining an appropriate disciplinary action.
- (5) Following the investigation, additional resources may be provided to the perpetrator and/or victim for the purposes of skill-building, restoration, and connectedness. These resources may be provided by (but are not limited to) the Director of Culture, Director of Academics, Director of Special Programming, Adult and Child, and/or any ILH staff member that is designated as a safe, trusted, and loved adult by the involved students. If the incidents continue beyond three instances there will be a plan created for the victim or bully to build skills. Progressive discipline will be used as appropriate which could potentially include suspension or expulsion as deemed necessary by administration.