

Cyberbullying Policy

Discourse with Wisdom, Courage, and Compassion

Members of the Soka University community are expected to engage with one another according to the values of the university. Exchanging ideas, disagreeing, and debating opposing opinions form the basis of intellectual inquiry are a cornerstone of a liberal arts education. However, in these exchanges all community members are expected to engage one another with a recognition of the human dignity inherent in each person. Using abusive language or participating in harassment, bullying, defamation, or intimidation are unacceptable and antithetical to the values of Soka University.

Harassment, Bullying, Cyberbullying and Intimidation

Harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying and intimidation are prohibited and participating in such acts will result in disciplinary action.

Harassment may involve isolated or continuing acts of intimidation, coercion, bullying and/or verbal, non-verbal, or physical abuse. Examples of the forms it can take include targeted remarks or jokes, threats, ostracism, public humiliation as well as physical actions, including unwanted touching and physical assault. Targets of harassment can be anyone: students, members of the faculty or staff, superiors, subordinates, peers or even individuals not affiliated with Soka University of America.

Bullying includes any unwelcome electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or a series of acts of physical, social, or emotional domination that cause physical or emotional harm to another student or group of students. Bullying conduct may not only cause a negative effect on individuals targeted, but also others who observe the conduct. Bullying conduct is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Has the purpose or effect of interfering with a community member’s education, employment, or enjoyment of the university;
2. Creates or has the intention of creating a hostile, offensive or intimidating learning or working environment for the victim or witnesses;
3. Infringes on the rights of the victim; or
4. Materially, substantially or unreasonably interferes with, disrupts or limits another’s ability to participate or benefit from an educational program or activity and/or the orderly operation of the university

Defamation No person shall publish to a third party any statement that defames any other person. A statement defames another person if it is:

- Published to a third party other than the subject of the statement or their legal representative;
- Of and concerning that person;
- Is a false statement of fact that holds the person up to hatred, ridicule or contempt;
- Is made negligently, if the person is a private figure or if the person is a public official or public figure, with knowledge of falsity or reckless disregard of the truth;
- Which proximately causes damages; and
- Is not privileged

Intimidation is any verbal, written, or electronic threats of violence or other threatening behavior directed toward another person or group that reasonably leads the person(s) in the group to fear for her/his physical well-being. Intimidation is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Cyberbullying is the use of cell phone, text messages, emails, social media or any other technology or electronic communication, to bully another individual in any of the ways described above in order to harass or damage the reputation of another.

Cyberbullying shall also include 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 creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (1) to (4), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.
- Cyberbullying shall also include 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 creates any of the conditions enumerated above in clauses (1) to (4) of the definition of bullying.