Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) Policy

1. Purpose

The GREEN Charter School Network is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and nurturing educational environment for all students.
Harassment, intimidation, or bullying whether verbal, physical, electronic, or sexual is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

This policy establishes consistent procedures to prevent, identify, and respond to acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) in accordance with the South Carolina Safe School Climate Act.

2. Scope

This policy applies in all school settings within the GREEN Charter School Network, including but not limited to:

- Classrooms and other instructional areas;
- School premises and grounds;
- School buses or other school-related vehicles;
- School-sponsored activities or events, on or off campus; and
- Any program or function for which the school is responsible.

3. Definitions

Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (HIB)

In accordance with S.C. Code § 59-63-120, (HIB) means a gesture, electronic communication, or written, verbal, physical, or sexual act that is reasonably perceived to have the effect of:

1. Causing physical or emotional harm to a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm or property damage; **or**
2. Insulting or demeaning a student or group of students in a way that causes substantial disruption or interference with the orderly operation of the school.

(Definitions and settings are consistent with S.C. Code § 59-63-120.)

Reprisal / Retaliation / False Accusation

- Reprisal or retaliation: Any adverse action taken against an individual for reporting or participating in an investigation of (HIB).

- False accusation: Knowingly reporting an incident of (HIB) when such conduct did not occur.

(These acts are prohibited under S.C. Code § 59-63-130.)

4. Expected Behavior & Student Obligations

All students and staff within the GREEN Charter School Network are expected to:

- Treat peers, staff, and volunteers with respect and dignity;
- Refrain from engaging in or supporting any form of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
- Report any acts of (HIB) witnessed or learned about; and
- Cooperate fully and honestly during investigations.

5. Consequences & Remedial Actions

A. For Persons Who Commit (HIB)

Consequences will be age/developmentally appropriate and may include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal or written warning;
- Loss of privileges or extracurricular participation;
- Restorative practices (e.g., mediation or conflict resolution);
- Counseling or behavioral interventions;
- Suspension or expulsion (for students); or
- Employment action up to and including termination (for employees).

B. Remedial Actions

- Ensuring the person's safety and support;
- Counseling or mediation for involved parties;
- Schedule or classroom changes to reduce contact; or
- Ongoing monitoring and follow-up.

C. Retaliation

Any person who retaliates against another for reporting or participating in an (HIB) investigation will face disciplinary action, up to expulsion or termination.

D. False Accusations

Knowingly making a false accusation will result in disciplinary measures proportionate to the offense and age of the offender.

6. Reporting Procedures

Who May Report:

Any student, parent/guardian, school employee, or volunteer may report harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

How to Report:

Reports may be made verbally or in writing to a designated school official (e.g., Principal, Assistant Principal, or School Counselor).
GREEN Charter allows for anonymous reporting; however, disciplinary action will not be based solely on an anonymous report (S.C. Code § 59-63-140(B)(5)).

Timeframe:

The lead administrator shall acknowledge receipt of the report (if not anonymous) and begin a preliminary review within twenty-four (24) hours.

7. Investigation Procedures

- All reports will be promptly, thoroughly, and impartially investigated.
- Investigations may include interviews with the target, aggressor, and witnesses; review of communications, social media, and surveillance evidence.
- Investigations should be completed within ten (10) school days, unless circumstances require additional time.
- Interim measures (such as separation or monitoring) may be implemented to ensure safety.
- Results and actions taken will be documented, and both parties (and parents/guardians) will be informed of the outcome in writing, with confidentiality maintained.

8. Protection Against Retaliation

No student, staff member, or volunteer shall be subject to reprisal or retaliation for making a good faith report or participating in an investigation.
Any act of retaliation must be reported immediately and will result in disciplinary consequences consistent with this policy.

9. Training, Education, and Prevention

The GREEN Charter School Network will:

- Provide training for all employees on identifying and responding to (HIB); and
- Reinforce this policy through classroom discussions, assemblies, or orientation sessions.

(S.C. Code § 59-63-140(E))

10. Publicizing the Policy

This policy will be:

- Published in the GREEN Charter School staff policy manual;
- Included in all school handbooks and codes of conduct;
- Posted on the official GREEN website; and
- Communicated to all students and parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.

Appropriate signage and informational materials may be displayed to encourage awareness and reporting.

11. Monitoring, Review, and Reporting

The GREEN Charter School Network shall:

- Maintain records of all reported (HIB) incidents, investigations, and outcomes; and
- Review this policy annually for effectiveness and compliance.

12. Legal Immunity

"A school employee or volunteer who promptly reports an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying to the appropriate school official designated by the local school district's policy, and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures in the district's policy, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from failure to remedy the reported incident." (S.C. Code § 59-63-150)(B)