
**POLICY: Behavior Management (approved by the board
9/22/2025; revised, updated, and approved 9/22/2025)**
SUBJECT: Bullying Policy

One Hope United (OHU) operates CARE therapeutic day school/Banner Northlake in Lake Villa. Utilizing restorative and trauma-informed practices, the **school embraces and enforces a no-bullying policy contrary to Illinois State law and the policy of One Hope United/Banner Northlake**. The immersion in a positive and supportive culture, combined with dynamic programming, creates a difference for a student looking for a place to belong. Developing academic, social, and emotional growth in a structured environment allows youth to achieve their highest potential. The school's limited enrollment enables small student-to-staff ratios, allowing for targeted differentiated goals and individualized programs that enable each student to overcome personal obstacles and differences.

Bullying, which shall be defined as physical or verbal conduct by one or more students, which serves to harass, demean, humiliate, abuse, victimize, deny, or exclude one or more students of CARE/Banner Northlake, or any student from another school district, from or in connection with the pursuit of, participation in, and enjoyment of any program or activity, including academic and nonacademic classes and extracurricular activities, offered or sponsored by One Hope United/Banner Northlake. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, direct behaviors (e.g., teasing, taunting, intimidating, threatening, name-calling, ridiculing, belittling, extorting, hitting, physical attacks, and violence) and indirect behaviors (e.g., spreading rumors, causing social or psychological isolation).

Bullying behavior will not be tolerated at CARE Therapeutic Day School/Banner Northlake. Bullying is defined as any behavior that harms others physically, emotionally, or socially and urges others to engage in such conduct. A person is bullied or victimized when repeatedly exposed to negative actions by one or more persons.

Employees shall intervene when they observe students engaging in such behaviors and are encouraged to take steps to either prevent such behavior from occurring or terminate it if it is already transpiring between and among students.

Prohibited bullying behavior includes but is not limited to direct behaviors (e.g., teasing, taunting, intimidating, threatening, name-calling, ridiculing, belittling, extorting, hitting, physical attacks, and violence) and indirect behaviors (e.g., spreading rumors, causing social or psychological isolation). Any student violating this policy shall be subject to appropriate discipline in accordance with the school's discipline guidelines.

CARE/Banner Northlake implements a campus-wide bullying prevention program to support a positive and supportive environment for students to grow and learn. **It is against State law to bully. In accordance with Illinois State Board of Education requirements (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7) and in collaboration with all partnering districts, CARE/Banner Northlake enforces a no-bullying policy. As seen in 105 ILCS 5/27 – 23.7: *Bullying is against State Law. No person, including an employee, or student, shall harass, intimidate, or bully a student based on actual or perceived: race; color; nationality; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity; gender-related identity or expression; ancestry; age; religion; physical or mental disability; order of protection status; association with a person or group with one or more of those above actual or perceived characteristics; or any other distinguishing feature.* Details of the program and school interventions are detailed in the policy below.**

Our goals at CARE/Banner Northlake are aligned with those of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program®, a widely recognized school intervention program. Our shared goals are to:

- Reduce existing bully/victim problems among schoolchildren
- Prevent the development of new bully/victim problems
- Improve peer relations
- Enhance the overall school climate
- Highlight the connection between the individual, the classroom, the residential, and the entire community

The elements of our program include:

- Awareness and prevention of bullying through highly engaging programmatic activities
- Weekly student award is given to the Community Compassion Champion
- Weekly dorm and monthly classroom meetings
- Creation of school rules against bullying
- Direct teaching and modeling bullying prevention
- Continued program enhancement through steering committee meetings

The Problem with Bullying

We must foster a safe and caring environment so our students can grow and develop as individuals. Bullying has no place at our school, which is why CARE/Banner Northlake has developed a community-wide bullying prevention program.

At CARE/Banner Northlake, we realize that many of our students have had histories involving bullying. Research shows that students with exceptional needs are more likely to be bullied than other students. Furthermore, once a child has been a victim of bullying, they are more likely to bully in return. The consequences of being bullied are long-lasting and can include the following:

- Lower self-esteem
- Higher rates of depression
- Increased anxiety

If left unchecked, the cycle of bullying will continue. However, an appropriate bullying intervention can change these destructive behaviors and consequences.

What is Bullying?

"A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself." (Owleus, 2008)

More specifically, Bullying is defined as 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 student's person or property; 2) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or student's physical or mental health; 3) Substantially interfering with the student's or student's academic performance; or 4) Substantially interfering with the student's or student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying includes three essential components:

- Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
- Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
- Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength. (Owleus, 2008)

Notably, 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.

Students Who Bully

- Students who bully have vital power needs and (negative) dominance.
- Students who bully find satisfaction in causing injury and suffering to other students.
- Students who bully are often rewarded for their behavior with material or psychological rewards. (Owleus, 2008)

Behind the Bullying:

Some Students Bully ...

- To conceal shame or anxiety
- To boost self-esteem
- Mistaking others' actions as hostile
- Concern with preserving self-image
- Engaging in obsessive or rigid actions (Hazler, 1997)

Some Students Bully Because...

- They have been isolated
- They have a deep need for belonging
- They do not possess the social skills to keep friends (Williams, 2005) effectively

It's About Power

Students bully to...

