



# MACS MANATEES

MICANOPY AREA COOPERATIVE SCHOOL

*Learners Today. Leaders Tomorrow*

## STATEMENT PROHIBITING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

It is the policy of Micanopy Area Cooperative School that all of its students, school employees and volunteers have an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The school will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

### Definition of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying includes cyberbullying and means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Unwanted teasing                  | social exclusion                                    |
| Threat                            | Intimidation  |
| Stalk                             | Physical violence                                   |
| Theft                             | Sexual, religious, or racial harassment             |
| Public humiliation                | Destruction of school or victim's personal property |
| Rumor or spreading of falsehoods. |   |

*Harassment* means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

- places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property;
- has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or
- has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

*Bullying and harassment* also encompass:

Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not done in good faith is considered retaliation.

- Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying and/or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
  - incitement or coercion.
  - accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the school system; or
  - acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment.

*Cyberbullying* means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications.

## Expected Behavior from Students and Employees at MACS:

MACS expects students to conduct themselves as appropriate for 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. Students have the responsibility to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior, respect the person, property and rights of others and obey constituted authority.

MACS believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents/legal guardians, staff, and community members producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and parents, and volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate bullying or harassment.

MACS upholds that bullying or harassment of any student or school employee is prohibited:

- During any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity.
- On a school bus of a public K-12 educational institution.
- Using data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of a public K-12 education institution within the scope of the School District, meaning regardless of ownership, any computer, computer system, or computer network that is physically located on school property or at a school-related or school-sponsored program or activity.
- Through the use of data or computer software that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a School District or school, if the bullying substantially interferes with or limits the victim's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by a school or substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school; or
- The above item 4 does not require a school to staff or monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

### **Consequences for students and employee who commit acts of bullying and harassment:**

*Students:* Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

*School Employee:* Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements. Additional, egregious acts of harassment by certified educators may result in a sanction against an educator's state issued certificate, pursuant to Rule 6B-1.006, F.A.C.

*Visitor/ Volunteer/ Parent:* Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor, volunteer or parent found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment, shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

### **Consequences for students and employee who wrongfully and intentionally accuse others of Bullying or Harassment**

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another person range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee, visitor or volunteer found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another person shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

## Procedures for receiving reports of alleged bullying or harassment, including procedures for anonymous reporting.

The director or designee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the Director or the Director's designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in-person. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying or harassment will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments. Any written or oral reporting of an act of bullying or harassment shall be considered an official means of reporting such act(s). Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

*Procedures for prompt investigation of reports of bullying or harassment and the person responsible for the investigation must include:*

- The director or designee selects a designee(s), employed by the school, trained in investigative procedures to initiate the investigation. The designee(s) may not be the accused perpetrator (harasser or bully) or victim.
- Documented interviews of the victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses are conducted privately, separately, and are confidential. Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses) will be interviewed separately and at no time will the alleged perpetrator and victim be interviewed together.
- The investigator shall collect and evaluate the facts including, but not limited to:
  - Description of incident(s) including nature of the behavior, context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred, etc.;
  - How often the conduct occurred;
  - Whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior;
  - The relationship between the parties involved;
  - The characteristics of parties involved (i.e., grade, age, etc.);
  - The identity and number of individuals who participated in the incident;
  - Where the alleged incident(s) occurred;
  - Whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or educational environment;
  - Whether the alleged victim felt or perceived an imbalance of power as a result of the reported incident; and
  - The date, time, and method in which the parents/legal guardians of all parties involved were contacted.
- Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances and includes:
  - Recommended remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying or harassing behavior; and
  - A written final report to the Director.
- The maximum of 10 school days shall be the limit for the initial filing of incidents and completion of the investigative procedural steps. The highest level of confidentiality possible will be upheld regarding the submission of a complaint or a report of bullying or harassment, and the investigative procedures that follow.

## *Procedures for notifying parents/ guardians of victims and perpetrators of reported bullying and harassment.*

The Director, or designee, shall promptly report via telephone, personal conference, or in writing, the occurrence of any incident of bullying or harassment as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident(s) has been initiated.

Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and state privacy laws.

Upon receiving a report of bullying, harassment, or other qualifying incident under Section 1002.40, F.S., the school shall timely notify parents of the Hope Scholarship program, which allows students who have been bullied, harassed, or subjected to other violent acts to transfer to another public school or to enroll in an approved private school. Reported acts of bullying, harassment, or other violent incidents do not have to be substantiated in order to qualify for the Hope

Scholarship. The school shall follow all Hope Scholarship procedures in accordance with Section 1002.40, F.S., and Rule 6A-6.0951, F.A.C.

*Referral for Counseling:*

If a formal discipline report or formal complaint is made, the Director or designee will refer the student(s) to the school intervention team for determination of counseling support and interventions. (Parent or legal guardian involvement is required.)

[Procedure for Including incidents of Bullying or Harassment in Required SESIR reporting under section 1006.09\(6\), F.S.](#)

The school will utilize Florida's School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline Data. If a bullying (including cyberbullying) or harassment incident occurs it will be reported in SESIR, coded appropriately using the relevant incident code and the related element code. The sponsoring District will provide bullying incident, discipline and referral data to the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) in the format requested through Survey 2, 3, and 5 from Education Information and Accountability Services, and at a designated date provided by the Department.

[Programs that provide instruction to students, parents, and school staff on identifying, preventing, and responding to Bullying and Harassment.](#)

Micanopy Area Cooperative school strives to sustain healthy, positive, and safe learning environments for all students. It is important to change the social climate of the school and the social norms with regards to bullying or harassment. This requires the efforts of everyone in the school environment – teachers, administrators, other non-teaching staff, parents/legal guardians, and students.

Students, parents/legal guardians, teachers, school administrators, counseling staff, and school volunteers shall be given instruction at a minimum on an annual basis on the school's Policy and Regulations against bullying and harassment. Instruction shall include how to recognize behaviors that lead to bullying and harassment and how to take appropriate preventive action based on those observations.

Micanopy Area Cooperative School uses instructional programs such as, but not limited to, radKids, Positive Behavior Supports and the Habits of Happy Kids to learn how to effectively identify and respond to bullying or harassment. The instruction shall include recognizing behaviors that lead to bullying and harassment and taking appropriate preventative action based on those observations.

[Procedure for Publicizing the District's Policy](#)

Each school year, the Director or designee shall develop an annual process for discussing the school policy on bullying and harassment with students in a reasonable format. Reminders of the policy and bullying or harassment prevention messages will be provided throughout the school year.