



Hope Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Approved and adopted: December 2023

Signatures:

Student Representative
(via Student Council)

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**Staff Co-Ordinator of
Anti-bullying**

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Principal

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Director

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Introduction

At Hope Academy we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our students to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them maximize their potential. We expect students to feel safe in school and have an understanding of the issues relating to safety, such as bullying. We also want them to feel confident to seek support from school should they feel insecure.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team:

The role of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team, in relation to a school, is to maintain accurate records and develop effective bullying prevention approaches and programmes that:

- (a) emphasize the importance of a whole-school approach that fosters an inclusive and respectful school environment for all students.
- (b) focus on developing healthy social behaviours and strategies (rather than only addressing specific bullying behaviours);
- (c) support the targets and initiators of bullying through our Anti-Bullying Curriculum as well as counselling through our school daily, 'Open Hours' sessions conducted by our Clinic Psychologists.
- (d) provide for planning, monitoring, and evaluation of outcomes.
- (e) take a long-term, sustainable approach to preventing bullying; and
- (f) provide for the professional development of school staff and the education of parents and legal guardians.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Anti-Bullying Policy and all related procedures and programmes.

Terms Defined

"Anti-Bullying Policy" is the school's Anti-Bullying Policy which is referred to under section 27A of the Education Act, 2016.

"bullying" is any repeated conduct by a student where the conduct is intended by that student to have the effect of, or is of such a nature that the student ought to know that it would likely have the effect of:

- causing physical, emotional, psychological, or social harm to another student.
- placing another student in reasonable fear of physical, emotional, psychological, or social harm.
- damaging the property of another student;
- placing another student in reasonable fear of damage to that student's property;
- creating an intimidating, threatening, hostile or abusive educational environment for another student;
- disrupting the academic progress of another student;
- damaging the reputation of another student; or infringing on the rights of another student to participate in or benefit from any school activity or service;

"conduct" in relation to bullying, includes any action which is verbal, written, electronic or physical;

"parent" includes a legal guardian;

"relevant authority" is the owner / director of Hope Academy;

"school leader" is a person, by whatever name called, responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and for persons deployed to work at the school;

“**school staff**” includes a person employed to work at the school, either by the school or by a contracted service provider, or a person who volunteers his or her time to provide a service at the school; and

“**student**” is a person who is enrolled or attends classes at a school.

Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the ‘bystanders’ or ‘accessories’;

“**cyberbullying**” is defined as the deliberate and repeated harassment and fear of a person through the use of digital technologies, including, but not limited to, email, blogs, texting on cell phones, social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, etc.) chat rooms including MS Teams.

This policy uses the terms "target" and "victim" interchangeably to describe students that have been bullied. However, the term "victim" can be challenging for those students at risk of internalizing the victimization and seeing themselves as weak and ineffectual. It is also recommended that "bullies" be referred to as "aggressors" or "perpetrators of bullying". It could also be appropriate that the above terms be prefaced with “alleged” pending the outcome of an investigation. This language is important when addressing the complexities incident of bullying gives rise to, particularly cyberbullying; given the speed of messaging and the potential anonymity of the aggressor making it difficult to determine the message's origin. Therefore, it is most constructive to identify and focus on the participants' behaviour, while avoiding viewing the “aggressor”, “bystander”, and “target” as having a fixed personality trait. This policy should be cross-referenced with the Hope Academy Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies.

Identifying Bullying

Bullying is a purposeful action that is intended to harm, involves physical (hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking etc.) and/or mental components (e.g., verbal humiliation, hurtful, threatening behaviours, gossip, exclusion) and **always** involves an imbalance of power.

Using this acronym **RID** is an easy way to remember the components that comprises bullying. It is **Repeated**, there is an **Imbalance** of power, and the conduct is **Deliberate**. The acronym RID aims to support educational institutions with an understanding of bullying so that both proactive and reactive strategies can be implemented to develop a safe learning environment for all stakeholders.

R: “Occurs **Repeatedly**”- this means simply that the targeting has occurred more than once.

NB: A single incident can have precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time, as it can be experienced as part of the continuous pattern and can be extremely threatening and intimidating.

I: “**Imbalance** of power”- occurs when one student, or group is more powerful than the other. For example, when one student, Adult and/or group is older, larger, or perceived to be smarter, and/or more popular than the other, there is an imbalance of power: the playing field is not level; one student, adult and/or group unfairly takes advantage of this imbalance of power. The student feels victimized and defenseless.

D: “**Deliberate** action”- the goal and/or the intent are purposeful - an outcome which is meant to harm.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is teasing bullying?

