

**Blue Water Middle College Academy (BWMCA)
Board of Education Policy**

Anti-Bullying and Cyber-Bullying

It is the policy of the Blue Water Middle College Academy to provide a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. All students are protected under this policy and bullying is prohibited without regard to its subject matter or motivation. It is a violation of this policy for any student to engage in bullying or cyber-bullying, or any employee of the Blue Water Middle College Academy to condone or fail to report acts of;

- Bullying or cyber-bullying that they witness or become aware of on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to the school grounds.
- At school sponsored or school related activities, functions or programs, whether on or off school grounds.
- At school bus stops.
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the BWMCA; or
- Through use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the BWMCA.

It is also a violation of this policy for any student to engage in bullying or cyber-bullying at a location, activity, function or program that is not owned, leased or used by the BWMCA, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or significantly and substantially disrupts the educational process or orderly operation of the school, as determined by school administrators.

The Blue Water Middle College Academy will not tolerate retaliation against a person who reports bullying or cyber-bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or cyber-bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying or cyber-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 victim that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to his property;
- Places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or his property;
- Creates a hostile environment at the school for the victim;
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Cyber-Bullying” is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes but is not limited to any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by such things as electronic

mail, internet communications, instant message, text messaging or facsimile. Cyber-bullying includes;

- The creation of 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 is a violation under the law.

Cyber-bullying also includes 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 is a violation of the law.

It is the responsibility of every student, parent and employee of the BWMCA to recognize acts of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation. Any student who believes that he or she has been a victim of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation should report it immediately to his or her teacher, counselor, or director.

Students, parents and members of the school staff (including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, and paraprofessionals), who witness or become aware of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation should immediately report it to the building director.

Reports of bullying or cyber-bullying will be promptly investigated. If the school director determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, and the Blue Water Middle College Academy Director believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator. The director shall then;

- Take the appropriate disciplinary action;
- Notify the parents or guardians of the perpetrator;
- Notify the parents or guardians of the victim, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation.

The BWMCA will provide age-appropriate instruction and provide professional development to build the skills of staff members, as required by law. The Director will develop a bullying prevention and intervention plan which sets forth the administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy. The Prevention and Intervention Plan shall include, but not be limited to:

- Procedures for reporting, responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation;
- The range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation or against someone for making a false accusation of bullying;
- Procedures for remedying incidents of bullying and restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that victim's needs for protection; strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a person who reports bullying or provides information during an investigation;

- Any notification requirements consistent with state and federal law;
- A strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for victims and family members and perpetrators; and
- Provisions for educating and informing parents about bullying.

Students and parents or guardians will receive notice of relevant student related section of the Plan annually and staff shall be trained annually. The Director shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight to the plan at his/her school. The BWMCA Director or designee shall assist students, parents and employees of the Blue Water Middle College Academy who seek guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to reprimand, detention, loss of privileges, and/or suspension. An educational component will be part of the actions taken. If the false accusations have civil and or criminal elements, then further action may be taken by appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Complaints of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; however, no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student, staff member, and parent or community member based solely on the anonymous report.

Effective March 31, 2015

Board Approved: May 20, 2015

Public Act 478 of 2014, MCL 380.1310b, 380.1310b amended, “Matt’s Safe School Law”.