



Cutchins Programs
for Children & Families
New Directions School

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BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

The Cutchins Programs for Children and Families and the New Directions School is dedicated to helping students understand what bullying is and how bullying affects others and to facilitate prevention of any level of bullying that might involve our students. When bullying occurs or is suspected, the school will intervene as quickly as possible.

Over the years, we have developed and enhanced a therapeutic, DBT approach in our milieu which emphasizes respect and community, while embracing family and provider support. Through these efforts, New Directions School has maintained a climate where students have consistently expressed that they feel emotional and physical safety, and over the years we have experienced very few incidents that meet the criteria of bullying. Through our milieu treatment, individual, group, and family therapy, we have put an emphasis on processing difficulties and developing positive social skills that help students avoid situations where their behaviors can either make others feel unsafe or tacitly support others who are engaging in bullying behaviors. Our overall goal is to create a positive school climate where respect and positive communication help to prevent the creating of an atmosphere where bullying is accepted. .

Bullying Defined

“Bullying” or “cyber-bullying” is the severe or repeated use by one or more students or staff (including educators, administrators, nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors, and paraprofessionals) 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 another student or damage to 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
- causing disruption in the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Cyber-bullying” is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means.

“Hostile environment” 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 the student’s education and create an abusive school environment.

Student Expectations

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, functions or programming 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 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 victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the New Directions School.

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.

Bullying prevention and intervention plan

The bullying prevention and intervention plan will be reviewed every year and will:

- continue to be developed in consultation with administrators, teachers, school staff, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians.
- include a discussion period and the plan will be reviewed and updated every year, in conjunction with our Parent Advisory Council .
- include descriptions of prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation;
- establish clear procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians, and others to report bullying or retaliation;
- include 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);
- establish clear procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation;
- identify the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation;
- establish clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that student's needs for protection;
- establish strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation 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;
- establish procedures consistent with state and federal law for

- promptly notifying the parents or guardians of a victim and a perpetrator. Procedures must provide for immediate notification to the local law enforcement agency where criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator;
- include a provision that a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action;
 - include a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators and victims and for appropriate family members of said students.

Anti-Bullying Curriculum

The New Directions School will incorporate age appropriate instruction on bullying prevention into the curriculum at each grade level and will include at least one session per month over the course of the school year. These sessions will be conducted during DBT Skills classes and the community-wide Center Meetings

. The instruction will include (but is not limited to):

1. Defining Bullying.
 - a. Provide a definition of bullying
 - b. Examples of incidents of bullying
2. Where does bullying happen?
 - a. Including cyber bullying
3. Questionnaire about bullying at this school.
 - a. Students fill out questionnaire
 - b. Discussion about bullying at New Directions School.
4. Discuss overall feelings around bullying.
 - a. Around those who are bullying
 - b. Those who are bullied
 - c. Those who witness bullying
5. Why do people bully?
 - a. Connect life experiences to feelings, thoughts and behaviors
6. How does bullying affect the person being bullied?
 - a. Again connect feelings, thoughts and behaviors.
7. What can you do if you see bullying?
 - a. How can I help?
 - b. Who can help me?
8. How can we make our school bully free?
 - a. Students brainstorm ideas
 - i. Possible student anti-bullying team
 - b. Make posters
9. Include Parents in bully free school plan.
 - a. Notices sent home asking parents to bring any bullying incidents to school personnel.
10. Regular follow up and group discussions in community meetings about bullying

Professional Development

The School's bullying prevention and intervention plan includes ongoing professional development to build the skills of all members of school staff (including educators, administrators, nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors, and paraprofessionals) 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 interactions as well as the power differential that can exist among the perpetrator, the victim and any witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying;
- information on the incidence of bullying;
- internet safety issues as they relate to bullying.

Parents and Guardians

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

The 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. .

Implementation

The Education Coordinator and Milieu Coordinator will be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and intervention plan

Reporting

School staff, 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 Education Coordinator, Milieu Coordinator, or designee or to any other school administrator. Failure to report may subject the staff member to disciplinary action. Staff members will use the "Incident Report Form" and check off bullying .

Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to bullying or retaliation, or who has witnessed or learned about the bullying of or retaliation toward 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 with whom he or she feels comfortable.

Reports of bullying may be made anonymously by students or by those not directly employed by the School; provided 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 any or all information received.

Investigation

New Directions School's Milieu Coordinator, Education Coordinator 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 victim, the alleged perpetrator, witnesses, individuals whom any of the foregoing identify 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:

- take necessary steps to end the bullying or retaliation;
- implement disciplinary action in accordance with the 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 perpetrator;
- notify the parents/guardians of the perpetrator;
- notify the victim 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 perpetrators, victims and parents/guardians.
- Contact the DESE and file incident reports, if necessary

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