

SIGNATURE SCHOOL, INC. ANTI-BULLYING POLICY/POLICY PROHIBITING BULLYING 2024-2025

Signature School, Inc. (hereinafter “Signature School”) takes a proactive stance in creating a safe learning environment for all of our students. Respect, tolerance, and an appreciation of diversity are embedded in our curriculum and in our school climate. Incoming new students undergo an orientation during which they learn Signature School’s expectations for treating others with respect. Signature School has incorporated character education into its curriculum with a Resource block, an AP Seminar, and through the International Baccalaureate Programme.

In cases where Signature School administrators, faculty and staff have knowledge that this policy is being violated, they will take appropriate action to prevent such misconduct. The administration, faculty and staff are committed to providing a safe environment for all Signature School students and they will take action proportionate to the facts and seriousness of the offense, as determined by Signature School, in response to any known instance of bullying.

Bullying Prevention/Education / Parental Involvement and Intervention

- Signature School’s Anti-Bullying Committee is a subcommittee of Signature School Safety Committee. This committee revises and updates the Policy Prohibiting Bullying.
- In-service training and professional development opportunities are provided to the staff to make them aware of the characteristics of bullying and to enhance the staff’s understanding of bullying.
- Signature School conducts meetings to explain to students what behaviors constitute bullying, and the School’s no-tolerance policy for bullying.
- Signature School’s rules and guidelines concerning bullying are discussed in an all-school meeting. Students are informed of Signature School’s expectations for behavior and range of discipline administered to students who violate this policy. Copies of Signature School rules and guidelines, including the anti-bullying policy are sent home with students. Parents and students are required to sign a receipt to confirm that they have received, read, and understand these documents. Signed receipts are kept on file in the office.

I. Indiana Code

IC 20-33-8-0.2

Indiana law defines “bullying” as overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), physical acts committed, aggression, or other behaviors, that are committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:

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

Bullying is verbal, emotional, or physical behavior intentionally directed toward others that is meant to be detrimental to their mental and physical well-being.

Examples of bullying behaviors include, but are not limited to:

1. **Verbal/Written:** name calling, teasing, taunting, racist or bigoted remarks, insults, sexual remarks, electronic comments, visual images and audio recordings
2. **Emotional:** intimidating, humiliating, excluding, and threatening
3. **Physical:** pushing, shoving, hitting, tripping, kicking, inappropriate touching, and any other hurtful behavior

II. Procedures for Reporting Bullying

- A. Students and Signature School employees (full-time, part-time, and temporary) must report suspected and observed bullying to any teacher, the Academic Services Advisors, or the Executive Director.
- B. Bullying that is either suspected or observed by parents, guardians and others not employed by Signature School may be reported to any Signature School teacher, the Academic Services Advisors, or the Executive Director.
- C. Parents, guardians and others not employed by Signature School may report suspected or observed bullying in-person, by e-mail, by letter or by phone. Thereafter, Signature School may request the reporting person to meet with school investigators to provide evidence of the suspected or observed bullying. The reporting person may be asked to bring to this meeting any documents, hard copy of visual images, e-mail, texts and other electronically transmitted information that supports the observed or suspected bullying.
- D. Reports of observed or suspected bullying may be made anonymously if transmitted electronically, by telephone or by letter, delivered to Signature School by the United States Post Office. Written communication must be provided to the "Executive Director" or the "Academic Services Advisors" and addressed to Signature School at: 610 Main St., Evansville, IN 47708.

An anonymous report of bullying is likely to be more difficult to investigate by Signature School officials because this method of reporting prevents school officials from obtaining additional information from the reporter.

- E. Signature School recognizes the importance of taking prompt and appropriate action to separate a targeted student from the alleged bully. Any such measures will be based on information obtained and may be implemented on an interim basis.
- F. Once a report of bullying has been received by a teacher, the Academic Services Advisors or the Executive Director will notify the parents or guardian of both the allegedly targeted student and the alleged bully in an expedited manner that in not less than five weekdays after the bullying incident report is received.
- G. If counseling is requested by a student who complains of bullying or by their parent/guardian, when counseling is deemed appropriate by the Executive Director, a request for such counseling will be made to the school's Youth First Counselor no later than three school days after the date of the request.
- H. Reports of bullying will be made by Signature School's Executive Director to law enforcement no later than one weekday after the day a determination has been made that such a report is necessary.
- I. Teachers, school staff and administrators who, after being instructed to do so, fail to initiate or conduct an investigation of an alleged bullying incident reported to them will be disciplined in a manner proportionate to the seriousness of the infraction, as determined by Signature School. No such discipline will be issued without Signature School first conducting appropriate procedures to ensure the employee's rights are observed.
- J. False reports of bullying will not be tolerated. Students who engage in such misconduct may be disciplined in a manner proportionate to the facts and seriousness of the offense, as determined by Signature School.
- K. Consequences for bullying and false reports of bullying, may include, but are not limited to any combination of:
 - 1. Teacher/student conference.
 - 2. Parent conference with Executive Director or her designee.
 - 3. Suspension.
 - 4. Expulsion.
 - 5. Follow-up conference to determine that the situation has been resolved.
 - 6. Meeting with counselor.
 - 7. Bullying education for the bullying student.
- L. Signature School's disciplinary rules and this policy permit the parent or guardian of a student to review any materials used in bullying prevention or suicide prevention programs. A parent or guardian who wishes to do so shall first make an appointment with either the Academic Services Advisors or the Executive Director to meet at school at a mutually agreed-upon date and time during the normal school day (8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.). The official notified shall confirm the date and time of this meeting by sending the parent or guardian a confirming text or email at an address provided by the parent or guardian.

M. This policy may be applied:

1. Regardless of the physical location in which the bullying behavior occurred, whenever:
 - (a) the individual committing the bullying behavior and any of the intended targets of the bullying behavior are students attending Signature School; and
 - (b) disciplinary action is reasonably necessary to avoid substantial interference with school discipline or prevent an unreasonable threat to the rights of others to a safe and peaceful learning environment.

N. This policy also prohibits bullying through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through, but not limited to, a:

1. computer;
2. computer system;
3. computer network;
4. cellular telephone or other wireless communication device; or
5. through the use of artificial intelligence tools that manipulate visual images and audio (that which may be heard). For example, in instances of bullying, the use of deepfake technology is strictly prohibited. Artificial intelligence may not be used to manipulate images, vocalization, and other digital content to make the false appear real. When appropriate, a deepfake or reface may be reported to law enforcement officials by the Executive Director or the Academic Services Advisors.

Policy Prohibiting Bullying: Approved by Signature School Board of Directors: June 6, 2024