



*Formerly The Children's Study Home*

## **Bullying Intervention and Prevention Plan**

### **Criterion: 20 January 2018**

The Helix Human Services' Mill Pond School expects that all members of the school treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. Our school is committed to providing students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber 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 and undermine our therapeutic special education program.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation in our school building, on school grounds or in school related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber bullying, and retaliation and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities and parent or guardian involvement.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is printed with appropriate reporting forms in the Parent Student Handbook which is reprinted and updated each year and sent to families, a signature is required after the parent and student have reviewed. The Staff Handbook also contains a copy of the Bullying Intervention and Prevention Plan with related reporting forms and is updated each year prior to the start of school. Staff also signs a receipt of the document. Staff meets informally daily and formally once a week. During these meetings discuss occurs around any reports or observations of bullying. Staff is informed so that everyone can be on high alert to ensure that bullying is not occurring.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber bullying and the Agency is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this plan for preventing, intervening and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation.

The Helix Human Services Day School Program “Mill Pond School” has developed the following plan in response to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 37O. Our plan emphasizes proactive and sustained approach to ensuring that our therapeutic program continues to provide a safe environment for our special needs students and complies with the training and reporting requirement of this new legislation.

The primary contact person for this plan is Amy Drake, Principal of Mill Pond School-Springfield Campus, Haley Pellegren, Principal of Mill Pond School-Richmond Campus.

## **I. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

### **Reporting Bullying or Retaliation:**

1. The existing Level System (which addresses appropriate behavior between student peers and towards staff) will be amended to include internet safety between students as well.

2. All school and Agency Staff members are required to report immediately to the Director of Education or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents/guardians or others and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member will be recorded in writing using the school bullying Prevention/Intervention Incident Reporting Form. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of staff to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or Agency procedures for behavior management and discipline.

Reports made by students, parent/guardians or other individuals who are not school or Agency staff members may be made anonymously; however, no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A copy of the reporting form will be included in student/parent handbooks distributed at the beginning of the school year; copies of the reporting form are available in the school administrative offices, the counseling office and the school nurse’s office.

Annual written notice of policies, procedures, and the plan will be provided to students, parents, and staff in student and staff handbooks.

### **Responding to Bullying/Retaliation Report:**

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal of the school 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. The Principal of the school or his/her designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary. The Principal of the school or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protection from bullying or retaliation for 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.

**The Investigation Steps Are as Follows:**

1. Bully/retaliation report is made to the Principal or designee.
2. Incident Report completed by staff, student, parent/guardian or others and forwarded to Principal or designee.
3. Upon receipt of a viable report, the principal, the Principal or designee will promptly contact the parent/guardians of the alleged target or the alleged aggressor.
4. The Principal or designee will conduct an internal investigation, to include interviews with the target(s) and alleged aggressor(s), students, staff, witnesses, parents/guardians and others as necessary.
5. The Principal or designee will remind the target(s) alleged aggressor(s), and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
6. To the extent practicable, the Principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigation process.

**School Determination Procedures Are as Follows:**

1. The Principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances.
2. If bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Principal or designee will determine what remedial, responsive or disciplinary action is necessary.
3. The Principal or designee will promptly notify the parents/guardians of the target(s) and aggressor(s) about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what actions are in place to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation and the procedures for responding to bullying.
4. All notices to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations.
5. If the bullying or retaliation involves students from other schools, the Principal or designee will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other schools so that appropriate action may be taken, in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations.
6. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after the investigation, if the Principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor(s), the Principal or designee will notify the local law enforcement agency, consistent with requirements and locally established agreements.

**School Responses to Bullying Include the Following:**

1. The schools will use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior including skill building and other relevant educational activities and positive behavior supports and plans.

2. Consequences for substantiated bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Apology (oral or written)
- Parent contact
- In-House suspension
- External suspension
- Expulsion
- Police contact

3. Because of the unique nature of each instance of bullying, the appropriate disciplinary action will be determined by the Principal after consultation with the Director of Education of his/her designee. Factors influencing his/her decision include the age of the students involved, past record of the aggressor, the severity, and the frequency of the bullying. Discipline will be consistent with the Agency and school codes of conduct. As part of therapeutically addressing the aggressor, an appropriate skill building activity will be assigned the aggressor as well as his/her consequence.

They include, but are not limited to:

- One on one lunch with a staff member discussing anti-bullying strategies
- Completion of a written assignment regarding the incident/feelings of the target and the effect on the school.
- Completion of an anti-bullying test
- Viewing an anti-bullying video
- Completion of an activity from Character Counts! Regarding respect, diversity, or anti-bullying.

4. The Principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance that target's sense of safety and that of others.

