

# Alcuin Montessori School Honor, Bullying, and Discipline Policy



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## **Honor, Bullying, and Discipline Policy**

Alcuin Montessori promotes tolerance and acceptance throughout our school and provides a safe space as a support network for all. We will create an environment in which it is safe for people to express themselves and their individuality without consequence or judgment. We hope to both educate and cultivate an attitude towards others marked by a generosity of spirit and acceptance and welcome all students and families to our community.

This policy was approved on September 13, 2021.

### **The purpose of this policy is to:**

- (1) foster an educational environment that is safe, welcoming, and free from stigma and discrimination for all students and staff members regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
- (2) facilitate compliance with local, state and federal laws concerning bullying, harassment, privacy, and discrimination.
- (3) ensure that all students and staff members have the opportunity to safely experience and express themselves and live authentically without being bullied, harassed, or discriminated against.
- (4) implement straight-forward rules that the students will follow about bullying:
  - We will not bully others
  - We will try to help students who are bullied
  - We will make it a point to include students who are easily left out
  - If we know someone is being bullied, we will tell an adult at the school and an adult at home.
- (5) Ensure that students, parents, and guardians are engaged in this policy and active in its enforcement.

There should be no end date for bullying prevention activities. Bully prevention should be woven into the entire school community. The Alcuin Honor, Bullying and Discipline policy aligns with the other policies of the school.

### **Our Honor and Discipline System**

At Alcuin, our honor and discipline system is based on accountability and natural consequences. We pursue a goal of self-discipline for children through lessons in grace and courtesy, peace-making, and guided conflict resolution. From the Infant and Toddler program all the way up through Middle School, each teacher is committed to building upon the work done in the class before them. In Infant and Toddler, honor and discipline starts with personal responsibility, as a child learns to walk, to move, and to carry objects by themselves. Their independent exploration creates natural situations where trial and error teach them to self-correct. The Infant and Toddler teachers prepare the classrooms to allow for these instances to naturally occur. In the Primary

level, children learn cause and effect. For example, if a child runs with water and spills it, they will be asked to clean it up. They will also learn through their actions that they should not run in the classroom, therefore taking accountability. In Primary, the role of the teacher is to help the child identify a positive behavior as opposed to a negative behavior. This entails finding the solution, whether it is cleaning up a mess or apologizing for an argument with a peer.

In Elementary, children take this a step further in terms of taking accountability for their actions by having more personal responsibility with books and cubbies to care for and maintain. Children have classroom jobs to help raise awareness of the needs of the environment and taking care of their space. They also have jobs such as mediator, which is a position that facilitates and mediates peace talks.

As part of our Peace Education curriculum, which is designed to go hand-in-hand with personal accountability, the children participate in and lead a variety of team-building activities and peace talks. These activities promote community building, which, in turn, allows the children to feel more comfortable with honesty, taking responsibility for their actions, and helping hold each other to the appropriate behavioral standards. Community building and the support offered by both teachers and peers allows for mistakes to be met with support and encouragement to find the right path, as opposed to shaming and punishing.

In Senior Elementary, when tattling is less developmentally common, children are strongly encouraged to take charge of solving social disputes independently by inviting friends for peace talks or mediating peace talks for a friend without teacher involvement. The use of a peace rock (also used in lower levels) creates opportunities for each student, as well as the teacher, to have equal turns for talking and being heard. Through these methods, the teachers are furthermore fostering independence, awareness, and responsibility.

In Middle School, daily community meetings are held during which students are encouraged to bring up issues and to problem-solve as a group. Children often do the work of social negotiation independently, but when needed a teacher will facilitate conversation between students who are having a problem. The focus is always on identifying personal needs and preferences and negotiating shared social space so that everyone's needs are met, as opposed to assigning blame or punishment.

In terms of accountability, natural consequences are based directly on the specific situation. Both teacher and child work together to come up with a reasonable, logical solution to the problem at hand. The teacher guides the child's activities by limiting freedom to socialize, to work with partners, or to select an activity or work area when needed. When the child consistently shows appropriate behavior, they regain independence and freedom. When a child does not respond cooperatively to these procedures, the child is removed from the group or activity. The child may be assigned a work area, required to stay next to the teacher or, if needed, asked to visit the office

for a period of time. The teacher will call the parent to discuss supportive options when necessary.

Cyberbullying is taken just as seriously as physical bullying and will not be tolerated at any level.

