



INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BOSTON BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

At the International School of Boston, we expect that all members of our school community will treat each other with civility and respect. It is the policy of the School to provide and maintain a learning environment that is free of bullying, cyberbullying, retaliation, and any other behavior (verbal or physical) that disrupts or creates an unsafe learning environment.

The ISB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the “Plan”), set forth below, has been developed in accordance with 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. The Plan spells out ISB’s comprehensive approach to addressing incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. Pursuant to the Plan, the School will promptly investigate any report of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation. If a determination has been made that bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has occurred, ISB will take immediate action to stop the behavior and address the safety concerns for any member of our community who has been impacted.

This Plan is consistent with broader protections at ISB against discrimination, harassment, bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation that appear in our *Parents’ Handbook*, our *Faculty/Staff Personnel Policies Handbook*, and our *Elementary, Middle and Upper Schools Codes of Conduct*. The Plan is posted on the ISB website and will be reviewed and updated every other year and/or according to any changes that take place in the Massachusetts law.

It is important that this Plan be reviewed by all members of the ISB community. The Head of School is responsible for the implementation and administration of the

Plan. Questions and concerns related to this Plan may be referred to him or to one of the School's Division Directors.

The School requires all faculty and staff to complete annually an online Mandated Reporter Training and will provide faculty and staff with regular professional development training on bullying and cyber-bullying prevention and detection as well as training on the Plan, which at a minimum will include a review of the reporting obligations for all faculty and staff and the process that the School will follow in response to a report of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

POLICY AGAINST BULLYING, CYBER-BULLYING, AND RETALIATION

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

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited on school grounds and at school-sponsored events, activities, functions, and programs, including athletic practices and games that occur at off-campus locations. Bullying and cyber-bullying are also prohibited at school bus stops, on school buses and other vehicles owned, leased, or used by the school. It is also prohibited through use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school.

In addition, bullying and cyber-bullying and retaliation 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 conduct/behavior 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

Massachusetts General Laws chapter 71, section 370, governs the prohibition of bullying and the adoption of bullying prevention and intervention plans. As such, and as used in the Plan, the following definitions apply:

Bullying: Bullying is “the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of the School staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

- (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s targeted student’s property;
- (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- (v) materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.”

Cyber-bullying: Cyber-bullying is “bullying through the use of technology or 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:

- (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or
- (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation of impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the above definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include 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 enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.”

Perpetrator: A perpetrator is “[a] student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation.”

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 or work environment.

Retaliation: Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying or who witnesses and/or, provides information during an investigation.

Legal Definitions and School Policy

It is important to bear in mind that stricter standards of behavior may apply under ISB’s policies in order that we may prevent inappropriate verbal and physical conduct before a student has been subject to bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation as it is defined under the law. For example, although the statute and this Plan define bullying as “repeated use” of certain expressions, acts, and/or gestures, the School reserves the right to apply disciplinary measures and other corrective/remedial action in a case of a single expression, act or gesture, if the School determines that it is of sufficient severity to warrant disciplinary measures or other corrective/remedial action.

PREVENTION OF BULLYING, CYBER-BULLYING, AND RETALIATION

From the earliest grades at ISB, students learn that as members of our community they have a right to be treated with civility and respect. Our curriculum emphasizes respect for differences, and faculty and staff are clear in their expectations for student behavior. As stated in the Elementary, Middle and Upper Schools’ Codes of Conduct, parents are expected to review the Code of Conduct with their child/children and reinforce standards of membership in the ISB community. Additional information and resources are provided to parents and families through presentations by outside consultants, the Weekly Update and the Health & Wellness portal page.

Each of our divisions provides programming to educate our students in bullying prevention skills and strategies to either prevent or respond to bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation. Each division has programs presented by outside consultants and in addition, the Elementary School program includes character education themes that are introduced in monthly assemblies and extended by faculty in their classrooms; the Middle School has an Advisory program that focuses on peer relationships and community-building; and, the Upper School offers a Flex-time program with a wellness component and a “community conversations initiative.”

The administration, faculty and staff recognize that it is essential that expectations for student conduct extend to corridors, locker rooms, lunch, recess, carpool, buses and the like. The School strives to ensure that adult supervision is provided on School premises, including but not limited to the corridors and locker rooms, at lunch and at recess, and on School-provided transportation throughout the school day as well as at School-sponsored events.

REPORTS OF BULLYING, CYBER-BULLYING, OR RETALIATION

Any member of the School community can and should report any incident of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation. Faculty and staff are *required* to report any such incident, as further discussed below.

Confidentiality

The School understands that reporting bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation can be emotional and complicated. Therefore, the School is committed to protecting the confidentiality of parties involved in an investigation, to the extent possible under the circumstances.

