

Saint Patrick School

131 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Roxbury, MA 02119



2011/2012

Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy

Saint Patrick School, Roxbury, MA 02119
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
2011-2012

I. Introduction

At St. Patrick School we expect that all members of our school community will treat each other with respect and dignity.

It is the policy of St. Patrick School to provide and maintain a learning environment that is free of bullying and any other verbal or physical misconduct that disrupts the learning environment or makes it unsafe.

The Saint Patrick School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy set forth below is published in response to the recently enacted Massachusetts law against bullying and is an integral part of our efforts to promote learning and to prevent behavior that can impede the learning process. Our plan spells out St. Patrick's comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation.

This Policy is consistent with our policies against discrimination, harassment, bullying and retaliation that appear in our Parent/Student Handbook and our Faculty Handbook.

It is important that this Plan be well understood by all members of the St. Patrick School community. The principal is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Policy. Questions and concerns related to this Policy may be referred to Ms. Lanata.

II. Policy against Bullying, Cyber-Bullying and Retaliation

St. Patrick School will not tolerate any form of bullying or cyber-bullying, nor will we tolerate retaliation against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited on all school property and at any school sponsored events, field trips, and programs. Bullying and cyber-bullying are also prohibited at bus stops, on buses and other vehicles used by the school, and through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school.

In addition, bullying and cyber-bullying are 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 bullying creates a hostile environment at school for a targeted student; infringes on the rights of a targeted student at school; or materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

Definitions under the Law - The following definitions are drawn from the Massachusetts law against bullying:

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

Target: A target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Bullying: Bullying is defined as 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 targeted student or damage to the targeted student's property;
- Places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the targeted student;
- Infringes on the rights of the targeted student at school;
- Disrupts materially and substantially the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

Cyber-bullying: Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, fax machines, and the internet. It includes, but is not limited to: e-mail, instant messages, text messages, and internet postings, whether on a webpage, in a blog or otherwise.

Hostile Environment: A 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 a student's education.

Retaliation: Retaliation is 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.

Legal Definitions and School Policy: It is important to note that stricter standards of behavior may apply under St. Patrick policies in order that we may prevent inappropriate verbal and physical conduct before a student has been subjected to bullying as it is defined under the law. For example, although the law defines bullying as “*repeated use*” of certain expressions, acts, and/or gestures, the school reserves the right to apply disciplinary measures or other remedial action before the repetition of that expression, act, or gesture might reasonably result in bullying as defined under the law.

III. Prevention of Bullying and Cyber-bullying

Every student at St. Patrick School has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Our curriculum emphasizes a respect for differences and the dignity of every human person. Students are given clear expectation regarding their behavior in class and towards others. When necessary parents are notified and asked to reinforce the behavior standards at St. Patrick School.

The Parent/Student Handbook is reviewed with students and shared with parents/guardians each fall. This handbook includes explicit policies around acceptable use of computers and technology. Each student and parent/guardian signs both a Code of Conduct and Computer Acceptable Use contract each fall.

The administration and faculty recognize that it is essential that expectations for student conduct extend to corridors, gym, the school yard or field, at break time, and throughout the school day as well as on all school field trips or school sponsored events.

IV. Reports of Bullying, Cyber-bullying, or Retaliation

Any student who is the target of bullying or cyber-bullying or has witnessed an incident of bullying or cyber-bullying or otherwise has relevant information about bullying or cyber-bullying prohibited by this policy is strongly encouraged to promptly report the matter orally or in writing to the principal, vice principal, guidance counselor, or any faculty/staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Any student who is the subject of retaliation in violation of this policy or who knows of another student who has been the subject of retaliation is also urged to report it as soon as possible.

A parent of a student who is the target of bullying or cyber-bullying or of a student who has witnessed or otherwise has relevant information about bullying or cyber-bullying is strongly urged to promptly notify the principal.

Any member of the faculty or staff of the school who witnesses or otherwise becomes aware of bullying or cyber-bullying in violation of this policy or who becomes aware

of retaliation against a student who reported information regarding a violation of this policy is required to report it to the principal immediately. There are to be no exceptions. A faculty or staff member may not make promises of confidentiality to a student or parent who informs him/her of an allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or retaliation.

Faculty and staff may not make reports under this policy anonymously. The school also urges students and their parents not to make anonymous reports. Although there are circumstances in which an anonymous report can be better than none at all, it is far more difficult to determine the facts of what occurred in complaints from an anonymous report. Students and parents are encouraged to bear in mind that the school takes its policy against retaliation very seriously. While the school cannot promise strict confidentiality because information must be shared in order to conduct an effective investigation, the school releases information concerning complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation on a legitimate need to know basis only.

V. Responding to a Report of Bullying, Cyber-bullying, or Retaliation

- A. **Preliminary Considerations.** When a complaint of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation is brought to the attention of the principal, vice-principal, or guidance counselor, an assessment is made as to whether any initial steps need to be taken to protect the well-being of students and to prevent disruption of their learning environment while the investigation is conducted. As appropriate, strategies such as increased supervision may be implemented to prevent further bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation during an investigation.
- B. **Obligation to Notify Parents.** It is the policy of the school to notify parents promptly of any student who is an alleged target of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation and the parents of any student who may have been accused of engaging in such behavior after a complaint has been made.
- C. **Investigation** – The following is an outline of the procedure that is pursued once a complaint has been brought to the principal’s attention:
 - An impartial investigation of the complaint is conducted by the principal or vice principal.
 - This investigation may include but is not limited to:
 - Interviews with the person who made the complaint
 - Interviews with the student who was the target of the alleged bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation
 - Interviews with the person or persons against whom the complaint was made
 - Interviews with any students, faculty, staff, or other persons who witnessed or who may otherwise have relevant information about the alleged incident.

