

Baystate Academy Charter Public School Bullying Prevention Plan

Introduction

Baystate Academy Charter Public School is committed to creating and promoting the safest and highest-quality learning environment for all members of our school community. It is the responsibility of all members of BACPS to ensure that our community is safe, inclusive, and welcoming so that all students may achieve their greatest potential.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory disabilities, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Therefore, BACPS will work actively to prevent, intervene in, and to respond to bullying as reflected in this comprehensive plan.

1. Definitions

A. ***“Bullying”*** means the severe or repeated use by one or more BACPS community members (student, staff) of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

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

In some circumstances, bullying may be established based on a single incident, due to its severity, despite the fact that the conduct is not repetitive. ***“Severe”*** means the incident was significantly offensive based objectively from the perspective of a “reasonable person”.

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

- unwanted teasing;
- threatening;
- intimidating;
- stalking;
- cyber-stalking;
- cyber-bullying;
- physical violence;
- theft;
- sexual, religious, disability or racial harassment;

- public humiliation;
- destruction of school or personal property;
- social exclusion; and,
- rumor or spreading falsehoods.

B. **“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, electromagnetic, 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.
- the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions listed in the definition of bullying.
- 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 listed in the definition of bullying.

C. **“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.

D. **“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.

E. **“Perpetrator”** means the student or staff member who engages in bullying or retaliation.

F. **“School grounds”** means property on which a BACPS building or facility is located; or property that is used by BACPS for any school sponsored activities, functions, programs, instruction or training.

G. **“Victim” or “Target”** means the student who has been bullied or retaliated against.

2. Policy

A. Bullying is hereby prohibited by Baystate Academy Charter Public School:

- on 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 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; and,
- 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 the victim,

infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process, the orderly operation of the school or the working environment.

- B. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is hereby prohibited.
- C. False accusations of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- D. This policy does not require BACPS to staff any non-school related activities, functions or programs.

3. **Bullying Prevention Plan**

A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation:

- Any staff including but not limited to teacher, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional shall immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the Principal or Dean of Students.
- Any student, parent, guardian or other interested person may report any bullying or suspected bullying to the Principal or Dean of Students/Principal as soon as reasonably possible. If possible, reports should be in writing but there is no requirement that they be written. Reports of bullying or suspected bullying may be made anonymously. Reports may also be submitted to the Crew advisor/teacher, or the school nurse.
- If an instance of bullying is reported to a staff member other than the Principal or Dean of Students, the staff member shall immediately inform the Principal or Dean of Students.
- The Dean of Students, who is in charge of receiving complaints, should keep accurate documentation of all complaints received.
- The Dean of Students/Principal should document the following:
 - a. the name of the target;
 - b. the name and status of the complainant (i.e. student, staff, third party), although this information can be omitted if the report is made anonymously
 - c. the name of the alleged bully;
 - d. the date the complaint was received;
 - e. how the complaint was received (i.e., written, oral);
 - f. the nature of the complaint (i.e. facts of the complaint); and
 - g. the names of witnesses.
- Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

- Please note that any individual who knowingly makes a false report will be subject to disciplinary action.

B. Responding to Reports of Bullying or Retaliation:

- Safety
 - a. Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Dean of Students/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 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 Dean of Students/Principal will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.
 - b. The Dean of Students/Principal 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.
- Obligations to Notify Others
 - a. Notice to Parents or Guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal or Dean of Students/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 Dean of Students/Principal contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00. *The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.*
 - b. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, nonpublic school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal or Dean of Students/Principal first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee 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.

- c. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal or Dean of Students/Principal has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal or Dean of Students/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 or Dean of Students/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 or Dean of Students/Principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.
 - a) Investigation of Reports of Bullying or Retaliation
 1. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal should conduct an investigation within 5 days of the complaint, if possible.
 2. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal should ask all appropriate questions of the target in order to get the full story.
 - a. who, what, when, where, how;
 - b. is there any physical evidence (documents, texts, voicemail);
 - c. effect of bullying or retaliation - what will restore the target's sense of safety; and
 - d. assess the target's need for protection and if needed determine what form the protection should take.
 3. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal shall notify the parents or guardians of the alleged bully and the victim. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal should caution all witnesses and the alleged bully that retaliation is also a violation of school policy.
 4. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal should interview the alleged bully and fairly warn him/her that the conduct will, if appropriate, be reported to local law enforcement.

5. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal should interview witnesses.
6. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal should establish the following:
 - a. if the alleged bullying or retaliation occurred;
 - b. when the alleged bullying or retaliation occurred;
 - c. how frequently the alleged bullying or retaliation occurred;
 - d. specific facts about the type and severity of the alleged bullying or retaliation;
 - e. if the bullying or retaliation has affected the target;
 1. what action will restore the target's sense of safety;
 2. is the target in need of protection and if so what type;
 3. what professional services are appropriate to recommend or require; and,
 4. is notification to local law enforcement required.

