



ST. MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION SCHOOL

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

INTRODUCTION.

St. Mary of the Annunciation School acknowledges that its purpose for existence is rooted in the mission of the Church. In fulfilling its role within the educational mission of the Church, the School must share and live out, through Catholic Christian tradition, the message of Jesus Christ and be committed to providing an integrated Catholic educational environment that permeates all aspects of its daily life and operations. Each child must be challenged to reach his/her full potential by fostering in each child a love of learning and by providing an environment that also fosters respect and understanding of one another. In this regard, it is essential that a safe, positive and productive educational environment be established where students can attain the highest academic achievement and where no student shall be subjected to bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation. Bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation or other similar disruptive or violent behaviors constitute conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and the School's ability to educate its students in a safe and embracing environment. The school's staff is expected to demand that all students behave appropriately and treat others with civility and respect. Bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation are not to be tolerated.

BULLYING PREVENTION

Leadership at all levels of the school community has played a critical role in developing and implementing this Plan in the context of other school and community efforts to promote a positive school climate. The Plan has been developed in consultation with the Pastor, School Board, school staff, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. Notice and a public comment period by families of students currently attending the school was provided before the Plan was adopted by the school. We all have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. The Principal and designated members of the staff, working under the oversight of the Pastor are collectively responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. It is also the responsibility of the Principal and such designees to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing, implementing and periodically reviewing the Plan.

The Plan is intended to be the school's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, school leaders, with input from families and the staff, have assessed the

adequacy of current programs; reviewed current policies and procedures; reviewed available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and assessed available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services. This “mapping” process has assisted the school in identifying resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, the school has revised policies and procedures; established partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities.

In an effort to include the entire school community in our bullying prevention program, students, parents, and teachers are required to sign an Anti-Bullying Pledge at the beginning of each school year. Students at every level discuss and participate in prevention initiatives. Open discussions about mean behavior and bullying behaviors occur at every level.

Additionally, a counselor from New Beginnings Counseling Service provides multi-week seminars in classrooms to support the socialization and integration of students having difficulties. “Lunch bunch” meetings have been established to help further positive connections among the students. The counselor is also available to support teachers with intervention techniques.

The school is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds owned, leased or used by the school;
- On property immediately adjacent to the school grounds;
- At any school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds;
- On a school bus or any other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school

Bullying is also prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the School if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the Target;
- infringe on the rights of the Target at school; or
- substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of the School.

Retaliation against any person who reports or provides information about bullying or retaliation

during an investigation is also prohibited.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Plan, the following definitions shall apply:

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

Bullying is 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 Target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the Target or damage to the Target's property;
- places the Target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the Target;
- infringes on the rights of the Target at the school;
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

By way of example only, bullying may involve, but is not limited to:

- unwanted teasing
- threatening
- intimidating
- stalking
- Cyber-Stalking
- physical violence
- theft
- sexual, religious, racial or any other type of harassment
- public humiliation
- destruction of School or personal property
- social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
- rumor or spreading of falsehoods

For the purpose of this Plan, whenever the term "Bullying" is used it is to denote either Bullying or Cyber-Bullying (as defined below).

Cyber-Bullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetics
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-Bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of Bullying.

Cyber-Bullying 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 in the definition of Bullying.

Hostile Environment means a situation in which Bullying causes the School environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.

Retaliation means any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports Bullying, provides information during an investigation of Bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about Bullying.

School Grounds means property on which the school building is located or property that is owned, leased or used by the school for a school-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, faculty, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, and paraprofessionals.

Target means a student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Reporting Bullying or Retaliation.

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school staff member is required to report immediately to the Principal any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not School Staff members, may be made anonymously. The school has made a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form (a copy of which is attached to this Plan), a voicemail box, and an email address.

Use of the Harassment Incident Report Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Report Form in the beginning of

the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office and the school nurse's office; and 3) post it on the school's website.

At the beginning of each school year, the school will provide the school community with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Principal will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the Principal when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Principal does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

St. Mary of the Annunciation School expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a Staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or the Principal.

Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

Safety:

Before fully investigating the allegations of Bullying or Retaliation, the Principal will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged Target and/or to protect the alleged Target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the Target and/or the Aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or in any other school setting; identifying a Staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the Target. The Principal will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

Obligations to Notify Others:

Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the Target and the Aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice to Another School. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal of the other School(s) of the incident so that each School may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the Aggressor, the Principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Principal shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the Aggressor.

In making this determination, the Principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable School policies and procedures, consult with the School resource officer, if any, and other individuals the Principal or designee deems appropriate (including, but not limited to, the Office of the General Counsel of the Archdiocese).

Investigation. The Principal will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the Principal will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Principal will remind the alleged Aggressor, Target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the Principal, other staff members as determined by the Principal, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Principal will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal will consult with the Office of the General Counsel of the Archdiocese about the investigation.

Determinations. The Principal will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Principal will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the Target is not restricted in participating in School or in benefiting from School activities. The Principal or

designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the Principal may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the Target's or Aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The Principal will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the Target and the Aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if Bullying or Retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of Bullying or Retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable Massachusetts and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the Principal or designee cannot report specific information to the Target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the Target must be aware of in order to report violations.