- Depending on the circumstances, the principal or vice-principal conducting the investigation will determine whether and to what extent the allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been substantiated. If it is determined that the policy set forth in here has been violated, the principal or vice principal will determine what disciplinary action and/or other remedial action is appropriate and how it will be implemented.

The goal of an investigation and any disciplinary or other remedial process that is imposed following an investigation is to correct the situation to the extent it is reasonably possible. A second goal is to take such steps as can be taken, to prevent there being a repetition of the incident and to prevent the student/students targeted and others who participated in the investigation from being subject to retaliation.

In appropriate circumstances, such as when a crime may have been committed or a child may have been subject to abuse or neglect of the type that is reportable under section 51A of the Massachusetts State laws, law enforcement or another appropriate government agency may be notified.

Upon completion of the investigation the principal or vice-principal who conducted the investigation will meet to report the results of the investigation with all parties concerned. Should disciplinary or corrective action be determined to be appropriate, the principal or vice-principal will inform all parties of the steps that will be taken to correct the situation. The amount of information in these meetings may be limited by confidentiality laws protecting student records.

Follow-up contacts will be made with any student found to have been targeted in violation of this policy and his/her parents to inquire if there have been any further incidents.

VI. Conclusion

This policy is intended to (1) prevent bullying and cyber-bullying among our students; (2) to encourage students and their parents to have confidence in the school's procedures and to come forward promptly whenever a student is subject to conduct that is prohibited by this and any other school policy; and (3) to implement appropriate discipline and other corrective measures when they are found to be warranted.

St. Patrick School, Roxbury

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing Report: _____

(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 the behavior ____ Reporter (not target)

3. Check whether you are a: ____ Student ____ Staff member (your role) _____
____ Parent ____ Administrator ____ Other (specify) _____
Your contact information/phone no.: _____

4. If student, state your school: _____

5. If staff member, state your school or work site: _____

6. Information about the incident:

- Name of Target: _____
- Name of Aggressor(s): _____
- Dates of Incident(s): _____
- Time when incident(s) occurred: _____
- Location of incident(s) – Be as specific as possible:

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

Name: _____ __ Student __ Staff __ Other _____
Name: _____ __ Student __ Staff __ Other _____
Name: _____ __ Student __ Staff __ Other _____

8. Describe the details of the incident (include names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.

9. Signature of Person Filing this report: _____ Date _____

10. Form given to: _____ Position _____ Date _____

St. Patrick School, Roxbury Investigation of Bullying Form

INVESTIGATION

Signature: _____ Date Received: _____

1. Investigator(s) & Position(s): _____
2. Interviews:
Aggressor(s): Name: _____ Date _____
Name: _____ Date _____
Name: _____ Date _____
Name: _____ Date _____
3. Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor(s): ___ Yes ___ No
 If yes, have incidents involved target group or target group previously? ___ Yes ___ No
 Are there any previous incidents with findings of Bullying/ Retaliation? ___ Yes ___ No
4. Interviews with Target(s)/Witnesses: Date _____
5. Summary of Investigation: (Use additional paper and attach to this document if needed)

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CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation: ___ Yes ___ No
2. Incident documented as _____
3. Discipline referred: ___ Yes ___ NO
4. Contacts:
 Target's parent/guardian Date: _____ Aggressor's parent/guardian Date _____
 Law Enforcement Date: _____ Catholic School Office Date: _____
5. Action Taken: ___ Loss of Privileges ___ Detention ___ Guidance referral
 ___ Community Service ___ Suspension ___ Other _____
6. Describe safety planning: _____
7. Follow up with Target scheduled for _____ Initial/date when complete _____
8. Follow up with Aggressor scheduled for _____ Initial/date when complete _____
9. Report forwarded to Principal on _____ to Superintendent on _____
10. Signature and Title: _____ Date _____

St. Patrick School Bullying Report Form

Adult receiving the Report: _____

Date and Time: _____

Who Reported the bullying? (*Circle one*) Bullied student Bystander Parent

Name of bullied student/students: _____

Student/students who did the bullying: _____

Where did the incident happen? (Check all that apply)

- On school property At a school-sponsored activity or event
 At a bus stop On a school bus On a computer
 On the way to/from school

Put an X next to the statement(s) that best describes what happened. (Choose all that apply):

- Teasing Threat Stalking Theft
 Cyber-bullying Social Exclusion Physical violence
 Public humiliation

Are there immediate safety needs? Yes No

If yes, send the student(s) to the office for prompt attention.

Specific Concerns (Check all that apply)

- Physical Injury Damaged clothing Transportation Needs
 Fear of retaliation Severity of bullying Emotional needs
 Continued cyber-bullying Other (describe)

Action Taken: _____