Teasing, done in manner where all persons involved feel comfortable and are capable of replying, is not bullying. However, teasing that is done in an unkind and cruel way that involves a power imbalance whereby one person feels powerless to respond or to stop what is happening is bullying. One person's intended good-natured joking is possibly experienced as bullying by the other person. It also happens that what starts as good-natured joking can escalate and become bullying.

What does bullying look like?

Bullying can include:

- unwanted teasing
- threatening
- intimidating
- stalking
- theft
- public humiliation
- destruction of school or personal property
- social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion.
- making offensive comments.
- physical assault.
- cyber bullying - inappropriate text messaging and e-mailing, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet.
- producing offensive graffiti.
- gossiping and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
- excluding people from groups.

Why are students bullied?

Some of the reason students are bullied are due to:

- race, religion, or culture.
- special educational needs or disabilities;
- appearance or health;
- sexual orientation;
- children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances;
- to gender;

What are the signs and symptoms of bullying?

A person may indicate by signs or behaviours that they are being bullied. Everyone should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if the person:

- Is terrified of walking to or from school or changes route.
- Doesn't want to go on the school bus.
- Begs to be driven to school.
- Changes their usual routine.
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic).
- Begins to truant.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence.
- Becomes aggressive, abusive, disruptive or unreasonable.

- Threatens or attempts suicide.
- Threatens or attempts self-harm.
- Threatens or attempts to run away.
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning.
- Performance in schoolwork begins to drop.
- Comes home with clothes torn, property damaged or 'missing'.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money.
- Has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'.
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Comes home 'starving'.
- Is bullying others.
- Is frightened to say what is wrong.
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone.
- Becomes nervous or jumpy when a cyber-message is received.
- Gives improbable excuses for their behaviour.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

It is important because:

- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- Everybody has the right to feel happy and safe.
- No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying.
- Bullies need to learn different ways of behaving.

Is bullying the same as conflict?

Bullying is not the same as conflict. Conflict involves antagonism among two or more people. Any two people can have a conflict in which they feel equally powerful. Bullying only happens when there is an imbalance of power, it is repeated and deliberate.

How does "potentially" creating an intimidating, hostile and offensive learning environment cause a student's school performance or active school participation to decline and reduce academic progress?

Bullying is likely to create an environment that causes a person or group of people to feel:

- Different, alone, unimportant and/or unvalued.
- Physically and/or mentally hurt or distressed.
- Unable to do well and achieve.
- Unable to see a positive future for self.

All of these can contribute to an environment where it is difficult, if not impossible, for learning and/or teaching to occur. Also, remember that these dynamics and resulting distress apply to off-campus events, such as cyberbullying or aggressive behaviours from school.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedures

Prevention Strategies:

At Hope Academy we foster a clear understanding that bullying, in any form, is not acceptable. Some strategies to prevent bullying include:

- Ensuring that a school leader is supported to:
 - Manage bullying prevention initiatives.
 - Investigate alleged bullying reports.
 - Document actions, intervention for all involved
 - Developed and manages training database to ensure that **all** staff are aware of this policy and equip with the tools to fulfil the mandate of this policy.
- Providing anonymous reporting opportunities through the use of the ‘Worry Box’, notes to teachers, the Gradelink system. Non-anonymous reporting is strongly encouraged and promoted through the anti-bullying curriculum and activities outlined in this policy.
- Developing an effective Anti-Bullying Policy, ethos, and practice.
- Regular praise of positive and supportive behaviour by all staff.
- Undertaking work in school which develops empathy and emotional intelligence.
- Ensuring that all incidents are treated seriously and dealt with immediately.
- Having an expectation that all staff will report incidents of bullying that have been witnessed.
- Having in place a clearly understood and accessible protocol for students, staff, and parents to raise concerns on bullying.
- Undertaking a standardised bullying survey at least once a year (PBIS Bullying Prevention Curriculum Surveys)
- Reporting the results of the bullying survey and any aligned plan of action to the Director.
- Consultation with the Student Council and the parents through the PTA committee.
- Creating a positive learning environment where students know their rights and responsibilities – see below.

Rights	Responsibilities
Students have the right to be treated with respect and honesty.	Students have the responsibility to treat others with respect and honesty.
Students have the right to privacy.	Students have the responsibility to respect the rights of others.
Students have the right to a safe and orderly school.	Students have the responsibility to treat school property and the property of others with respect and to act in a way that does not interfere with the rights of others and is not harmful to the health and safety of others.

Students’ rights, responsibilities and values are woven into the National Policy and Guidance on Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (2020 Revision).

