

Center On Deafness – Centerview Therapeutic School

3444 Dundee Rd. Northbrook, IL 60062

5.2.1 BULLYING POLICY

Purpose

The Illinois General Assembly has found that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve and that bullying can cause physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with their ability to learn and participate in school activities. Bullying has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, using drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment, and violence.

It is the goal of the Center On Deafness and Centerview Therapeutic School to create a learning environment in its school community where students are protected from bullying, so they feel safe and supported in their efforts to succeed academically and develop emotionally into responsible, caring individuals.

The Center On Deafness asks every Centerview Therapeutic School student, with the support of his/her parent(s), guardian(s) and the adults at school, to commit to the following principles, which will apply to everyone on school property and at school-related activities:

- I will not bully others.
- I will try to help anyone I suspect is being bullied.
- If someone is being bullied, I will tell an adult.

Scope

Bullying is contrary to Illinois law and this policy is consistent with the Illinois School Code. This policy protects Centerview Therapeutic School students against bullying and harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic. The Center On Deafness recognizes the particular vulnerability of students with actual or perceived disabilities and those who identify as or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Nothing in this policy is intended to infringe upon any expression protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.

This policy will be reviewed every two (2) years based on an assessment of its outcomes and effectiveness, including, but not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff and family observations of safety at school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation.

Bullying is prohibited:

1. During any school-sponsored program or activity;
2. In school, on school property, on school buses or other school district provided transportation, and at designated locations for students to wait for buses and other school district provided transportation;
3. Through the transmission of information from a Center On Deafness computer or computer network or other electronic school equipment;
4. When communicated through any electronic technology or personal electronic device while on school property, on school buses or other school district provided transportation, at bus stops, and/or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities;
5. When it is conveyed that a threat will be carried out in a school setting, including threats made outside school hours with intent to carry them out during any school-related or sponsored program or activity or on school district provided transportation.

Definitions

"Bullying" - Any severe or pervasive (repeated over time) physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students, that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the following effects:

1. Placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation, one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non exhaustive.

"Cyberbullying" means using information and communication technologies to bully. This definition includes cyberbullying by means of technology that is not owned, leased, or used by the school district when an administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred. This policy does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any non-school related activity, function, or program.

"Retaliation" means any form of intimidation, reprisal including but not limited to the submission of knowingly false bullying allegations, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation is prohibited and will result in the imposition of appropriate interventions/consequences.

Intervening to Address Bullying

All Center On Deafness/Centerview Therapeutic School staff members who witness incidents of bullying or school violence or who possess reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying, must:

1. Intervene immediately in a manner that is appropriate to the context and ensures the safety of all people involved;
2. Report the incident of bullying or retaliation to the School Program Coordinator/school counselor as soon as practicable, but within twenty four (24) hours, on a Center On Deafness Incident Report;
3. Cooperate fully in any investigation of the incident and in implementing any safety plan established by the School Program Coordinator/school counselor.

Responsibilities of Students, Parents and Guardians

Students who witnesses bullying must notify a staff member at the school immediately. Any parent or guardian who witnesses or is notified of bullying has an obligation to advise the Center On Deafness School Program Coordinator or school counselor as quickly as practicable. Reports can be made by calling (847) 559-0110 or by emailing stopbullying@centerondeafness.org. No disciplinary action will be taken on the sole basis of an anonymous report and further investigation will be conducted.

Investigation

1. The School Program Coordinator and/or the school counselor shall perform the investigation.
2. Investigation of a bullying incident shall be initiated within five (5) school days of receipt of a report and completed within ten (10) school days.
3. The investigation shall include:
 - a. Identifying the perpetrator(s), target(s) and bystander(s), as well as any adult who witnessed the incident or may have reliable information about it;
 - b. Conducting an individual interview in a private setting with the alleged perpetrator and target; The alleged perpetrator and target should never be interviewed together or in public; Individual interviews shall also be conducted in private with student and adult bystanders;
 - c. Determining how often the conduct occurred, any past incident or continuing pattern of behavior, and whether the target's education was affected;
 - d. Assessing the individual and school-wide effects of the incident relating to safety, and assigning school staff to create and implement a safety plan that will restore a sense of safety for the target and other students who have been impacted;
 - e. When appropriate, preparing a school Incident Report;
 - f. Comprehensively documenting the details of the investigation.
4. When the investigation is complete, the School Program Coordinator and/or the school counselor shall ensure the investigation report is attached to the school Incident Report and placed in the individual's school file.

Notification

On the same day the investigation is initiated, the School Program Coordinator/school counselor shall report to the parent/legal guardian of all involved students, via telephone, personal conference and/or in writing, the occurrence of any alleged incident of bullying, and shall document these notifications in the school Incident Report. When the investigation is complete, the School Program Coordinator/school counselor shall notify the parents/legal guardians of all students involved of the outcome of the investigation. When communicating incidents of bullying to the target's parent/guardian, the School Program Coordinator/school counselor should consider whether the student may want to keep certain information confidential. For example, if a student is bullied after coming out as gay, the School Program Coordinator/school counselor shall not disclose the student's sexual orientation to the parent/guardian without the student's permission, unless there is a legitimate, school related reason.

Assigning Interventions and/or Consequences

If a peer conflict is ongoing and meets the definition of bullying, the investigation procedures in this policy must be followed. Staff must respond to bullying in a manner tailored to the individual incident, considering the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. When an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the School Program Coordinator/school counselor shall explain the consequences in a non-hostile manner, and shall impose any consequence immediately and consistently. The School Program Coordinator/school counselor shall keep communicating and working with all parties involved until the situation is resolved.

Some key indicators of resolution include:

- The perpetrator is no longer bullying and is interacting civilly with the target;
- The target reports feeling safe and is interacting civilly with the perpetrator;
- School staff notice an increase in positive behavior and social-emotional competency in the perpetrator and/or the target;
- School staff notice a more positive climate in the areas where bullying incidents were high.

Referrals

Interventions with bullies should not focus on feelings but changing the perpetrators way of thinking. The targets of bullying need protection from bullies but may also need support and help in changing their own behavior. The counselor shall help develop these skills in a therapeutic setting.

Appeal

Any party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation may submit a written appeal to the Center on Deafness Executive Director, within fifteen (15) calendar days of notification of the School Program Coordinator's decision. The Executive Director shall render a final determination. The Executive Director shall notify the party requesting the appeal and the School Program Coordinator that its decision is final and shall document that notification in the related Incident Report.

Consequences for Center On Deafness/Centerview Therapeutic School Employees and Contractors

When it is determined that an employee or contractor was aware that bullying was taking place but failed to report it, the employee/contractor will be considered to have violated this policy. The School Program Coordinator shall consider employee discipline for such violations.

Notice and Dissemination of Requirements

The School Program Coordinator shall make sure that the Bullying Policy is posted on the school's website, in the school building, as well as disseminating and presenting this policy to school staff as part of pre school year professional development.

Training and Professional Development

Professional development will be offered to build the skills of all Center On Deafness/Centerview Therapeutic School employees to implement this policy.

The content of such professional development shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent incidents of bullying and to intervene immediately and effectively to stop them;
2. Information about the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, target, and witness to the bullying;
3. Information about Internet safety issues as they relate to "cyberbullying".