Responses to Bullying:

Teaching Appropriate Behavior. Upon determining that bullying has occurred, the school will use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. Approaches that may be considered include:

- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students
- Meeting with parents to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula
- Making a referral for any further evaluation as appropriate

Taking Disciplinary Action. According to the Anti-bullying program in place, a Bullying Violation slip is issued for the first offense. If a second occurrence of bullying takes place, a violation slip is issued and the student receives detention. A parent/teacher/student conference is required for a third offense. A fourth offense provides for an in-house suspension of the Aggressor and the fifth offense requires a parent/student/ Principal/Pastor conference. In every instance, the Aggressor must write a letter of apology to the Target. This note must be brought home, signed by the Target's parents and returned to the classroom teacher. A copy of the note should be filed with the Harassment Incident Report Form.

If the Principal determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Promoting Safety for the Target and Others. The Principal will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school's environment to enhance the Target's sense of safety.

Within a reasonable period of time, the Principal will contact the Target to determine if there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures

are needed. If so, the Principal will implement them immediately.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Annual Staff Training on the Plan. Annual training on the Plan will be provided for all School Staff, and, at the discretion of the Principal, volunteers who have significant contact with students. At the beginning of each School year, the Principal shall provide written notice to the School Staff of the RCAB Policy and the St. Mary of the Annunciation Plan. Relevant sections of the RCAB Policy and the Plan relating to the duties of school staff shall be included in the faculty handbook.

On-going Professional Development. Professional development will provided as needed.

RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Counseling and Other Services

New Beginnings Counseling Services P.C. are available to support classroom initiatives to create a positive school environment by focusing on education and early interventions.

Melrose Alliance Against Violence (MAAV) provides professional development training for Staff and informational presentations for parents and students. Additionally, MAAV Provides information about bullying on their web site (<http://www.maav.org>)

Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) provides professional development trainings, and information on their web site, in support of staff, parent, and students. www.bridgew.edu/marc

The Middlesex Partnership for Youth and Project Alliance, in coordination with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office, provide ongoing support by presenting information.

ST. MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION SCHOOL
HARASSMENT INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date of Report _____

Time of Incident _____

Type of Incident (circle all that apply):

Harassment/Bullying

Cyberbullying

Retaliation

Other

Person reporting incident (circle one):

Student / Teacher / Parent / Counselor / Nurse / Support Staff / Other

Name(s) of Target

Grade _____
_____ Grade _____

Name(s) of Alleged Aggressor(s)

Grade _____
_____ Grade _____

Describe the incident that was reported or witnessed. Please be thorough and provide as much detail as possible. Please attach extra paper if necessary.

Name(s) of Witnesses (if any)

Grade _____
_____ Grade _____

Physical Evidence (if any)

Action(s) taken:

BULLYING VIOLATION

Date _____

Student _____

Grade _____

Description of the Offense

Person reporting incident:

Parent Signature

This violation notice must be returned the day following its issue.

BULLYING VIOLATION

Date _____

Student _____

Grade _____

Description of the Offense

Person reporting incident:

Parent Signature

This violation notice must be returned the day following its issue.

BULLYING VIOLATION

Date _____

Student _____

Grade _____

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Student _____

Grade _____

Description of the Offense

Person reporting incident:

Parent Signature

This violation notice must be returned the day following its issue.



St. Mary of the Annunciation School

**4 Myrtle Street
Melrose, MA 02176**

STUDENT ANTI-BULLYING PLEDGE

We, the students of St. Mary's School, agree to join together to stamp out bullying at our school.

We believe that everybody should enjoy our school equally, and feel safe, secure and accepted regardless of color, race, gender, popularity, athletic ability, intelligence, religion, or nationality.

Bullying can be pushing, shoving, hitting and spitting, as well as name calling, picking on, making fun of, laughing at, and excluding someone. Bullying causes pain and stress to victims and is never justified or excusable as "kids being kids," "just teasing," or any other rationalization. The Target is never responsible for the behavior of a Aggressor.

By signing this pledge, I agree to:

1. Value student differences and treat others with respect.
2. Not become involved in bullying incidents nor be an Aggressor.
3. Be aware of the school's policies and support system with regard to bullying.
4. Report honestly and immediately all incidents of bullying to a faculty member.
5. Be alert in places around the school where there is less adult supervision such as bathrooms, corridors and stairwells.
6. Support students who have been or are subjected to bullying.
7. Talk to teachers and parents about concerns and issues regarding bullying.
8. Work with other students and faculty to help the school deal with bullying effectively.
9. Encourage teachers to discuss bullying issues in the classroom.
10. Provide a good role model for younger students and support them if bullying occurs.
11. Participate fully and contribute to assemblies and discussions concerning bullying.

I acknowledge that whether I am being the Aggressor or I see someone being bullied, I am guilty if I do not report or stop the bullying.

Student signature

Date



St. Mary's School
4 Myrtle Street
Melrose, MA 02176

PARENT ANTI-BULLYING PLEDGE

We, the parents of St. Mary's School, agree to join together to stamp out bullying at our school.

We believe that everybody should enjoy our school equally, and feel safe, secure and accepted regardless of color, race, gender, popularity, athletic ability, intelligence, religion, or nationality.

Bullying can be pushing, shoving, hitting and spitting, as well as name calling, picking on, making fun of, laughing at, and excluding someone. Bullying causes pain and stress to Targets and is never justified or excusable as "kids being kids," "just teasing," or any other rationalization. The Target is never responsible for the actions of an Aggressor.

By signing this pledge, I agree to:

1. Keep our children and ourselves informed and aware of school bullying policies
2. Work in partnership with the school to encourage positive behavior, valuing differences and promoting sensitivity to others.
3. Discuss regularly with our children their feelings about schoolwork, friendship, and relationships.
4. Inform faculty of changes in our child's behavior or circumstances at home that may change a child's behavior in school.
5. Alert faculty if any bullying has occurred.

Parent signature

Date