

Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Harassment Prevention

All ALCS community members are forbidden from bullying, cyber bullying, harassing, or falsely accusing another ALCS community member of bullying or harassment. Furthermore, all school personnel are required to report any incidents of bullying or harassment to the Director. Any student found bullying, harassing, or falsely accusing someone of bullying or harassment is subject to the bullying and harassment discipline policy. Any school personnel found bullying, harassing, or falsely accusing someone of bullying or harassment is subject to the “Bullying and Other Unlawful Harassment” policy that is printed in the Employee Handbook.

Definition

“Bullying” is clearly defined by New Mexico Administrative Code [6.12.7.7 Sec. A] as ... “any repeated and pervasive written, verbal or electronic expression, physical act or gesture, or a pattern thereof, that is intended to cause distress upon one or more [ALCS community members] in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at school activities or sanctioned events. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, hazing, harassment, intimidation or menacing acts of an [ALCS community member] which may, but need not be based on the [individual’s] race, color, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation.”

“Cyber bullying” is **bullying** that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Examples of cyber bullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

“Harassment” is a crime in New Mexico, and its elements are defined in the New Mexico Criminal Code. Conduct meeting that definition of harassment will be reported to the local authorities. Conduct not meeting that definition, but otherwise offensive to ALCS mores, is considered to have occurred when conduct:

1. has the intent or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment,
2. has the intent or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student’s academic performance, or otherwise adversely affects any ALCS community member’s opportunities.

If a member of the ALCS community experiences or witnesses bullying, cyber bullying or harassment at Aldo Leopold Charter School, the event should be reported immediately to the Director. If the Director is unavailable or it is believed that the Director would not be the appropriate person to contact, the report should be made to the Chair of the Governing Council or, if he or she is unavailable, his or her designee. Legitimate concerns and reports can be made without fear of reprisal or retaliation. All allegations of bullying, cyber bullying or harassment will be quickly and discretely investigated. To the extent possible, confidentiality of the reporter, any witnesses, and the alleged harasser will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. When the investigation is completed, those involved in the bullying,

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cyber bullying or harassment event will be informed of the outcome of the investigation as deemed pertinent and will be bound by appropriate confidentiality practices outlined in New Mexico Administrative Code and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Any supervisor, faculty member, or other staff member who becomes aware of possible bullying or other harassment must immediately advise the Director or any other designated staff or the Governing Council Chair so it can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner. Anyone engaging in bullying, cyber bullying or other harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination or expulsion.

If any party disagrees with the outcome of the investigation, a grievance may be filed according to the ALCS Grievance Policy. Any student who is found bullying, cyber bullying, harassing or falsely accusing another ALCS community member of any bullying or harassment is subject to school discipline. Discipline may result in any one or a combination of the following, as prudent and appropriate based on the severity of the infraction:

- • Communication with student's parents
- • Verbal warning to student with possible behavior contract (for minor and non-illegal acts of bullying)
- • Restorative Practices
- • Suspension or Expulsion from school
- • Other in-school consequences deemed appropriate and necessary by school Director