

## **BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN**

**Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech**

**47 Round Hill Rd.**

**Northampton, MA 01060**

### **Introduction**

Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech is firmly committed to the prevention of bullying and to immediate intervention whenever bullying occurs or is suspected. Our program has consistently focused on respect for other students as part of our social-emotional learning instruction which emphasizes positive interactions and expected behaviors. Our initiatives have helped to create a welcoming school climate which represents a powerful underpinning for any anti-bullying program. In addition, Clarke has developed the following prevention and intervention plan to further reduce the possibility of any bullying activity.

### **Definition of bullying**

“Bullying” or “cyber-bullying” is the severe or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or damage to the other student’s property
- placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property
- creating a hostile environment at school for the other student
- infringing on the rights of the other student at school
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Cyber-bullying” is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means.

“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 the student’s education and create an abusive school environment.

### **Prohibition**

Bullying is prohibited 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 through the use of any personal or school technology or electronic device.

Bullying is also prohibited at any non-school location, activity, function or program and/or through the use of non-school technology or electronic device 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 or the orderly operation of the school.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, who provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is a witness to or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or

harassment in connection with filing a complaint or assisting with an investigation under this policy.

### **Bullying prevention and intervention plan**

The bullying prevention and intervention plan of the Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech:

- was developed in consultation with administrators, teachers, school staff, students, parents and guardians. The plan will be reviewed and updated every 2 years.
- includes descriptions of and statements prohibiting bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation;
- establishes clear procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians, and others to report bullying or retaliation;
- includes a provision that reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously (provided that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report);
- establishes clear procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation;
- identifies the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation;
- establishes clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that student's needs for protection;
- establishes strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying;
- establishes procedures consistent with state and federal law for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of a victim and a perpetrator. Procedures provide for immediate notification to the local law enforcement agency where criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator;
- includes a provision that a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action;
- includes a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators and victims and for appropriate family members of said students.

### **Curriculum interventions**

The Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech will incorporate age appropriate instruction on bullying prevention into the curriculum at each grade level. Topics will be addressed in class groups facilitated by teachers of the deaf and/or the school psychologist during Social Emotional Learning sessions. This instruction will include use of the following programs designed by Committee for Children, 568 First Avenue South, Suite 600, Seattle, Washington 98104:

- Woven Word Pre/K
- Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum (preschool-8<sup>th</sup> grades)
- Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program (3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades)

### **Professional development**

The school's bullying prevention and intervention plan will include ongoing professional development to build the skills of all members of school staff to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development will include, but not be limited to:

- 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 exist among the perpetrator, the victim and any witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying;
- information on the incidence of bullying;
- internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

### **Parents and guardians**

The school's bullying prevention and intervention plan will include provisions for educating parents and guardians about the school's bullying prevention curriculum, how they can reinforce that curriculum at home, how they can support the school's prevention and intervention plan, the dynamics of bullying, and online safety and cyber-bullying.

The school will notify students and their parents/guardians annually of the relevant sections of the bullying and prevention policies. A description of the policies will be included in the school's student and staff handbooks. In addition, a description of the policies will be included in the packet of information sent to all students at the beginning of each school year and to newly admitted students throughout the year. The school's bullying prevention and intervention policies will also be posted on the school's website.

### **Implementation**

The principals of the elementary school and the director of the preschool, with the assistance of the school psychologist, will be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and intervention plan.

### **Reporting**

School staff, including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurse or support staff will immediately, but no later than the end of the regular school day, report any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or of which the staff member has become aware. The report should be made to the school principal or designee or to any other school official identified in the bullying prevention and intervention plan as responsible for receiving such reports. Failure to report may subject the staff member to disciplinary action. Staff members will use the "Bullying Incident Report Form" appended to these policies.

Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to bullying or retaliation, or who has witnessed or learned about the bullying or retaliation of a student, has the right to report the information to the principal or designee. This may be done in writing or orally by informing the principal or designee as soon as possible. If the individual does not wish to discuss the issue with either, the student may report to any staff member at the school with whom he or she feels comfortable.

Reports can be made orally, by using the “Bullying Incident Report Form”, by calling Preschool Director Marian Hartblay, K-8 Director OJ Logue or K-8 Lead Teacher Kathleen Shea at 413-584-3450, by email to [mhartblay@clarkeschools.org](mailto:mhartblay@clarkeschools.org), [ojlogue@clarkeschools.org](mailto:ojlogue@clarkeschools.org) or [kshea@clarkeschools.org](mailto:kshea@clarkeschools.org) or by mail to Marian Hartblay, OJ Logue or Kathleen Shea at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech, 47 Round Hill Rd., Northampton, MA 01060..

Reports of bullying may be made anonymously by students or by those not directly employed by the school; provided, however, that no disciplinary action can be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. All reasonable efforts will be made to maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of these policies may require disclosure of any or all information received.

### **Investigation**

The school’s principals or designee are responsible for investigating reports of bullying and/or retaliation. The investigation shall be prompt, fair and of sufficient duration to understand the circumstances of the complaint, including the type, severity and frequency of the alleged bullying. The investigation should generally include interviews of the victim, the alleged perpetrator, witnesses, individuals whom any of the foregoing identifies as having knowledge of the situation, and anyone else the investigator believes may have such knowledge. The investigator should take notes during (or shortly after) the interviews for the purpose of maintaining accurate records.

The investigator should also review any documents that may be relevant to the allegations of bullying or retaliation whether in electronic format or otherwise and including photographs, emails, voice mails, telephone records, etc. The investigator should maintain a confidential file of interview notes and other documents pertaining to the investigation.

### **Resolution**

If the investigator determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he or she will:

- take whatever action is necessary to end the bullying or retaliation;
- take disciplinary action in accordance with the school’s written Discipline Policies as stated in the Student Handbook (ranging from loss of recess privileges or detention to in school or at home suspension);
- immediately notify the local law enforcement agency if there is reason to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator;
- notify the parents/guardians of the perpetrator;
- notify the victim and his or her parents/guardians, to the extent allowed by state and federal law, of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation;
- if indicated, provide information concerning counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators, victims and parents/guardians;
- consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the safety of the target, witnesses or any person who provides reliable information about an act of bullying (including increased adult supervision, seating and/or schedule changes and periodic checks for any recurrence of bullying or retaliation).

If the investigator determines that an individual has knowingly made a false report of bullying or retaliation, that individual will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the school's written Discipline Policies as stated in the Student Handbook.