Core values to prevent and support anti- bullying include:

- Responsibility
- Citizenship
- Kindness
- Respect
- Honesty
- Self-Control
- Tolerance

- Cooperation

Our school will then become a safer and happier environment, with an emphasis on appropriate attitudes, behaviours, and relationships, which will also have a positive impact on learning and achievement.

Cyberbullying is a growing problem worldwide. It may happen in school, and we must be vigilant. All students, staff, parents, and stakeholders must know this. Activities that will assist in this awareness-raising initiative include, but are not limited to:

- Include cyberbullying (and “sexting” where age suitable) in general discussion with students, staff, and parents about bullying prevention and/ or cyber safety.
- Save all emails and virtual communication of harassment.
- Educate onlookers about how to intervene with cyberbullying on social platforms, cell phones, emails, and all forms of virtual communication.
- Educate parents about how to block specific email addresses from instant messaging and chat and how to report complaints to the internet service provider.
- Change email addresses if the harassment carries on.
- Direct parents to contact the Royal Cayman Islands’ Police Force if threats are violent or sexual.

Curriculum

Based on the school Anti-bullying Regulation, 2022, Hope Academy will provide appropriate instructions on bullying prevention in each grade as part of our PSHE curriculum. Hope Academy will use the PBIS Anti-Bullying curriculum (*‘Bully Prevention in Positive Behavior Support: Giving Students the Tools to Extinguish Bullying’* – Elementary and *‘Bullying Prevention in Positive Behavior: Expect Respect’* -- Middle and High), as well as Becoming X, during Tutor times, assemblies, and class time to support teaching students about bullying prevention.

Professional Development

Hope Academy will annually provide professional development to all staff members who will review the school policies and procedures. Staff Training Days allow for on-boarding training for new staff as well as review and refresher activities for returning staff. As with all major policies, staff will be required to sign off on each policy on our HR platform, ‘BambooHR’, to acknowledge understanding and agreement of them. Our school will respond promptly and effectively to reported incidents of bullying.

Responding to Bullying

Appendix A provides a flow chart depicting the process for responding to bullying. When you suspect or know a person has been targeted, follow the *10 Steps to Safety* (see Appendix B): This policy and its Appendix are available to staff on our TEAMS platform.

Parent Participation and Partnership

School leaders shall, in collaboration with other agencies, provide opportunities and encourage parents to participate in prevention efforts with their children in meaningful and relevant ways that address their children's academic, social, and health needs.

The school leader shall guide resources and support for parents by linking them with internal support and referral to community-based resources as needed. Teachers must involve parents in their anti-bullying efforts in a variety of ways. The parent training guidance can include but not be limited to videos, PowerPoint presentations, etc. Other options include: _____

- Letter to parents
- Assembly
- School newsletters
- Open evenings
- Early Start Coffee Mornings
- PTA Parent Education events

Evaluation of Service Effectiveness

Evaluations to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the services being provided will be conducted annually through various data collection methods such as surveys. The PBIS Bully Prevention Curriculum includes surveys for both staff and students. Student Council will also be involved and will feedback to the staff as to the effectiveness of our provision. Surveys will be sent to parents, either directly from the school or by liaising with the PTA. Hope Academy will use this data for strategic planning going forward.

Referral for Intervention

A school leader after investigation can make the necessary referral for intervention for all parties involved (where applicable). A school leader shall notify the parents promptly, document evidence, and record actions for intervention.

At Hope Academy all reported bullying incidents are entered into the school information management system (Gradelink) and,

- Counselling support to address the needs of the victims of bullying.
- School inclusion / behaviour interventions to address the behaviour of the perpetrator of bullying (e.g., empathy training, anger management).
- Intervention which includes assistance and support provided to parents.
- Analysis and evaluation of school culture with resulting recommendations for interventions aimed at increasing peer ownership and support.

Investigation, Reporting and Recording of Bullying Incidents

Reporting

At Hope Academy all reported bullying incidents are entered into the school information management system (Gradelink). Students **must** report bullying to any school staff or volunteer (as applicable). Students are encouraged to report bullying to a member of staff they feel comfortable with, or through the 'worry box' system, Tutor Group time, assemblies or PSHE/anti-bullying curriculum time. All staff and volunteers are required and **must report in writing**, any allegations of bullying. Failure to report will result in action(s) or discipline, consistent with the Anti-Bullying (Schools) Regulations, 2022. Staff members must record concerns on Gradelink and inform the Safeguarding Leads.

Any other members of the school community who have credible information that an act of bullying has taken place must make a report of bullying (see appendix A), whether they are a victim or witness.

