



Harassment Policy

It is the policy of Wesley College Preparatory School to maintain a learning and community environment that is free from harassment or discrimination because of a person's race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, or gender identity. It is a violation of this policy for any student, faculty member, employee or administrator to discriminate against or harass any member of the School community. It is also a violation of this policy for any faculty member, employee or administrator to tolerate sexual harassment or harassment based on the race, color, national origin, religion, disability, genetic information, sexual preference or gender identity of any member of the School community.

It is important to bear in mind that stricter standards of behavior than those provided by law may apply under the Wesley College Preparatory School's policies in order that we may prevent conduct which we deem to be inappropriate. Wesley College Preparatory School also reserves the right to take corrective action in a case of a single expression, act or gesture, if it determines that it is of sufficient severity to warrant disciplinary measures or other remedial action. Conduct need not meet the legal definitions of harassment, discrimination, hazing or bullying to violate the School's expectations for appropriate behavior.

Definitions

Harassment, discrimination, hazing and bullying (including cyberbullying) are serious offenses and will not be tolerated by Wesley College Preparatory School. Verbal, physical or electronic conduct that has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for any member of the school community is prohibited and will not be tolerated. This conduct is prohibited on school grounds and at school sponsored events, activities, functions and programs. This conduct is also prohibited on school buses and other vehicles owned, leased or used by the School, and through use of any technology or any electronic device. See "Technology Acceptable Use" Policy, section "Social Media, Websites, Apps and Wesley College Preparatory School". In addition, harassment, discrimination, hazing and bullying which occur at locations and activities which are not School related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned by the School is prohibited if the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for any member of the School community or impugns the reputation of the School. Through education and intervention, Wesley College Preparatory School makes every effort to achieve an educational environment which is free from harassment, discrimination, hazing and bullying.

Harassment or Discrimination:

Harassment or discrimination is defined as behavior that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the purpose or effect of:

- creating an intimidating, hostile, threatening or abusive environment;
- interfering unreasonably with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or school activity;



- creating a situation where academic decisions regarding a student depend on his or her submitting to and/or not objecting to the behavior.

Discrimination and harassment can take many forms. Examples include:

- limiting opportunities to participate in certain clubs, teams or activities based on certain characteristics or non-programmatic criteria;
- slurs, jokes, statements, remarks, questions, gestures, pictures, e-mails, texts or cartoons regarding legally protected status that are derogatory or demeaning to an individual's or group's characteristics or that promote stereotypes;
- demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment, academic rewards or continued participation in a program or project;
- offensive or unwelcome sexual flirtation, advances or touching;
- obscene, demeaning or abusive commentary about an individual's body or other personal characteristics;
- responding to refusals to provide sexual favors with verbal, emotional or physical abuse.

Hazing:

Hazing is defined as any action which recklessly or intentionally endangers the health or safety of a person for the purpose of initiation, admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a student organization. Examples of hazing include, but are not limited to:

- requiring indecent exposure of the body;
- requiring any activity that would subject the person to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation or extended isolation from social contact;
- confinement of the person to unreasonably small, unventilated, unsanitary or unlighted areas;
- any assault upon the person;
- requiring the ingestion of any substance or any other physical activity which could adversely affect the health or safety of the individual.

All student activities related to membership in a student group or team (such as new membership and elections) must comply with applicable School rules and community standards. Officers and members in any student organization, team or group are also responsible for making sure that hazing does not occur.

Bullying:

Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;



- creates a hostile environment for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target;
- materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying can include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- hitting, slapping, pushing and other physical conduct that causes bodily harm;
- threatening in a manner that puts someone down or is cruel or in an aggressive manner;
- spreading hurtful rumors about another person;
- embarrassing or threatening to embarrass another person;
- deliberately excluding someone as a way to humiliate or demean them;
- sexually harassing conduct;
- hazing activities.

Cyberbullying:

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers and the internet. It includes, but is not limited to:

- e-mail
- instant messages
- text messages
- internet postings, whether on a webpage, social media, a blog or otherwise.

Cyberbullying may include, but is not limited to, any of the following kinds of behaviors:

- taking a private e-mail, instant message or text message and forwarding it, or threatening to forward it to others or posting it where others can see it to embarrass or intimidate a person;
- spreading hurtful rumors online about another person;
- threatening or insulting through aggressive e-mails, social media, instant messages or text messages;
- posting or threatening to post embarrassing pictures of someone online without his or her permission;
- creating a Web page or blog 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 causes any of the conditions listed in the definition of bullying listed above.

Retaliation:

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a student or adult who reports discrimination, harassment, hazing or bullying; provides information during an investigation of such behavior; or who witnesses or has reliable information about such behavior.



Retaliation against any individual for reporting violations of the policy, whether by the object of the complaint or someone else, will not be tolerated and will be subject to the same strict discipline as harassment, discrimination, hazing or bullying itself. Each retaliatory offense will be investigated and sanctioned separately. Individuals who themselves are not complainants, but who participate in an investigation, for example, as witnesses, will also be protected from retaliation under this policy.

