

Appendix B

THE SAGE SCHOOL BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

Introduction:

The Sage School is committed to providing an environment that is both physically and emotionally safe for all children. It is our responsibility as educators to clearly and immediately address any behavior which is impeding the learning of any Sage School member. The Sage School expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

The Sage School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is written in response to the recently enacted Massachusetts law. This plan focuses primarily on bullying and retaliation. Our behavior code and expectations are clearly communicated in our Family Handbook and on our website. This policy will ensure that members of our school community, including students, parents and staff, know what will happen when incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation are reported.

Policy:

The Sage School will not tolerate bullying or retaliation of any kind. We are a small school based on a community of trust, kindness and mutual respect. Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited in our building, on our grounds, and at any Sage-sponsored function or event. When Sage students and staff travel off campus, either on school trips, field trips, on the bus, or at any sponsored event where students are representing Sage, the same rules and expectations apply.

It is important to note that if any Sage student participates in bullying or cyber-bullying off campus, even on their own time, the school reserves the right to pursue and investigate these instances as well. If the bullying creates a hostile environment for the target, infringes on the rights of the target, or in any way substantially disrupts the learning environment, The Sage School will pursue the report.

Definitions:

The following definitions are drawn from the Massachusetts Law.

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Bullying is the 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 a target that with intent:

1. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or the target's property
2. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to self or others or damage to his or her property
3. creates a hostile environment at school for the target
4. infringes on the rights of the target at school, or
5. materially or substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school.

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cellphones, computers or the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to: email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

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.

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

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Reporting Process and Follow Up: The following guidelines work to support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation. Any student, parent of a student, or staff member who is either the target of a bullying or cyberbullying incident or who has witnessed or has relevant information regarding a bullying or cyberbullying incident is encouraged to promptly file an incident report. Any student, parent or staff member who is subject to any retaliation in violation of this policy is also encouraged to report this as soon as possible.

1) **Reporting bullying or retaliation:** Reports may be made orally or in written form; oral reports shall be recorded in writing. Communication must be made immediately to the appropriate Dean of Students about any incident. Reports from non-school staff members, such as adults hired to run clubs, may be made anonymously. An Incident Reporting Form is found at the end of this document. It is important to note that while reports may be made anonymously, it is more difficult to follow up and determine the facts when this is the case. Faculty and staff are not allowed to file an anonymous report. Students are encouraged to talk to someone on the school staff that they trust. Confidentiality is important in a school, but it is important to note that the school cannot promise confidentiality when determining the facts and following up on the report.

2) **Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation:** When a report of bullying and/or retaliation has been brought to the attention of a Sage School staff member, this information is immediately shared with the Dean of Students. The designee will first assess the need and safety of the target. If needed, responses may include creating a safety plan for the target. This plan could include responses such as establishing a seating plan (for the classroom, lunch room, school bus, etc.) In addition, at this point a safe person should be identified for the target to talk to whenever needed. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, it is the policy of The Sage School to promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target about this, and of the procedures for responding to it. The parents of the student or aggressor who has been accused of bullying or retaliation will also be notified.

3) **Investigation:** When an incident of possible bullying or retaliation has been reported, the Dean of Students will immediately begin an investigation and will gather and consider all relevant information. Interviews will be held with the person reporting the bullying, the target, and the aggressor. In addition, if helpful, additional students and staff members who may have been witnesses will be interviewed. The Dean of Students will also remind the aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. The Dean of Students will also maintain a written record of the investigation.

4) **Determination:** The Head of School or Dean of Students will:

- A. make determination based upon all facts and circumstances,
- B. determine what remedial action is necessary,
- C. determine what responsive action or disciplinary action is necessary,
- D. may consult with others (teachers, counselors),
- E. promptly notify parents/guardians of target and aggressor, and
- F. because of state and federal privacy and confidentiality laws, designee cannot report specific disciplinary action taken to parents of the target

5) **Responses to Bullying:** once it has been determined that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school respond. The goal of any response and/or remediation plan is to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target's school experience is not impacted. This includes participation in any school-related activities. Possible responses may include:

- A. teaching appropriate behavior through skills-building,
- B. providing individual support for the target,
- C. implementing relevant activities for group or class,
- D. meeting with parents/guardians,
- E. adopting behavioral plan with clear expectations and consequences for the aggressor,

and/or

F. making a referral for outside evaluation or support.

If it is determined that bullying and/or retaliation has occurred, disciplinary action may be taken. This action is:

1. made on the basis of facts found,
2. consistent with school's code of conduct, and may include a range of responses including suspension and dismissal
3. If it is determined that a false allegation has been made the student may be subject to disciplinary action as well.

Our goal and outcome must promote and provide safety for the target and others. The Sage School will also determine if changes need to be made within the school structure (ex. increased adult supervision, altering activities, more curricular support) In addition, the Head of School or Dean of Students will follow up with the target to assess climate.