

## Center On Deafness – Centerview Therapeutic School

3444 Dundee Rd. Northbrook, IL 60062

### 5.2.1 BULLYING POLICY

Last revision: 12/10/2021

#### 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. The information developed as part of the evaluation process will be posted on the district website. If the internet website is not available, the information will be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

The bullying policy aligns with the other policies of the Center On Deafness board of directors. Bullying is contrary to state law and the policy of the school district.

#### 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; 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;

4. 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 a student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student or students’ person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students’ 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 or 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. Appropriate remedial actions will be implemented for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.

### **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 Principal/Program Coordinator (John Jun) or the school counselor (David Wood) 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.
4. Make school counseling services, restorative measures, and therapeutic interventions such as social-emotional skill building available and easy to access.

### **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](mailto:stopbullying@centerondeafness.org). Anonymous reporting can be done through the Center On Deafness/Centerview Therapeutic School website anonymous reporting form located at <https://www.centerondeafness.org/anonymous-bullying-report.html>. 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 principal or school administrator or his or her designee shall be notified of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after it is received.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation can obtain information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

The Center On Deafness will investigate where the reported act of bullying is within the school's jurisdiction and if so, will provide the victim with information regarding services that are available from the school as well as in the community where they live.

## **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.

Federal and state laws govern student privacy rights includes procedures and promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying. This includes discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

## **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 be based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians. The policy will be posted on the school's website, in the school building, in the school handbook, and distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

### **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".