



Flossmoor Montessori School (FMS) is committed to helping children respect personal boundaries and supports in developing self-control and self-discipline. Children are encouraged to express their feelings and respect for each other and the environment we share creating a safe place to grow, and approach for support when needed.

This policy is created to meet the requirements of the Illinois State Board of Education.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying means any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. 'Bullying' includes cyber bullying. 'Bullying' does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

As children are learning how to get along with each other, cooperate, share, and understand their feelings, conflicts naturally occur. Young children may be aggressive and act out when they are angry or don't get what they want. Children in Montessori school learn respectful listening and communication skills to solve normal peer conflict starting at an early age. They learn to be courteous and express their feelings without being aggressive. Staff at FMS help young children develop skills for getting along with others following age-appropriate ways.

- Model positive ways of communication and actions for young children
- Help young children understand and learn the consequences of certain actions
- Set clear rules and expectations for behavior and monitor children's interactions carefully. Step in quickly to stop aggressive behavior or redirect it before it occurs.
- Use age-appropriate consequences for aggressive behavior.

"Bullying", including "Cyberbullying", is a more serious act and is recognized 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 students' person or property.
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health.
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, spreading rumors, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual

harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, purposefully excluding someone from a group, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of the non-sectarian nonpublic school and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this Section [free exercise of religion].

Nothing in this Section is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

All members of the Flossmoor Montessori School community, including but not limited to administration, faculty, staff, consultants, parents, students, vendors, and volunteers, to not engage in bullying, discrimination, or harassment of any other member of the FMS community. This includes but is not limited to offensive comments or jokes, gestures, social media posting, or other verbal or physical conduct that creates a hostile or abusive environment or is intimidating, demeaning, or threatening.

Definition of “Cyber-bullying”

“Cyber-bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. “Cyber-bullying” includes the creation of a webpage or weblog 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 creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. “Cyber-bullying” also includes the distribution by electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

Reporting

Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Director/Complaint Manager, or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the Complaint Manager. The complaint manager is:

Nanette Renzi, Program Director
Phone: 708-798-4600
Email: flossmoormontessorischool@yahoo.com

All reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly, by:

1. Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation in less than 10 school days

after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the investigation about the report incident of bullying.

2. Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
3. Notifying the Director or her or his designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.

Any reported alleged incident will be kept confidential to the extent possible while it is investigated. Consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Director or designee shall promptly inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of every student who is involved in an alleged incident of bullying. The Director will offer an opportunity to meet the parents or guardians of the involved parties to discuss the incident, findings and actions taken to address the reported incident. Examples of other interventions, and restorative measures may include; teaching students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, and teaching students to serve, build, and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities.

The Director or designee shall investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction and shall require that the school provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs. The Director shall offer as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services available to the community.

Intervention

When an incident occurs, staff is required to complete an Incident Report and to send copies to the complaint manager. Parents or guardians of all students involved in an alleged incident of bullying will be notified.

- If the behavior continues, the FMS staff will record behavior observation.
- If the behavior is deemed or becomes extreme, a "Care and Concern" process will be started by meeting with the parents, and appropriate staff.
- Parents, staff, and child will respectfully work together to modify the behavior.

If a pattern of willful, disruptive behavior develops, consequences may range from appropriate additional professional help, positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension, expulsion, and/or reports to law enforcement as is required by law.

If a child persists in the unprovoked, willful, and deliberate hurting of others, after being reasoned with and experiencing consequences, there may be an immediate one-day suspension from school. Parents will be asked to pick up the child from school to prevent any personal injuries. Continued negative behavior will result in the school requiring a behavioral evaluation by a professional, and the possible removal of the student from the school.

School will consider consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying.

The school prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying and will determine appropriate consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.

The bullying prevention and response plan is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.

The bullying policy is posted on the school's existing internet website and is included in the student handbook, and, where applicable, posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted in the school, and is distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

To assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the bullying policy, actions will include, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The non-sectarian nonpublic school may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation must be made available on the Internet website of the school. If an Internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

The bullying policy is consistent with other school policies.

Date of adoption: February 9, 2022, Date of Approval: February 11, 2022