



## **Bullying / Harassment Policy**

***\*\*Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf adheres to the strict Bullying / Harassment Policy based on the Florida Statutes. We consider bullying and harassment a very serious matter and it will not be tolerated.***

Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf is here to provide a safe learning environment for all of our students, families and staff. If a child is found guilty of any of the infractions mentioned in the Florida Statutes (see attached pages 2-4), discipline actions will be taken as listed in the steps below. The severity of the infraction will play a major role in the way Blossom's staff will handle the situation. Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf's sole priority is to educate in a safe environment.

Below are the steps Blossom will take to ensure safety:

1. If a child is found guilty or involved of bullying or harassing as mentioned situations listed in the Florida Statutes; he or she will be removed from the situation and brought to the child's teacher. The teacher will determine the severity of the situation. If this happens in the presence of the child's teacher, the child will be brought to the Director. If this situation is deemed serious, the child will have a behavior report written up, parents will be immediately contacted, and the child will be sent home for the rest of the school day.
2. If this is a second offense, the child will again have a behavior report written up and will be suspended for the rest of the school day and the following school day. A meeting with our Behavioral Therapist will be set up with the child if they are enrolled in therapy. If the child is not enrolled in therapy, then it will be strongly recommended and a request for parental permission will be issued by the school.
3. If this is a third occurrence, the child will be suspended for the rest of that school day and the following three school days. A visit to the child's doctor and/or a psychologist will be required. A note from the child's doctor and/or psychologist will be required to return to school with confirmation that the child is under medical care and is at no risk of harming others.
4. Finally a fourth occurrence will result in expulsion.
5. In a severe case, Blossom reserves the right to automatically expel or call in law enforcement at a moments notice. Blossom will have zero tolerance for severe cases which pose an immediate threat or harm to others.

***\*\*Please note each situation will be considered individually. Blossom understands that each child has their own unique characteristics. Blossom accepts and embraces each child as an individual, but recognizes that our specialized environment is not always a best fit for each child.***

If you have any further questions about this policy, please feel free to contact Blossom's Director, Julie Rutenberg via e-mail [jrutenberg@blossomschool.org](mailto:jrutenberg@blossomschool.org) or phone (727) 539-7879.



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### ***Florida Statutes Policy on Bullying / Harassment -***

***Bullying/Harassment:*** Statute [1006.147](#) (2008) prohibits bullying or harassment of any student or employee of a private or public K-12 educational institution. during any program or activity conducted by a private or public K-12 educational institution, during any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity, or through the use of data or computer software accessed through a computer, computer system or network of a private or public K-12 educational institution. Specific definitions of bullying and harassment are outlined in the statute. Statute [1006.147](#) (2008) provides immunity from a cause of action to a school employee, school volunteer, student, or parent who promptly reports in good faith an act of bullying or harassment to the appropriate school official.

Statute [1006.147](#) (2008) requires school districts to adopt a policy prohibiting bullying and harassment of any student or employee of a private or public K-12 educational institution. The policy must substantially conform to the model policy of the state Department of Education, and must afford all students the same protection regardless of their status under the law. It requires “a procedure for providing instruction to students, parents, teachers, school administrators, counseling staff, and school volunteers on identifying, preventing, and responding to bullying or harassment.” Additional requirements of the policy are outlined in the statute.

State Board of Education Administrative Rule [6A-19.008](#) (1985) requires schools to have environments that are free of harassment and prohibit any slurs, innuendos, or other verbal or physical conduct reflecting on one's race, ethnic background, gender, or



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handicapping condition, which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment, or interferes with student's school performance or participation or other educational opportunities.

**Cyberbullying:** Statute [1006.147](#) (2008) prohibits bullying and harassment prohibits bullying or harassment of any student or employee of a private or public K-12 educational institution through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system or computer network of a private or public K-12 educational institution. The definition of "harassment" in the statute includes any threatening, insulting or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that does one of the following: (1) places them in reasonable fear of harm or to his or her person or damage to his or her property, (2) substantially interferes with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits, or (3) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school. The definition of "bullying and harassment" includes perpetuation of actions by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause physical harm to a student or school employee by accessing or knowingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system.