Reporting Complaints

Any Wesley College Preparatory School community member who believes he or she has been hazed, harassed, or bullied, who has witnessed such an incident or who otherwise has relevant information about such an incident, should bring the matter immediately to the dean of students. The individual receiving the complaint is required to ensure that it reaches the proper channels for investigation. Also, any community member who is subject to retaliation in violation of this policy or who knows of another person who has been subject to retaliation is likewise required to promptly report it.

A parent of a student who is the target of discrimination, harassment, hazing or bullying of a student who has witnessed or otherwise has relevant information about such behaviors is strongly urged to promptly notify the dean of students or the school counselor. Furthermore, any parent who has him or herself witnessed discrimination, harassment, hazing or bullying or who has relevant information concerning such an incident is strongly urged to promptly come forward to the dean of students. A parent should also promptly report any incident of retaliation to the dean of students.

Any member of the faculty or staff who witnesses or otherwise becomes aware of discrimination, harassment, hazing or bullying in violation of this policy, or who becomes aware of retaliation against anyone who provides information concerning a violation of this policy is required to report it immediately to the dean of students. A member of the faculty or staff may not make promises of confidentiality to a student, parent or anyone else who informs him/her of an allegation of harassment, discrimination, hazing, bullying or retaliation.

Anonymous Reports

Members of the faculty and staff may not make reports under this policy anonymously. Students and parents may make reports anonymously, but generally no disciplinary action will be taken based solely on an anonymous report. Although there are circumstances in which an anonymous report can be better than none at all, it is far more difficult to determine the facts of what occurred if complaints are made anonymously. Also, while the School cannot promise strict confidentiality, because information must be shared in order to conduct an effective investigation, the School releases information concerning complaints of harassment, discrimination, hazing, bullying and retaliation only on a need-to-know basis, as needed to conduct a comprehensive and effective investigation or to ensure that the requirements of this policy and applicable law are met.



Investigation Process

Once a complaint or notice of a complaint has been made, the matter will be referred to the principal and dean of students to make a decision as to whether the matter should be handled formally or informally.

In situations for which an **informal process is appropriate**:

- The matter will be referred to the principal and dean of students who may provide advice to the complainant or an adult representing the complainant as to how to respond to the situation on his/her own.
- Alternatively, the principal and dean of students may obtain support to moderate a conversation, in person or writing, between the student and the person perceived as the harasser.
- Such facilitation may be conducted by the principal and dean of students, the school counselor or other appropriate individual.

In the event **formal action is required**:

- The matter will be assigned to the principal and dean of students for investigation.
- Such an investigation may include, but is not limited to, interviews of those individuals directly involved in the incident and any potential witnesses, and collecting documents and any other evidence bearing on the incident.
- At this time an outside investigator may be retained by the School. In all cases, investigator(s) will at all times during the process maintain confidentiality to the extent, in their judgment, the situation permits.
- All members of the School community are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation under this policy. *Failure to cooperate* on the part of a student may result in him or her being temporarily or permanently removed from campus at the sole discretion of the principal.
- Upon completion of its investigation, the investigator(s) will submit a written report recording the facts developed and summarizing the findings and recommendations to the principal who will determine what, if any, remedial action or disciplinary measures should be initiated.
- Upon the implementation of appropriate remedial measures, the principal or dean of students, will inform individuals directly involved of the outcome of the investigation and whether action has or will be taken. In addition, the principal or dean of students will provide documentation as appropriate for inclusion in the student or personnel record of persons found to have engaged in discriminatory, harassing, hazing, bullying or retaliatory behavior.

Although the School's goals are to support and educate members of the community as the principal means of preventing harassment, discrimination, hazing and bullying, it is both a principled goal and the legal duty of the School to ensure a learning, working and living environment free of such behavior. The School thus reserves the right to act promptly and if necessary, unilaterally, to end harassment, discrimination, hazing and bullying where such intervention is deemed to be warranted. Individuals who have been found to have engaged in harassment, discrimination, hazing or bullying will, in accordance with the procedures outlined above, be subject to remedial action or



discipline as appropriate, from counseling to dismissal from school. In addition, the principal or dean of students may take further action for any individual's failure to comply with the terms of any remedial action or discipline imposed.

False Complaints/Abuses of Process

Because allegations of discrimination, harassment, hazing or bullying are serious and can be damaging to accused persons' reputations, any person who knowingly, maliciously or recklessly makes a false complaint will be subject to severe discipline. In addition, because candor and honesty are essential to the investigation and remediation process, they are required of all participants, including third-party witnesses.

The withholding of material information in an investigation by complainants, witnesses and/or the accused party is prohibited. All members of the community are expected to cooperate fully in an investigation conducted by the School; failure to demonstrate such cooperation will lead to disciplinary action. Abuse of the process, including falsifying information, will result in discipline being imposed, up to and including dismissal from school or termination of employment.