

## BULLYING/CYBER BULLYING POLICY

### PROHIBITION OF HARRASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING

As with all Greenfield Schools, Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield is committed to a safe and positive learning environment for all students, employees, volunteer and parents, free from harassment, intimidation or bullying. All forms of bullying and cyber bullying are hereby prohibited. Anyone engaging in bullying or cyber bullying is in violation of the Policy and shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

Bullying shall mean unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at any person(s) by any other person(s) when the intentional act:

- Physically harms a student or damages the student's property;
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
- Is placing another in reasonable fear of physical, emotional or mental harm;
- Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidation, threatening or terrorizing another person by way of any technological tool, such as sending inappropriate or derogatory emails, instant messages, text messages, pictures or website postings that would include blogs, when the intentional act is:

- Physically, emotionally or mentally harming to any person;
- Substantially interfering with the student's education;
- Placing any person in reasonable fear of physical, emotional or mental harm;
- Is severe, persistent, or pervasive to the extent that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Nothing in this policy requires the affected person to possess a characteristic that is a perceived basis for the harassment, intimidation, or bullying, or other distinguishing characteristic(s).

All forms of bullying are unacceptable and when such actions are disruptive to the education process of the Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield, offenders shall be subject to appropriate staff intervention, which may result in administrative discipline or action.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying can take many forms including: slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendos, demeaning comments, drawing cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical

attacks, threats, or other written, oral or physical actions. “Intentional acts” refers to the individual’s choice to engage in the act rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s).

This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the education environment. Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may still be prohibited by other school policies or building, classroom, or program rules.

Preventative educative counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to change the behavior of the perpetrator and/or remediate the impact on the victim and school community. This includes appropriate intervention(s), restoration of a positive climate, and support for victims and others impacted by the violation. False reports or retaliation for harassment, intimidation or bullying also constitute violations of this policy.

The Head of School is authorized to direct the development and implementation of procedures addressing the elements of this policy, consistent with the complaint and investigation.

Second Reading for Affirmation of Adoption: October 28, 2010