Bullying Prevention Policy
Foothill Elementary School

Foothill Elementary School and Saratoga Union School District believe that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. Our district, schools, and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

Our school community will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate, harass, or bully another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes: direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation.

Foothill Elementary School expects students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal. Staff who witness such acts take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of bullying will be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during lunch, whether on or off campus, and during a school-sponsored activity.

To ensure bullying does not occur on school campus, Saratoga Union School District provides staff development training in bullying prevention. Our social-emotional learning curriculum and school-based services aim to cultivate a school culture of acceptance and understanding, as well as help students build skills that help them regulate their emotions, practice self-advocacy, and successfully navigate peer conflict.

Teachers should discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

The following guidelines outline essential information about bullying and how students and staff should approach circumstances where a student or adult is being bullied.

The aim of these guidelines are to:

1. Define bullying
2. Offer a consistent response to bullying behavior
3. Create a safe, secure, and positive environment where all members of our community are treated with respect
4. Support the social, emotional, and behavioral growth of all students
5. Track incidents of bullying and assess the effectiveness of school-based interventions

The following information about bullying is adapted from stopbullying.gov.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying can lead to significant lasting problems, for both children who bully and those who are their victims.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:
- **An Imbalance of Power:** Children who bully use their power – such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or social status within a community – to control or harm others.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Types of Bullying

There are three kinds of bullying:
- **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
  - Teasing
  - Name-calling
  - Inappropriate sexual comments
  - Taunting
  - Threatening to cause harm
- **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
  - Leaving someone out on purpose
  - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
  - Spreading rumors about someone
  - Embarrassing someone in public
- **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
  - Hitting/kicking/pinching
  - Spitting
  - Tripping/pushing
  - Taking or breaking someone's things
  - Making mean or rude hand gesture

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place via a digitally-mediated environment like SMS, text, apps, social media, forums, or online gaming communities. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing

personal or private information about someone causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

Discriminatory Harassment

Bullying can also include harassment based on a person's perceived or expressed identity, which may include:

• Race, ethnicity, and national origin

• Religion and faith

• Gender

• Sexual orientation

• Disability

This kind of harassment is discriminatory and unlawful.

Effects of Bullying

Children Who Are Bullied

Bullying can negatively impact a child's physical, social, and emotional well-being. Children who are bullied are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, changes in sleep and eating patterns, health problems, and decreased academic achievement.

Children Who Bully Others

Children who bully others are at risk for violent and other high-risk behaviors into adulthood, including alcohol and drug abuse, domestic and sexual violence, and criminal behavior.

What Kids Can Do

Treat Everyone With Respect

• Stop and think before you say or do something that could hurt someone.

• If you feel like being mean to someone, find something else to do.

• Keep in mind that everyone is different. Not bettor or worse. Just different.

• If you think you've bullied someone in the past, apologize.

If You're Being Bullied

• Talk to an adult you trust. Don't keep your feelings in side. Telling someone can help you feel less alone. A trusted adult can help you make a plan to stop the bullying. Students can report bullying by approaching a trusted adult, requesting to speak with an adult through a Kelvin survey, or by calling the number on our SpeakUp cards.

• Tell the bully to stop in a calm, clear voice. You can also try to laugh it off in the moment.

- If speaking up seems to hard or not safe, walk away and stay away. Find an adult to stop the bullying on the spot.
- Stay near adults and other kids. Most bullying happens when adults aren't around.

Protect Yourself From Cyberbullying

- Think before you post. How would you feel if this post or message was shared with others? Do not share anything that could hurt or embarrass anyone.
- Remember that, if you are being unkind online, you're being unkind.
- Keep your passwords secret from other kids, even kids who are your friend.
- Keep your parents in the loop about what you are doing online and who you are connect in with.
- Tell an adult right away if you receive a message that feels threatening or unsafe, if you receive a message from someone you do not know, or if you access content that makes you sad or scare. Report cyberbullying right away.

Stand Up For Others

- Talk with a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult if you see someone being bullied. Adults need to know when bad things happen so they can help.
- Tell the bully to stop in a calm, clear voice. If speaking up is too hard or not safe, tell an adult right away.
- Be kind to the student being bullied. Show them you care by including them and letting them know they aren't alone.

School Staff Response to Bullying Among Students

If a child reports bullying behavior, staff will:

- Listen with empathy and treat information seriously.
- Immediately inform school administration.

School administration will:

- Respond promptly to the concern.
- Keep the parents and staff informed and involved as appropriate.
- Respect student confidentiality.
- Ensure a child who is being bullied has access to school-based resources to feel safe and address ongoing concerns from the bullying.
- Ensure a child who is bullying has access to school-based resources that teach replacement behaviors and address ongoing concerns from the bullying.

Recommendations for Parents

If you are concerned your child is being bullied:

- Consider signs of potential bullying: school avoidance, complaining of feeling ill, withdrawing from preferred activities, avoiding friends, losing items at school, coming home with bruises or torn clothing.
- Contact school administration.
- Reassure your child that you and school staff will work together to stop the bullying and make sure they are safe.
- *Do not* encourage retaliation.
- Talk with your child about ways to respond when they experience bullying.

Responding to a Bullying Incident

Bullying reported to staff

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Staff inform principal

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Principal meets with students involved

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Does what happened meet the definition of bullying?

No → Mediation
Monitoring of the situation
Incident report in Power School
Parent contact, if appropriate

Yes → Parent contact
Incident report in Power School

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Was the incident a severe or repeated offense?

Yes → Appropriate school-based consequences
Restorative practices
Consider support from SRO/other external agencies
Refer to COST to consider intervention supports
Ongoing follow up with principal

No → Appropriate school-based consequences
Restorative practices, including teaching, facilitating apologies, etc.
Consider intervention support as needed
Ongoing follow up with principal

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Was this enough to stop the bullying?

No → (back to Appropriate school-based consequences)

Yes → Reinforce/support changed behavior