5. Within a reasonable period of time, the Principal or designee will contact the target(s) to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed.

6. Strategies for protecting targets, witnesses, interviewees, and reporters include:

- Separation from the aggressor
- Contact with the counselor
- Parent contact
- Mediation
- Heightened staff awareness of incidents
- Increased staff supervision at identified bullying sites

7. A student making a false accusation of bullying or retaliation will be subject to the same disciplinary action as a bully. The Principal or his/her designee will weigh the damage caused by the false accusation and prescribe the appropriate disciplinary action.

## **II. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES**

### **Parent education and resources:**

The schools will offer education programs for parents/guardians that are focused on the parental components of the bullying prevention and social competency framework used at each level, through the Parent Advisory Committee. The school counselor will be available for students who are involved in a bullying incident, regardless of their involvement. The Director of Clinical Services may assign appropriate staff when needed to work with students and families. If outside counseling is needed, the Director of Clinical Services will make arrangements with outside agencies.

### **Notification requirements:**

1. Each year the school will inform parents/guardians about the bullying prevention/intervention framework used, including information about the dynamics of bullying, cyber bullying and online safety.
2. The school will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the plan and the school internet safety policy through the Parent/Student Handbook.

## **III. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

### **Acts of bullying, which include cyber bullying, are prohibited:**

**(a)** On school grounds and 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 other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school Agency or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Agency or school, and

**(b)** At a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Agency or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights of school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c.71, § 370, nothing in this Plan requires the Agency or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions or program.

## IV. DEFINITIONS

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

**Bullying:** as defined in M.G.L. c.71, § 370, 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:

- (a) Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- (b) Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- (c) Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- (d) Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- (e) Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

**Cyber bullying:** is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet posting. See M.G.L. c.71, § 370 for the legal definition of cyber bullying.

**Hostile environment:** as defined in M.G.L. c.71, § 370 is 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 a student's education.

**Retaliation:** is any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying provide information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, and advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff or paraprofessionals.

**Target:** is a student against who bullying, cyber bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

## IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the schools and Agency, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school or any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of student such public school on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or Agency 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 or Agency policies. Students will be afforded equal protection regardless of their legal status.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or Agency to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c.71, § 370 or 37H 1/2, other applicable laws, or local school or Agency policies in response to violent, harmful or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.



Helix Human Services Mill Pond School and Curtis Blake Day School

**BULLYING PREVENTION & INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM**

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report)*

2. Check whether you are the: ☐ Target of Behavior ☐ Reporter (not Target)

3. Check whether you are a: ☐ Student

☐ Parent

☐ Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Staff Member (role): \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name of Target (of behavior): \_\_\_\_\_

5. Name of Aggressor (Person(s) who engage in behavior) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Date of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Time when Incident Occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

8. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please attach additional sheet if necessary.

9. Signature of Person Filing this Report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Note: Reports may be made anonymously.)*

**FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY**

Form Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Conclusions from Internal Investigation (Internal Investigation notes must be attached)

Actions taken: (include discipline, skill building, and protection actions taken in order to resolve the issue.)

**Signatures**

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Education: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Helix Human Services—Mill Pond Campus

## BULLYING INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Bullying is serious and will not be tolerated at Mill Pond School. If you wish to report an incident of alleged bullying, either contact the Principal or his/her designee to receive/complete this form and return it to the school so that staff can investigate the matter. In addition, we encourage you to work directly with the school staff as they take steps to resolve problems and assure the safety of all parties. This form can be completed anonymously.

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s) of target(s) of bullying

\_\_\_\_\_  
Age

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s) of aggressor(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Age

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s) of witness(es):

\_\_\_\_\_  
When did the incident(s) happen? (Include date and time)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Where did the incident(s) occur?

Please check the statement(s) that best describes what happened (*choose all that apply*)

☐ Teasing

☐ Hurtful, demeaning remarks or actions

☐ Threat

☐ Physical Violence

☐ Maliciously excluding from group

☐ Extortion

☐ Public Humiliation

☐ Defacing clothing or other property

☐ Stalking

☐ Cyberbullying

☐ Aggression encouraged by others

☐ Theft

☐ Intimidation

☐ Rumors or Spreading Falsehoods

☐ Retaliation

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Give a brief description of the incident(s) and/or your concerns. (*Use reverse side if necessary*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Did a physical injury result? Please check one of the following:

☐ No

☐ Yes, but it did not require medical attention

☐ Yes, and it required medical attention

\_\_\_\_\_  
Do you know of other incidents of bullying directed at this student?

☐ Yes

☐ No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the person reporting incident(s)? (*You may report anonymously*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Administrator Receiving Report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_