- Get even
- Assert dominance
- Protect territory
- Define roles

What Bullying Looks Like:

- Planned and Unprovoked insult and disrespect. (Provocation may come from different stimuli and appear as bullying.)
- Intent to harm, humiliate, and debase others.
- Mob mentality towards one student or another faction of students.
- Low-grade, constant teasing in front of or at a distance from the victim.
- Attacking others for personal attributes (family, physical attributes, financial status, etc.)
- Targeting a specific student the bully views as inferior/superior to them.
- Backhanded compliments.
- Consistent attempts to get the victim in trouble (tattling to extreme amounts, setting them up, manipulating the relationship).

What Bullying Doesn't Look Like:

- Anger Outbursts
- Provoked argument that does not consistently target one student
- Anger that does not persist toward another due to specific acts

- A singular event
- Random events
- Limited to the dynamics of size and presence (The big guys aren't always the bullies)

How Do We Respond?

- Consistent and accurate labeling
- Firm, consistent limit setting
- Nurturance for the underlying reasons for bullying
- Helping victims find an agency
- Empowering bullies to use new tools to express their needs
- Fostering peaceful dialogue between the bully and the victim

Developing Student Awareness

We believe student awareness of bullying problems is the first step in transformation. As a result, we teach our students the cycle of bullying by identifying bullying roles.

Furthermore, the School Rules Against Bullying are posted in all classrooms, dorms, and the depot. When each student enrolls, the rules are reviewed.

They include:

- We will treat all students with dignity and respect
- We will show respect even if we disagree and offer options instead of just opinions
- We will not bully others
- We will help students who are bullied
- We will include other students in conversations, activities, and relationships who are easily left out
- When we know someone is being bullied, we will tell a member of the staff

CARE/Banner Northlake School Bullying Prevention Mission Statement

Through proactive education and programming, our mission is to create and support a community that recognizes how and why bullying happens, knows how to prevent and defend against bullying, and celebrates those who work to be champions for inclusion and against bullying in our community.

Ongoing Intervention and Teaching

For many of our students, it takes continual dialogue and intervention to break the cycle of bullying. The residential and class meetings are critical components of the process. Some of the themes discussed include:

- How we affect each other
- Living with others
- Including others
- Listening
- Giving feedback – formal & informal – offhand comments
- Accepting feedback
- Assertive communication
- Blaming
- Boundaries
- Personal Responsibility
- Community

One student will win the Community Leadership Award each week during the Friday Community Meeting. The student body and staff vote to select the Community Compassion Champion. To win the award, students are asked to engage in the following positive practices:

- Use words to build people up
- End rumors
- Be a team player
- Ask others to join activities
- Offer to help students who are left out or bullied

Students who join the Leadership Team by winning the Community Leadership Award are recognized by:

- Receiving student and staff feedback about their behaviors during the meeting
- Given a t-shirt and a certificate
- Parents are notified when their son wins the award

Making a Complaint: Enforcement

Students are encouraged to promptly report claims or incidences of bullying, harassment, or other prohibited conduct to the Teacher, Counselor, Academic Coordinator, Residential Coordinator, or Principal.

The principal will use reasonable measures to inform staff members and students of this policy, such as by including it in the appropriate handbooks and posting it at the school.

Investigation

Upon receiving a report of bullying or harassment, the School will investigate the allegations of such a report. The School will promptly notify the parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident(s) of bullying and harassment and will advise the parents or guardians of the students involved of the resources available to them, including the option to involve their treating therapist and administrative contact.

The School will make all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within ten days after the report of the incident of bullying or harassment is received, taking into consideration additional relevant information obtained during the course of the inquiry concerning the reported incident.

Through its investigation, the School will involve appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying investigation as deemed appropriate.

The School will also make information concerning the status of the investigation available to the **parents of all students** involved in such an investigation. The parents or guardians of the students involved shall have the opportunity to meet with the Principal or administrator to discuss the investigation, any findings resulting from the investigation, and any actions taken to address the reported bullying or harassment.

Eric Carlton, Director, ecarlton@bannerlearning.org, (773) 934-2328

Victim Services

Victim(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s) of bullying will receive counseling and support services facilitated by trained and certified school/organizational staff.

Findings

Any School employee or staff member determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in conduct prohibited by this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Any student determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in conduct prohibited by this policy will be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the discipline policy.

Any person making a knowingly false accusation regarding prohibited conduct will likewise be subject to disciplinary action.

Evaluation of Policy

The School will review the bullying policy annually to determine if changes need to be made. The School will make any necessary revisions to this policy as it deems appropriate.

The policy evaluation process to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy includes, but is not limited to, the following factors:

- 1) The frequency of victimization.
- 2) Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school.
- 3) Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs.
- 4) The types of bullying that are common or occurring.
- 5) Bystander intervention or participation.
- 6) All stakeholder groups (i.e., students, parents, school staff, and One Hope United/Banner Northlake staff participated in the annual review and revision of the policy.)**
- 7) The information developed as part of the evaluation process is posted on the One Hope United/Banner Northlake website. The data is also provided to school administrators, board members, personnel, parents, guardians, and students. Finally, the Bullying Policy is posted in each classroom, as well as in the Student Handbook and the Parent Handbook.**

Approved by Eric Carlton Date September 22, 2025

The policy was revised on 09/19/2025 and approved on 09/22/2025.

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