

CURTIS BLAKE DAY SCHOOL
979 Dickinson St.
Springfield, MA 01108

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

Introduction

The Curtis Blake Day School is firmly committed to the prevention of bullying and to immediate intervention whenever bullying occurs or is suspected. Through the years our program has consistently focused on respect for other students with our annual themes which emphasize positive comments, kindness, empathy and expected behaviors. These have been implemented through our pragmatics and social thinking programs and create a school climate which represents a powerful underpinning for any anti-bullying program. All staff at the Day School are trained to intervene when negative social interactions occur and to use a variety of proven teaching strategies to resolve those conflicts. These strategies are outlined in more detail under the heading of “curriculum interventions.” In addition to these initiatives, the Day School has developed the following prevention and intervention plan to further reduce the possibility of any bullying activity.

Bullying prevention and intervention plan

The bullying prevention and intervention plan of the Curtis Blake Day School:

- was developed in consultation with administrators, teachers, school staff, students, parents and guardians. The consultation included a public comment period and the plan will be reviewed and updated every 2 years;
- includes descriptions of and statements prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation;
- establishes clear procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians, and others to report bullying or retaliation;
- includes a provision that reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously (provided that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report);
- establishes clear procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation;
- identifies the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a aggressor for bullying or retaliation;
- establishes clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for the target and assessing his/her need for protection;
- establishes strategies for protecting a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying;
- establishes procedures consistent with state and federal law to promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor. Procedures provide for immediate notification to the local law enforcement agency where criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor;
- includes a provision that a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action;
- includes a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors and targets and for appropriate family members of said students.

Definition of bullying

“Bullying” is the severe or 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 another student that has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or damage to the other student’s property;
- placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;
- creating a hostile environment at school for the other student;
- infringing on the rights of the other student at school;
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Definition of cyberbullying

“Cyberbullying” is 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, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include but not be limited to:

- 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 under the definition of bullying noted above.

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 under the definition of bullying noted above

A “hostile environment” is a situation in which bullying causes the Day School environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student’s education or create an abusive school environment.

Prohibition

Bullying, which includes cyberbullying, is prohibited on Day School grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or through the use of any school technology or electronic device.

Bullying, which includes cyberbullying, is also prohibited at any non-school location, activity, function or program and/or through the use of non-school technology or electronic device if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringes on their rights at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the Day School.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, who provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is a witness to or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment in connection with filing a complaint or assisting with an investigation under this policy.

As stated in M.G.L. c.71 §370, nothing in this Plan requires the Curtis Blake Day School to staff any non-school related activities, functions or programs.

Reporting

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. School staff, including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurse, support teachers or secretary will immediately, but no later than the end of the regular school day, report any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or of which the staff member has become aware. The report should be made to the school principal or designee. Failure to report may subject the staff member to disciplinary action. Staff members will use the “Bullying Incident Report Forms” appended to these policies.

Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to bullying or retaliation, or who has witnessed or learned about the bullying or retaliation of a student, has the right to report the information to the principal or designee. This may be done in writing or orally by informing the principal or designee as soon as possible. If the individual does not wish to discuss the issue with either, the student may report to any staff member at the Day School with whom he or she feels comfortable. The student may also report anonymously using the contact information described below. 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 with the principal or designee.

Bullying or retaliation reports made by parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school staff members, may also be made in writing or anonymously using the contact information described below. It should be noted that no disciplinary action can be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. All reasonable efforts will be made to maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of these policies may require disclosure of information received.

Contact information

Reports can be made orally, in writing or anonymously by using the “Bullying Incident Report Form” (appended to this Plan and available on the School website), by calling the Day School principal (413.205.3960), by email to linda.gillen@aic.edu or by mail to Linda Gillen, Principal, Curtis Blake Day School, 979 Dickinson St., Springfield, MA 01109.

Addressing the needs of the target

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee 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 on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

Addressing the needs of others

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

Investigation

The Day School’s principal or designee is responsible for investigating reports of bullying and/or retaliation. The investigation shall be prompt, fair and of sufficient duration to understand the circumstances of the complaint, including the type, severity and frequency of the alleged bullying. The investigation should generally include interviews of the target, the alleged aggressor, witnesses, individuals identified as having knowledge of the situation and anyone else the investigator believes may have such knowledge. The investigator should take notes during (or shortly after) the interviews for the purpose of maintaining accurate records.

The investigator should also review any documents that may be relevant to the allegations of bullying or retaliation whether in electronic format or otherwise and including photographs, emails, voice mails, telephone records, etc. The investigator should maintain a confidential file of interview notes and other documents pertaining to the investigation.