A school leader shall:

- a) On receiving a report of an allegation of bullying or retaliation;
- b) On receiving a report with respect to a suspicion of bullying or retaliation; or
- c) On witnessing conduct which appears to be bullying or retaliative action.

- Immediately investigate and record in writing the circumstances surrounding the conduct and take such measures as are appropriate to protect, during the investigation, the student who is alleged to have been bullied.
 - Within **twenty-four hours** after receiving a report or witnessing conduct, **must** notify the parents of the students involved in the bullying or retaliative conduct if, in the opinion of the school leader, doing so would not result in harm to either the perpetrator of bullying or the target; and any other relevant agency if the school leader is of the opinion that the issues identified in the report should be referred to another agency.
- a) The information to be disclosed by the school leader when providing the notification under the Anti-Bullying (School) Regulations, 2022:
 - b) the day on and (if known) the time at which the bullying or retaliation incident occurred;
 - c) the nature of the conduct that constituted the bullying or retaliation;
 - d) the nature of the harm to the student who was the victim of the bullying or retaliation conduct; and the measures taken or to be taken to respond to the report.
- A school leader may refer a bullying incident to the relevant authority for (as applicable) determination.

Steps in the Investigation (within 24 hours form the report is made):

N.B. *Appendix A* provides support regarding the ‘10 Investigation Steps.’

The school leader is encouraged to ask open-ended questions to enable students/staff to describe what happened in their own words.

- The school leader will ensure that each student or staff is accorded a safe and respectful environment to meet.
- Where an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school, the school leader first informed of the bullying or retaliation shall, within twenty-four hours after details of the incident were received, notify the school leader of the other school so that both may take appropriate action;

Investigation Outcome

After concluding an investigation under regulation 6, the school leader shall, **within seventy- two hours**, communicate in writing the outcome of the investigation to:

- The parents of the students who were the subject of the investigation; and
- The person who made the report, unless the school leader is of the opinion that it would not be appropriate to do so.

The communication referred to under the Anti-Bullying (School) Regulations, 2022 shall include:

- The findings on whether the allegations of bullying and retaliation are substantiated;
- The steps taken or proposed to be taken to protect the student who was bullied or retaliated against;
- The support that will be provided to the student bullied in response to the harm that resulted from the bullying or retaliation; and
- The student who engaged in the bullying or retaliation; and
- The disciplinary action, if any, imposed or to be imposed in response to the bullying or retaliation;

A school leader shall notify the relevant authority where a parent refuses to participate in any bullying intervention program and it is believed that the interests of the student might be adversely affected.

Complaints and Appeals

If parents/guardians or any member of the school community has a complaint or wants to appeal the outcome of an anti-bullying investigation this should be brought to the attention of the Principal or Director. The complaint or appeal should be made in writing. Written notice of the outcome will be provided to the petitioner by the Principal or School Director.

In exceptional circumstances, if the complaint or appeal remains unresolved, and it can be clearly demonstrated that the petitioner has exhausted both the school leadership and the responsible authority in finding a resolution, then the complaint or the appeal can be made to the Ministry of Education's Chief Officer or the Chief Officer's designate in accordance with the Ministry's policy and guidelines.

Anti-Bullying Prevention and Intervention Additional Support

<https://www.pbis.org/topics/bullying-prevention>

<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org/>

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

<http://www.character.org/>

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/index.html/>

<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/>

<https://www.osstf.on.ca/en-CA/publications/research-studies/bullying/canadian-bullying-resources-online>

<http://prevnet.ca/BullyingResources/ResourcesForEveryone/tabid/392/Default.aspx>