Students

Any student who is the target of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation or has witnessed an incident of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation or otherwise has relevant information about bullying, or cyber-bullying, or retaliation is strongly encouraged to promptly report the matter orally or in writing to a member of the ISB faculty, staff and/or administration. A student may make an anonymous report, although no disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A student who knowingly makes a false report of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents and Families

A parent or family member of a student who is the target of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, or of a student who has witnessed or otherwise has relevant information about bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation is strongly urged to promptly notify the Head of School or a Division Director. A parent or guardian may make an anonymous report, although no disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. If a parent or guardian knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, the School may take appropriate action up to and including dismissal of the parent or guardian's child(ren) from the School. Furthermore, any parent or family member who has witnessed bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation or has relevant information concerning such an incident is strongly urged to contact the Division Directors.

Faculty and Staff

Any member of the faculty or staff who witnesses or otherwise becomes aware of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation is *required* to report it immediately to the Head of School or one of the Division Directors. There are no exceptions. This includes not only incidents of which faculty or staff have first-hand knowledge but also any time that faculty or staff have any reasonable basis to believe that such an incident may have occurred – in other words, faculty and staff must report any credible report or allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, regardless of the fact that the faculty or staff member lacks first-hand knowledge, and regardless of whether the faculty or staff member has confirmed whether any such incident actually occurred. It is for the School, not the individual faculty or staff member, to investigate any such reports or allegations.

A member of the faculty or staff may not make promises of confidentiality to a student, parent, family member or co-worker who informs him/her of an allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Faculty and staff may not make anonymous reports concerning a student.

Anonymous Reports

As noted above, faculty and staff may not make reports anonymously concerning a student. Although Massachusetts law permits anonymous reports, the School urges students and their parents not to make reports anonymously. Although there are

circumstances in which an anonymous report can be better than none at all, it is far more difficult to investigate and determine the facts of what occurred if complaints are made anonymously.

RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF BULLYING, CYBER-BULLYING, OR RETALIATION

Preliminary Considerations

When a complaint of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation is brought to the attention of the Head of School or a Division Director, 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 being conducted. As appropriate, strategies such as increased supervision or a safety plan during an investigation may be developed and implemented to prevent further bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Investigation

The following is an outline of the procedure that is pursued once a complaint has been brought to the attention of the Head of School or one of the Division Directors:

An impartial investigation of the complaint is conducted by the Head of School or by the Division Director or their designee. That investigation may include (but will not necessarily be limited to) individual interviews with:

- (i) the person who made the report or complaint;
- (ii) the student who was the target of the alleged bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation;
- (iii) the person or persons against whom the complaint was made, and
- (iv) any students, faculty, staff or other persons who witnessed or who may otherwise have information relevant to the complaint.

Resolution, Notification, and Follow-up

Following interviews and any other investigation undertaken, as the School deems appropriate, the Head of School or the Division Director 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 this Plan has been

violated, the Head of School or the Division Director will determine what disciplinary action and/or other remedial action is appropriate and how it will be implemented. In all cases where dismissal is considered as a disciplinary action, the Head of School will be consulted and will make the final determination.

The goal of an investigation, and any resulting disciplinary or other remedial action that is imposed following that investigation is to correct the situation to the extent it is reasonably possible and to take such steps as can be taken to prevent there being a repetition of the incident and to prevent the student or 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 by a caretaker, law enforcement or another appropriate government agency may be notified.

Upon completion of the investigation, the Head of School or the Division Director will meet individually with the student or students who were the target of the alleged incident, the person or persons against whom the complaint was made and parents/families of said persons. All parties involved will be informed as appropriate with respect to the results of the investigation and any steps that will be taken to address the situation.

The Head of School or Division Director, in consultation with the school counselor, may refer perpetrators, victims and family members of such students for counseling or other services as appropriate.

The Head of School or Division Director will notify the appropriate administrator of another school if an incident of bullying or retaliation involves a student from that school.

The Head of School or Division Director will ensure that any appropriate follow-up with victims, perpetrators, or others is undertaken.

Record-Keeping

The Head of School will keep a separate and confidential file on all reports of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, the investigation, and any actions taken in response to a finding of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

NOTIFICATION AND TRAINING

The School will provide written notice of the relevant student-related sections of this Plan to students and parents/guardians at least annually. The notification to students will be in age-appropriate terms. Relevant portions of the Plan will be included in the Parent and Student Handbook.

The School will post the entire Plan on its website.

The School will provide training on this Plan for all employees at least annually. The training at a minimum will include a review of the reporting obligations for all employees and the processes that the School will follow in response to a report of bullying or retaliation. The Plan, or relevant portions thereof, will be included in employee handbook.

REVIEWING AND UPDATING THIS PLAN

The Plan will be updated at least once every two years. In connection with that update, the Head of School or designee will be responsible for reviewing the Plan, reviewing the file of reported incidents of bullying or retaliation in at least the preceding two years, and undertaking such other steps as may be appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of this Plan and the School's compliance with the Plan and any laws or regulations relating thereto.

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