### **What Constitutes Bullying**

Bullying is an intentional aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power or strength. It is often repeated over time. Bullying can be written verbal, or physical act that a student exhibits toward another particular student. This behavior causes mental or physical harm that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student. Additionally, bullying is contrary to Illinois State law and the policy of the school district within which Alcuin resides.

Please note that "Bullying" includes "cyber-bullying" and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

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

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation 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 without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyber-bullying" 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 effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. "Cyber-bullying" 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 effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of the non-sectarian nonpublic school and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this Section [free exercise of religion].

Nothing in this Section is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

Examples of bullying conduct include:

- Physical violence and/or attacks
- Threats, taunts, and intimidation through words and/or gestures
- Extortion, damage or stealing of money and/or possessions
- Exclusion from peer groups or spreading rumors
- Acts of cyberbullying:
  - o Posting slurs, gossip, or rumors on website or blogs where students congregate
  - o Sending abusive or threatening instant messages
  - o Taking embarrassing photos of students and posting them online
  - o Excluding others from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to internet service providers

Bullying and cyberbullying may also include:

- Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance;
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

### **Behavior and Discipline Procedures and Rules to Create a Safe and Welcoming School Environment**

Alcuin Montessori School pursues a goal of self-discipline for children through lessons in Grace & Courtesy, peace-making and guided respectful social communication. Teachers role play scenarios with the children, identify situations in which skills can be applied and guide the children toward the successful use of these attributes. We provide children with appropriate and enriching activities, anticipating that children who are engaged in successful work will be more likely to develop responsible behavior.

When inappropriate behavior occurs, the teacher redirects the child to engaging, appropriate activities. If a behavior persists, the teacher guides the child's activities by limiting freedom to socialize, to work with partners and/or to select an activity or work

area. When the child consistently shows appropriate behavior, he regains independence and freedom.

When a child does not respond cooperatively to these procedures, the child is removed from the group, activity, or peers. The child may be assigned a work area, required to stay next to the teacher or, if needed, asked to visit the office for a period of time. The teacher will call the parent to discuss supportive options.

If a child does not respond cooperatively to the second stage process, the staff arranges with the parents for the child to be taken home. Parents may be called to pick-up the child immediately if:

- a) the child bites another person,
- b) the child intentionally and seriously hurts another person,
- c) the child's tantrum is uncontrollable and prolonged, and/or
- d) the child persists in using inappropriate language.

Alcuin sets behavior standards and disciplinary policy based upon the principle that a person's independence and freedom are the result of responsible and self-controlled behavior. All persons and things are to be treated respectfully and courteously, and the needs and good of the whole community. Our goal is for independence with responsibility, and it is the partnership between families and administration that supports these values and makes them possible. The Executive Director of the school reserves the right to dismiss a child or family from the school at any time for any reason.

Additionally, we expect the children to follow our Behavior and Discipline Procedures and Rules:

1. Respect the people around you by:

- Accepting people for who they are and respecting differences
- Giving them personal space
- Listening when others are speaking or presenting
- Respecting their personal space and items
- Resolving conflicts in a respectful way
- Utilizing empathy in an attempt to see other perspectives

2. Respect the environment by:

- Treating the materials and classroom objects with care
- Taking seriously the job of cleaning the classroom each day
- Saving loud and rowdy behavior for appropriate times

3. Respect yourself by:

- Taking your coursework and learning seriously

- Being safe – stay with Alcuin teachers or parents unless you have made specific alternative arrangements with them
- Asking for things you need from your peers and teachers
- Abiding by the dress code, technology, behavior, and computer guidelines

### **Technology and Internet Usage**

Alcuin Montessori School uses computers to teach the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that students will need as successful and responsible members in the community and as lifelong learners. The school expects those who use the computers to do so in a way that is consistent with Alcuin Montessori School's educational mission and this policy.

Since electronic media change constantly and rapidly, as does the "netiquette" among users, this policy cannot lay down rules to cover every possible situation. Instead, this policy expresses the School's philosophy and sets forth general guidelines to be applied to all users, whether they are students, faculty/staff members, volunteers, or other guests.

Computer and internet use is encouraged for work and research purposes. Computers may be used during independent work time and as needed in class. Non-academic internet and media use are not allowed. Game download is not allowed, and any inappropriate software will be removed. Browser history must be maintained. Music must be school appropriate (no explicit lyrics or content) and only played during non-academic times.

Cyberbullying is taken just as seriously as physical bullying and will not be tolerated at any level.