Resolution

If the investigator determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he or she will:

- Immediately notify parents/guardians of any target and any aggressor of this and the procedures for responding to it;
- notify the Director of Special Education of the students’ sending districts of the incident and the procedures for responding to it;
- take whatever action is necessary to end the bullying or retaliation;
- take disciplinary action in accordance with the Day School’s written policies on “Student Conduct and Behavior Management”;
- immediately notify the local law enforcement agency if there is reason to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor;
- notify the parents/guardians of the aggressor;
- notify the target and his or her parents/guardians (to the extent allowed by state and federal law) of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation;
- if indicated, provide information concerning counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets and parents/guardians.

Responses to bullying

If the investigator determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the initial approach will be to teach more appropriate behavior to the aggressor(s). The Day School has well developed methods for intervening in this way including our Social Thinking curriculum, our emphasis on perspective taking and the close and supportive relationship between staff and students, all of which are designed to help students learn appropriate way of achieving their goals. Intervention may involve consultation with the school Clinician and the parents/guardians of the aggressor(s) in order to insure parental support for the Day School's interventions.

Students will also be held accountable for bullying or retaliation activities and will be subject to disciplinary action which may include the range of sanctions specified in the Day School's written policies on "Student Conduct and Behavior Management". These may range from homeroom restriction to suspension to termination from the program, depending on the severity of the offense.

If the investigator determines that an individual has knowingly made a false report of bullying or retaliation, that individual will be subject to the same range of disciplinary action in accordance with the Day School's written policies on "Student Conduct and Behavior Management."

Relationship to Other Laws

Nothing in this Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school policies.

Curriculum interventions

The Curtis Blake Day School will incorporate age appropriate instruction on bullying prevention into the curriculum at each grade level. The instruction will include a variety of strategies that have been implemented for several years across the curriculum of the Day School, primarily in the Pragmatics and Social Thinking classes offered to all students. These approaches will be enhanced by a school-wide assembly with a guest speaker with known expertise in this area.

The content of classroom instruction will include any or all of the following activities: defining bullying and its dangers, role playing exercises, age appropriate anti-bullying videos, what to do if you observe bullying, distinguishing bullying from teasing and how to report bullying. The Day School has a long history of school-wide initiatives emphasizing empathy, kindness and positive feedback and these will continue. In addition, the Day School has regularly used The Story Grammar Marker™ to help students take another's perspective and to understand one's own and another's feelings. This educational tool is used throughout the curriculum to instruct students in the elements of story grammar and has been particularly useful in helping the children understand and respond effectively to social interactions and social conflict.

Finally, the School's emphasis on enhancing our students' self-advocacy and self-management skills will continue to be an important focus as part of our anti-bullying efforts.

Professional development

The Day School's bullying prevention and intervention plan will include ongoing professional development to build the skills of all school staff to identify and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development will include, but not be limited to:

- developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents;
- developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can exist among the aggressor, the target and any witnesses to the bullying;
- information on students who are at risk for bullying
- information on cyberbullying
- research findings on bullying;
- information on the incidence of bullying;
- internet safety issues related to bullying.

Parents and guardians

The Day School's bullying prevention and intervention plan will include provisions for educating parents and guardians about the School's bullying prevention curriculum, the dynamics of bullying, online safety, cyber-bullying and how they can reinforce that curriculum at home in support of the Day School's prevention and intervention plan.

The Day School will notify students and their parents/guardians annually of the relevant sections of the bullying and prevention policies. A description of the policies will be included in the school's Policy Handbook which is distributed to all parents and staff. In addition, a description of the policies will be included in the packet of information sent to all students at the beginning of each school year and to newly admitted students throughout the year. The Day School's bullying prevention and intervention policies will also be posted on the school's website.

Implementation

The principal of the Day School will be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and intervention plan of the Curtis Blake Day School.

CURTIS BLAKE DAY SCHOOL BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION
INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

This form is for the purpose of reporting any incident of bullying or retaliation of which the reporter is aware. Reports can be made orally, in writing or anonymously by using this form, by calling the Day School principal (413.205.3960), by email to linda.gillen@aic.edu or by mail to Linda Gillen, Curtis Blake Day School, 979 Dickinson St., Springfield, MA 01109. It should be noted that no disciplinary action can be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. All reasonable efforts will be made to maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of these policies may require disclosure of information received.

Name of person filing the report: _____

Check all that apply: I am a target of the behavior _____ I am a witness to the behavior _____
I am a Staff member _____ I am a student _____ I am a parent _____
I am an administrator _____ Other (specify) _____

Contact information/telephone number _____

Information about the behavior

Name of target of behavior _____

Name of alleged aggressor _____

Date/times of incident(s) _____

Location of incident(s) _____

Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it.)

Name _____ Student _____ Staff _____ Other _____

Name _____ Student _____ Staff _____ Other _____

Name _____ Student _____ Staff _____ Other _____

Describe the details of the incident(s) including the names of the person(s) involved, what occurred and what each person said and did, including specific words used. Use additional space on back if necessary.

Signature of person filing this report _____ Date _____

Form given to _____ Position _____ Date _____