C. Decision

1. Based upon a thorough investigation, the Principal or Dean of Students/Principal shall make a decision that is appropriate for all parties concerning whether bullying occurred and if so, what is the appropriate remedy including discipline of the perpetrator, appropriate educational and counseling remedies and protection of the target.
2. Depending on the circumstances of the case, if it is determined that bullying or retaliation has occurred the Principal or Dean of Students/Principal may discipline the offending party by ordering:
 - a. counseling and counseling for the appropriate family members as well
 - b. schedule or class change;
 - c. stay away order;
 - d. an educational component;
 - e. a verbal warning;
 - f. a written warning;
 - g. suspension;
 - h. expulsion;

- i. or any other consequences deemed appropriate by the Principal or Dean of Students.
- 3. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal shall notify local law enforcement if he/she believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the alleged perpetrator.
 - a. Any discipline should be viewed in the light of balancing accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
- 4. If the incident involves students from more than one school, the school first informed of the bullying or retaliation shall, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school or schools. If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21, the school shall inform local law enforcement when appropriate and consistent with this policy.
 - a. Parents/guardians will be notified of action taken to prevent further acts of bullying/retaliation .The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal should confer with the target and his/her parents to explain the action being taken including what if any actions are being taken to create a sense of safety for the target, and implementation of any protection plans and to make counseling referrals for the target and for the target’s family members if appropriate.
 - b. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal shall confer with the alleged perpetrator and his/her parents. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal shall explain the discipline if any, make any counseling referral for the perpetrator and for any appropriate family members of the perpetrator, explain plans for creating a sense of safety for the target, explain any protection plans and reiterate any retaliation by alleged perpetrator or family/friends may subject the offender to further discipline up to and including expulsion.
 - c. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal may hold meetings with parents and guardians to engage parental support and reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building at home.
 - d. The Principal or Dean of Students/Principal should follow-up on this decision in order to ensure that his/her recommendation has been put into effect.

D. Bullying Prevention Plan – Education and Professional Development:

This bullying prevention plan shall be developed and updated biennially in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, BACPS Board of Trustee members, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. There shall be notice of the consultation and a public comment period.

- E. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches: Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:
1. using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
 2. empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
 3. helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
 4. emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
 5. enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
 6. engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.
- F. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:
1. setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
 2. creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
 3. using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
 4. using positive behavioral supports;
 5. encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
 6. modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
 7. using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
 8. using the Internet safely; and
 9. supporting students' interest and participation in co- activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

- G. At BACPS, there are structures in place that explicitly work to prevent bullying:
1. Crew: All students at BACPS participate in the daily Crew Advisory Program which presents a personal and social development curriculum around our school-wide character values of Respect, Responsibility, Perseverance and Integrity. In addition, the Crew curriculum contains units on Conflict Resolution, Personal Safety, and Healthy Decision-Making as well as age appropriate instruction on bullying prevention.
 2. Parent Workshops: each quarter BACPS offers parenting classes on topics central to adolescent wellness including a session on the dynamics of bullying, online safety and cyber-bullying, and how parents and guardians can reinforce our crew curriculum and bullying prevention curriculum at home; and
 3. Community Building: The school holds school-wide “community circle” meetings each week where positive character and school values are warmly celebrated.
 4. Teaching Appropriate Behavior through Skill Building: The school will work to explicitly teach students behavioral skills which may include:
 - a. presenting individualized skill-building sessions based on the school’s anti-bullying curricula;
 - b. providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with the behavioral health specialist;
 - c. implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
 - d. meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
 - e. adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
 - f. creating a referral for evaluation.
- d. There will be ongoing professional development to build skills of all staff members, including but not limited to teachers, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. Professional development shall include:
- 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 take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
- internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.
- The school shall provide annual written notice of the plan to all staff.
- All staff shall be trained and provision for faculty and staff duties shall be included in the school employee handbook.
- The Plan shall be posted on the website for the school.
- The Principal or Dean of Students shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan.

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the school may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pga>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Executive Director's office.



BACPS Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation Incident Report Form

Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. If you are a student, parent/guardian of a student, a volunteer or visitor and become aware of a possible incident, please fill out this form as completely as you can, and return it to , or any member of the BACPS faculty/staff. All school employees are required to report suspected incidents. This form can be submitted anonymously by omitting your name and signature. BACPS is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for everyone in our community. Every reported incident will be investigated and the proper individuals will be informed.

Date of Incident: _____

Name of Target: _____ Grade: _____

Name(s) of Alleged Aggressor/s: _____ Grade: _____

_____ Grade: _____

_____ Grade: _____

Location of the Incident: (check all that apply)

1. School bus stop
2. To/ From School
3. Text/Phone/Internet/Social Media
4. School Sponsored Activity
5. Event off Campus
6. On Campus
7. Other _____

What Occurred? (check all that apply)

1. Taunting
2. Threat
3. Intimidation
4. Stalking
5. Theft
6. Retaliation

7. Humiliation
8. Exclusion
9. Physical Contact
10. Cyber-bullying
11. Other _____

Did physical injury result?(check all that apply)

1. No
2. Yes
3. Medical attention required
4. Medical attention NOT required
5. Student absent from school as a result of incident? No ___ Yes___ # of days _____

Describe the incident (please attach another page if necessary):

Person reporting incident (print name) _____

(signature) _____

Individual reporting is:

1. Student
2. Faculty/ Staff
3. Parent/ Guardian
4. Other