

Palm Bay Academy

Policy Against Bullying and Harassment

In response to changes made to Florida Statute 1006.147, that became effective July 1, 2013, Palm Bay Academy has updated its policy that prohibits bullying, harassment, teen dating violence, and abuse. The policy ensures that all students, employees, and volunteers learn and work in an environment that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind.

Florida Statute 1006.147 defines bullying to include cyberbullying and means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees and may involve but is not limited to chronic teasing, social exclusion, threat, intimidation, stalking, including cyber-stalking, physical violence, theft, sexual, religious, or racial harassment, public humiliation, and destruction of property.

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, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Harassment is defined as any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or employee that: places a student or employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, benefits or has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying and harassment also encompasses 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 made in good faith is considered retaliation. Perpetuation of conduct is listed in the definition of bullying or harassment as causing 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 district school system

and/or acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment.

Cyber-stalking, as defined in Florida Statute 784.048(1)(d), means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

Florida Statute 1006.148(1)(a) prohibits dating violence and abuse by any student on school property, during a school-sponsored activity, or during school-sponsored transportation.

Palm Bay Academy is committed to providing a safe learning environment and will not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. Incidents of bullying or harassment can be reported to the principal. Anonymous reports can also be made by placing a written statement in the “Bully Box” located in the schools’ front office.

To learn more about bullying and find out what can be done to help prevent it, visit the website www.stopbullying.gov.