Cyberbullying may also include:

- Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

In both the real world and the virtual one, common principles apply. As a Montessori school, we advocate and require concern and respect for both persons and materials. Conscientious sharing of limited resources, offering each other space and time for uninterrupted work, attention to grace and courtesy both to peers and neighbors and to those in the wider world, and a careful balancing of society's needs and rules with our personal freedoms and responsibilities are also paramount. Our expectations are the

same of the children whether on the computer or in person. Users need to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and may not abuse their privileges.

Students are expected to follow the below rules:

- Do not transmit personal information (home address or telephone number, your age or personal interests, personal photographs, credit card numbers) through email or non-secure websites.
- Any email should be written as if it were a public document that might be read by a third party: embarrassing or private emails can be forwarded or made public to others beyond the user's control.
- Report cyber bullying immediately. Do not erase any messages; they may be needed to take action against the offender. Online threats and insults intended to embarrass, harass, or terrify, even if they occur outside of school hours and off campus, have serious effects on the school community and will be treated as a significant offense.
- Prohibited software and sites: the use of sites that promote hate or violence, sites with adult content, or any other questionable material is prohibited on all school computers, without exception.
- The School has a limited amount of bandwidth for the transfer or information to and from the Internet. Unless specifically approved for a classroom project, access to streaming media (music, video, radio stations) is not permitted.
- Maintain a high standard of civility. No material containing offensive, profane, rude, inflammatory, threatening, violent, sexually explicit, harassing, abusive, or impolite language or images is to be created, viewed, or accessed. In the event that any such material is encountered accidentally, log off immediately and report the event to the classroom teacher and System Administrator.

### *Social Media*

The school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website. However, the school may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy; and, the school may require the student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

### **Dealing with Bullying: Reporting, Consequences as Rules**

The school procedures for promptly reporting bullying, including, but not limited to, identifying, and providing the school e-mail address (if applicable) and school telephone number for the staff person or persons responsible for receiving such reports and a procedure for anonymous reporting; however, this shall not be construed to permit formal disciplinary action solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The complaint manager is Gina Gleason, 708.366.1882 ext. 203 (ggleason@alcuin.org).

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the bullying policy includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing, as appropriate, the

availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. Examples of restorative measures may include: teaching students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, and teaching students to serve, build, and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities.

The bullying procedures for promptly investigating and addressing reports of bullying, including the following:

- (A) Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
- (B) Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- (C) Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- (D) Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The school interventions that can be taken to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

School will consider consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying.

The school prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying and will determine appropriate consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.

The bullying prevention and response plan is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.

The bullying policy is posted on the school's existing internet website and is included in the student handbook, and, where applicable, posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted in the school, and is distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

To assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the bullying policy, actions will include, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The non-sectarian nonpublic school may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation must be made available on the Internet website of the school. If an Internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

The bullying policy is consistent with other school policies.

Bullying prevention should not be the sole responsibility of an administrator, teacher, or any single individual at school. To be most effective, bullying prevention require rules, training, policies, and activities. Should a child witness bullying or be a victim of bullying, they should promptly report the incident(s) to a teacher, administrator, assistant. The school's main line is 708.366.1882. The executive director's email is: [ggleason@alcuin.org](mailto:ggleason@alcuin.org). And all teacher emails are first initial, lastname@alcuin.org.

Additionally:

- The school will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within ten (10) school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
- Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- Consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights and providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

Interventions include:

- school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

Additionally:

- we will prohibit reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying and the consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.
- we will instill consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying.

Finally, should the victim of bullying require counseling, support services, or other programs, we will provide them with a list of resources in the area.

### **To Reduce Bullying**

To reduce bullying, it is important to change the climate and social norms of the school. It must become “uncool” to bully, “cool” to help students who are bullied, and normative for staff and students to notice when a child is bullied or left out. This requires the efforts of everyone the school environment---teachers, administrators, support and enrichment staff, as well as parents and students.

In-service training can help staff better understand the nature of bullying and its effects, how to respond if they observe bullying, and how to work with others at the school to help prevent bullying from occurring.

It is important to make clear that the school not only expects students not to bully, but we also expect them to be good citizens and not passive bystanders if they witness bullying. **Violations will be taken seriously.**

*Data used from the parent satisfaction survey, and the middle school survey, will be used in policy evaluation and necessary changes will be made accordingly.*

*The bullying policy is consistent with other school policies.*