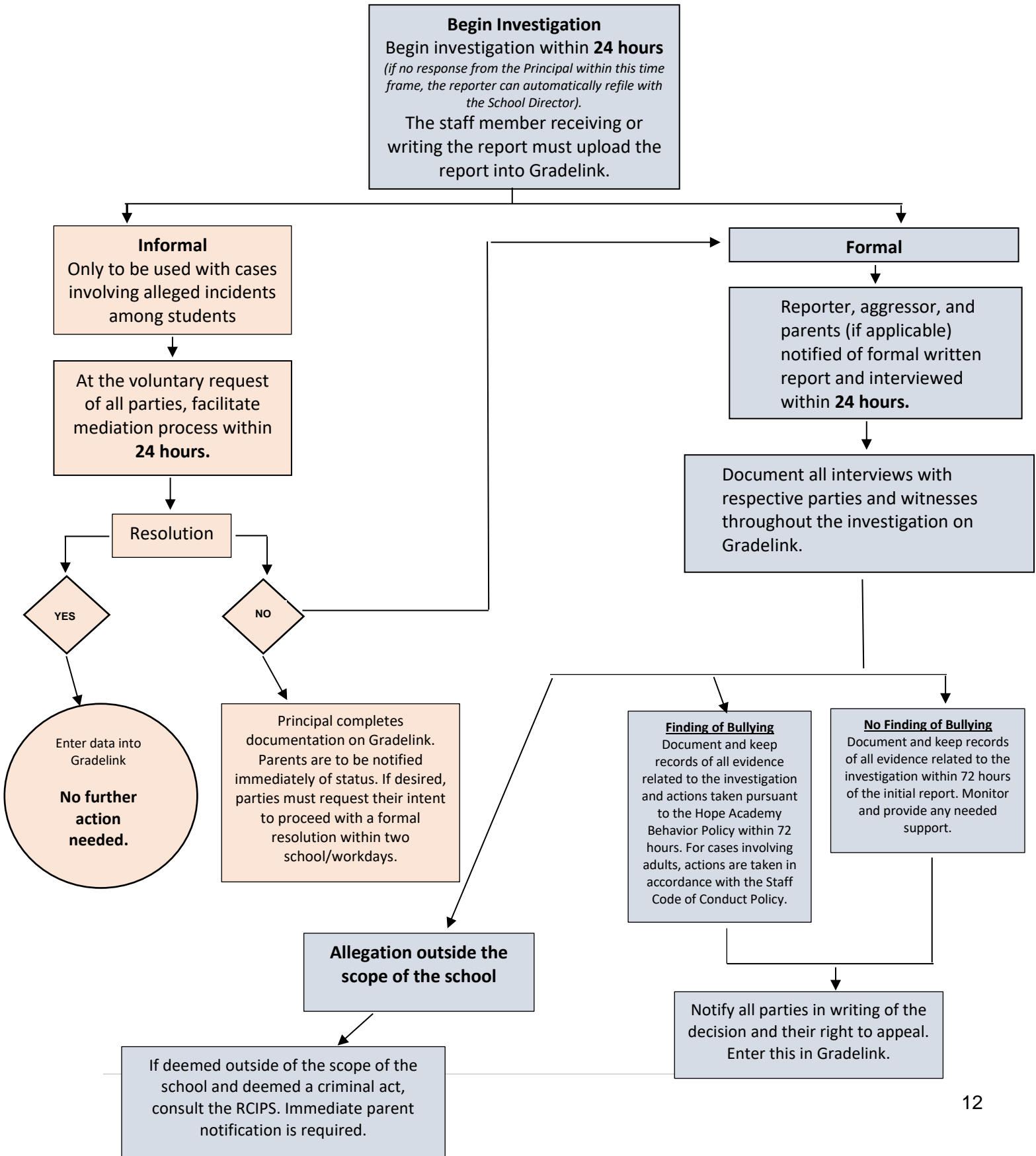
http://www.kzoo.edu/psych/stop_bullying/resources/websites.html

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/#4>

<http://www.clemson.edu/olweus/>

Appendix A: PROCEDURES AT HOPE ACADEMY FOR REPORTING ALLEGED BULLYING

Alleged Bullying Investigation Process



Appendix B: Responding to Bullying

When a person has been targeted follow the 10 Steps to Safety:

1. Validate the individual's right to physical and emotional safety.
"You have a right to feel physically and emotionally safe and we will help to ensure you have that"
2. Share any personal experiences with bullying.
This can help the individual feel less alone; they may be surprised to learn that an adult they respect has been targeted.
3. Ensure there is nothing wrong with the target.
"You have done nothing wrong to deserve this."
4. Validate feelings. That must hurt.
5. Provide Protection.
Provide increased adult supervision, build a protective peer network of support.
6. If you are the parent, tell Hope Academy what is happening.
7. Talk to parents of both target and individuals exhibiting bullying behaviours.
Talking to parents should be done by the school and not other parents so as not to escalate or heighten emotions.
8. Ensure the target and individual exhibiting bullying behaviours get help.
Counselling may be necessary for both parties.
9. Speak to the individual exhibiting bullying behaviours in private.
Be firm about acceptable and non-acceptable behavior.
10. Intervene immediately.

DO NOT:

1. Do not tell the person being bullied to toughen up or deal with it. Provide appropriate support and empathy.
2. Do not confront anyone in front of their peers. This could elevate prestige and sense of power.
3. Do not ignore the incident or the harmful effect on the individual.
4. Do not attempt to mediate between the target and an individual exhibiting bullying behaviour. This creates a larger power imbalance.