



## Bullying and Prohibited Behavior Policy

### California Online Public Schools

California Online Public Schools non-profit Board of Directors operates the following charter schools to which this policy applies:

California Online Public Schools Central Coast  
California Online Public Schools Central Valley  
California Online Public Schools Monterey Bay  
California Online Public Schools North Bay  
California Online Public Schools Northern California  
California Online Public Schools Southern California

---

Approved by CalOPS Board September 10, 2024

Approved by CalOPS Board September 9, 2025

---

### Bullying and Prohibited Behaviors

California Online Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all its students, and encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations among members of the school community. The Nondiscrimination Statement and Title IX Policy for California Online Public Schools can be found in the Student and Family Policy Catalog and on the school's website.

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing toward any member of the school community, whether by or toward any student, staff, Caretaker, or other third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Examples of such prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, stalking, bullying/cyber bullying, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior; physical, verbal, and psychological abuse; and violence within a dating relationship. These types of behavior are forms of intimidation and harassment and are strictly prohibited, regardless of whether the target of the prohibited behavior are members of a legally protected group, such as, but not limited to, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, national origin, parenting or marital status, immigration status, disability or any other category protected by state or federal law.

The following definitions are intended to provide guidance in assessing whether a particular behavior is a prohibited behavior. They are not exhaustive in their scope and are not intended to replace the intuition of the individual. When in doubt as to whether a particular suspected behavior is a prohibited behavior, you are urged to rule on the side of caution and report your concerns to the appropriate authority, as provided for in this policy.

**Harassment** - any intentional behavior or course of conduct (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) directed at a specific person or group of persons that causes substantial physical and/or emotional distress or harm and is sufficiently severe, persistent, and/or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, and/or abusive educational environment for other person(s) and serves no legitimate purpose.

**Bullying** – a course of abusive treatment (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) that typically involves the use of force or coercion to affect others, particularly when habitual and involving an imbalance of power. It may involve verbal, written or cyber harassment, physical assault or coercion and may be directed persistently towards particular victims.

**Cyber-bullying** – the use of information and communication technologies, such as, but not limited to, cell phone, email, instant messaging, social media websites, Twitter, etc., to support deliberate and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that (i) is intended to harm others or (ii) that an objectively reasonable person would expect to cause harm to others. Cyber-bullying includes the posting or other transmission of text, video, or images that are embarrassing, demeaning, or threatening in nature, regardless of whether the subject of such text, video, or images directed, consented to or otherwise acquiesced in the at issue posting or other transmission.

Possible forums for social media bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Internet websites with free registration and ease of registration.
- Internet websites offering comment forums or sections.
- Internet website offering peer-to-peer instant messaging.
- Internet websites offering image or video posting platforms.

**Hazing** – the use of ritual and other activities involving harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying, intimidation, abuse, or humiliation for the purpose of initiating a person or persons into a group, regardless of whether such person(s) consented to or otherwise acquiesced in the at issue behavior(s) and action(s).

**Intimidation** – a course of behavior that instills fear or a sense of inadequacy.

**Violence within a dating relationship** - any behavior by a student exhibited towards that student's dating partner that is an attempt to gain and/or maintain power and/or control over a dating partner through violence, threats of violence, and/or physical, verbal, psychological, and/or mental abuse.

**Sexting** - knowingly using a computer, or any other device capable of electronic data transmission or distribution, to transmit or distribute to another person any photograph or video which depicts nudity and/or text message that is sexually explicit and/or is harmful to minors. Knowingly possessing a photograph or video that was transmitted or distributed by another person as described above.

**Sexual Harassment** – (as defined by Title IX regulations) conduct on the basis of sex that may be one or more of the following:

1. An employee of CalOPS conditioning the provision of aid, benefit, or service of the school on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (commonly referred to as quid pro quo).
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's education program or activity.
3. Sexual assault means an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the FBI.
4. Dating violence means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of these factors: the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
5. Stalking means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.

**Prohibited behaviors** include all the above.

The School Administration and School Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which (i) cause, threaten to cause, or an objective and reasoned third-party would find was intended to cause, bodily harm or personal degradation, or (ii) creates, or an objective and reasoned third-party would determine was intended to create, an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for any student, staff member, member of the administration, Caretaker, or other third-party.

This Policy applies to all school-related activities and/or engagements, including, but not limited to, online school-related activities such as LiveLesson sessions, participation in clubs and activities, email messages, text



messages, discussions, telephonic communications, and in-person activities, such as state testing, field trips, open houses, and any other in-person school-related activities on school property.

This Policy also applies to those activities or engagements which occur off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or events where students are under the school's control, in a school vehicle, where an employee is engaged in school business, or where the prohibited behavior is facilitated using any school property or resources.

Any student or student's Caretaker who believes that a student, any other student, or other third-party, has been or is the recipient of any of the above-described prohibited behaviors should immediately report the situation by using the Uniform Complaint Procedure found here:

### CalOPS - [California Online Public Schools Uniform Complaint Procedures](#)

When the target of the prohibited behavior is a student, the School shall provide that student with a written copy of the rights, protections, and support services available to them. If there is any evidence that the student has experienced physical harm as a result of the prohibited behavior, the School shall promptly communicate that information to the appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to, emergency personnel and /or law enforcement.

If the investigation finds an instance of harassment, intimidation, bullying/cyberbullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action in accordance with the School's disciplinary process. This may include up to expulsion for students; up to discharge for employees; exclusion for Caretakers, guests, volunteers, and contractors; and removal from any official position and/or a request for a Board member(s) to resign. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for employees will follow the procedures outlined in the Employee Handbook. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for students will follow the procedures outlined in the Student and Family Policy Catalog.

When appropriate, the target(s) of the prohibited behavior (and/or such target(s') Caretaker(s)) shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and, when appropriate, that action has been taken. In providing such notification, care shall be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the accused perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation, bullying/cyberbullying, and/or dating violence.

If, after investigation, the act(s) of prohibited behavior by a specific student is/are verified, the Superintendent or appropriate administrator shall notify in writing the Caretaker of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in the notification.

**Retaliation** against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of harassment, intimidation, bullying/cyberbullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior will not be tolerated, independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of school policy, and suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as prohibited behavior. Making intentionally false reports about prohibited behavior will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

This Policy shall not be interpreted as infringing upon the First Amendment rights of students (i.e., to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is conducted at appropriate times and places during the school day and is protected by state or federal law).

## Complaints

Students and/or their Caretakers may file formal written reports regarding any suspected prohibited behavior by following the Uniform Complaint Procedures available on the school website. Such reports should be reasonably



specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected prohibited behavior(s), and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports shall be promptly forwarded to the designated person for review, investigation, and action.

Students and/or their Caretakers may make informal complaints of conduct that they consider to be prohibited behavior(s) by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who received an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing.

This written report shall be promptly forwarded by the school staff member and/or administrator to the Superintendent or designee for review, investigation, and appropriate action.

### **Privacy/Confidentiality**

The school will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the School's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

