

## POLICY PROHIBITING HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING

The Center School prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards; harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and disciplined environment. Because students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying.

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication (a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager), whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is:

a) reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or

b) by any other distinguishing characteristic; and that

c) takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and that

d) a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; or

(e) has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or

(f) creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

It is expected that students will conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities, with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities and the care of school

facilities and equipment, consistent with The Center School's expectations stated in this policy and in the school handbooks.

Students and staff are expected to behave in a way that creates a supportive learning environment. The best discipline is self-imposed, and it is the responsibility of staff to use instances of violations of the school's policies and rules and regulations as opportunities for helping students learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to prevent student conduct problems and foster students' abilities to grow in self-discipline.

It is expected that all students and staff will act in accordance with the behavioral expectations set forth in The Center School Handbooks. The Center School expects that all students and staff will refrain from becoming involved in any bullying, harassing, intimidating or threatening behaviors. "Zero tolerance" has become a school and workplace necessity and each student is being taught, and each staff member is expected to demonstrate an understanding, that any of these actions (verbal or written) bring serious consequences, no matter how inconsequential the student or staff member may believe his/her intentions to be. These behaviors will not be tolerated. Volunteers and visitors to the school are also expected to conduct themselves appropriately as described in this policy and The Center School Handbooks. All incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying will be reported to law enforcement as required by New Jersey law, including cyber bullying and threats that take place outside of school hours that are brought into school.

The Center School administrators will implement procedures that ensure both appropriate consequences and remedial responses for students and staff who engage in one or more acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying, consistent with this policy. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions are those that are graded according to the severity of the offenses, consider the developmental ages of the student offenders and students' histories of inappropriate behaviors.

Further prohibited by this policy is reprisal, retaliation or false accusation against a victim, witness, one with reliable information or any other person who has reliable information about an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying or who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the appropriate school administrator after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act in accordance with this policy and the school handbooks.