

Policy - School

A.3.1 – Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Policy

Community Leadership Academy/Victory Preparatory Academy (CLA/VPA) is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning and working environment where all members of the school community—students, staff, parents, and visitors—are treated with dignity and respect. The school actively supports a culture of well-being and ensures that discrimination, harassment, and retaliation are prohibited in all school-related activities and programs.

It is critical that anyone who has experienced discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in the context of the school's educational programs, activities, or employment can report their concerns without fear of retaliation. This policy aims to create a climate that fosters preventive measures and encourages the reporting of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. The school administrators will engage in prevention efforts, provide training, respond promptly to all complaints, offer supportive measures, and develop fair and equitable processes to investigate and address complaints of discrimination, harassment, and related retaliation.

Reporting Process

CLA/VPA encourages all students, staff, parents, and community members to report concerns or allegations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. The school will ensure that all complaints are promptly addressed and that individuals are not subject to retaliation for making reports. All school staff are required to promptly inform the compliance officer of any reports or complaints of discrimination or harassment.

Definitions

- **Bullying:** Bullying is any written or oral expression, physical or electronic act or gesture, or a pattern of behavior intended to coerce, intimidate, or cause harm to another person. Bullying may include physical, emotional, and social harm. If bullying is based on a student's protected class, it may also constitute discrimination or harassment. The school's *Bullying Prevention and Education Policy* outlines the specific procedures and reporting process for addressing bullying.
- **Protected Classes:** Protected classes include race, color, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, transgender status, religion, national origin, immigration/citizenship status, ancestry, age, pregnancy, marital status, veteran status, disability, family composition, and genetic information.
 - *Race* includes hair texture, hair type, hair length, or protective hairstyles such as braids, locs, twists, tight coils or curls, cornrows, Bantu knots, afros, and headwraps, that are commonly associated with race.
 - *Sexual Orientation* refers to an individual's attraction to the same or another gender, and it can encompass various social behaviors and affiliations resulting from that attraction.

- *Gender Expression* refers to an individual's outward demonstration of their gender through appearance, dress, and behavior.
- *Gender Identity* refers to a person's innate sense of their gender, which may or may not align with the sex assigned at birth.
- **Harassment:** Harassment is unwelcome conduct based on a protected class that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment. Harassment may be physical or verbal, including written, graphic, or visual communication. Harassment can occur in educational settings, the workplace, or in public environments.
 - For students, harassment may interfere with their ability to participate in the school's educational services or create an intimidating environment.
 - For employees or applicants, harassment may interfere with work performance or be used as a basis for employment decisions.
 - For community members, harassment may interfere with their ability to participate in school services, activities, or opportunities.
- **Discrimination:** Discrimination occurs when a student or community member is denied or limited in their ability to participate in or benefit from the school's programs, services, or opportunities due to their protected class. Discrimination also includes actions in employment practices, such as hiring, firing, or other employment decisions that treat an individual unfairly due to their protected class.
- **Retaliation:** Retaliation includes any form of intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against an individual who has reported harassment, discrimination, or bullying, or who has participated in any investigation related to such complaints. Retaliation is prohibited and may lead to disciplinary action.
- **Sex-based Harassment (Title IX):** Sex-based harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other unwelcome conduct or communication of a sexual nature. Title IX, a federal law, outlines the requirements for addressing sex-based harassment.

Use of a Student's Chosen Name

Harassment or discrimination includes the intentional use of a name other than a student's chosen name, or the refusal to use a student's chosen name. CLA/VPA will honor a student's request to use their chosen name or preferred first name (such as a nickname) and will update school records accordingly, in alignment with relevant policy and procedures.

School Action and Discipline

CLA/VPA is committed to responding swiftly and appropriately to any incidents of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. The school will take appropriate action to promptly and impartially investigate all complaints. This may include providing supportive measures and taking necessary actions to end the misconduct, prevent recurrence, and protect against retaliation. When a violation is confirmed, the school will impose disciplinary measures in accordance with applicable policies and restore lost opportunities to affected individuals.

All complaints of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation will be handled in a confidential and professional manner. However, individuals who knowingly file false complaints or provide false statements may face disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion, or termination.

Supportive Measures

CLA/VPA will provide supportive measures for students or employees who experience harassment or discrimination, regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed. These measures may include but are not limited to:

- Counseling
- Modifications to class schedules
- Extended deadlines or course-related adjustments
- The opportunity for home instruction
- Modifications to work assignments or duties
- Restrictions on contact between the parties involved in the complaint

Notice and Training

The school will issue a written notice each year prior to the start of the school year to inform all students, parents, staff, and the public about the school's commitment to nondiscrimination. This notice will include contact information for the Title IX Coordinator and other relevant compliance officers. CLA/VPA will ensure that this information is accessible to individuals with limited English proficiency and those with visual or hearing impairments.

Training on recognizing, reporting, and preventing discrimination and harassment will be provided to all school employees. Employees will receive additional training on how to properly respond to complaints and assist students and staff in navigating the reporting and investigation processes.

Legal References

- 20 U.S.C. 1681 (Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972)
- 42 U.S.C. 2000d (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
- C.R.S. 22-32-109 (Board duty to adopt written policies prohibiting discrimination)
- C.R.S. 24-34-301 (Definitions of gender expression, identity, sexual orientation)

Adopted/Revised: January 2025