



20.0 BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Bullying (including cyber-bullying and harassment) are major distractions from learning. Bystanders feel both guilty and helpless for not standing up to the bully.

Most bullying by students starts out verbally – easing and put-downs – and may become progressively worse and assume physical dimensions. Bullying of any type, including cyber-**bullying is unacceptable in school and our community. Reed Academy in partnership with our students and families will endeavor to maintain learning and working environment free of bullying.**

Definition: Bullying, including cyber-bullying, as defined by Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts Acts of 2010, 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 therefore, directed at a victim that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property
- 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 school.

Cyber-bullying, as defined by Chapter 92 of the Massachusetts Act of 2010, is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which will include, but will 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 written, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying also includes:

- The creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or
- The knowing impersonation creates any of the conditions included in the definition of bullying above.

Cyber-bullying will also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to one or more persons 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 included in the definition of bullying above.

Reed Academy prohibits bullying:

- On school grounds and 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 other vehicle owned, or used by the local school districts



- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, or used by a school or school and 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 Reed if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Note: nothing contained herein will require Reed to staff any non-school related activities, functions or programs. In addition:

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses bullying, or has reliable information about bullying will be prohibited.

Reed Academy will provide for all staff, professional development that includes 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 take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying; research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

Reed responsibilities: each year Reed will provide:

- All staff members with written notice of the bullying policy.
- A copy of Reed's Bullying Prevention and Intervention guidelines to the local police
- A copy of Reed's Bullying Prevention and Intervention guidelines to students / parents / guardians
- Students and parents/guardians with written notice of the relevant, student-related sections of the bullying policy in age-appropriate terms.
- Age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade through an evidence-based curriculum
- Professional development to build the skills of all staff members 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 take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying
- Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying, and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

Inform parents and guardians about:

- The school's bullying prevention plan
- How parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home and support Reed
- The dynamics of bullying
- Online safety and cyber-bullying.

In addition, Reed will continue to

- Promote and model the use of respectful language
- Foster an understanding and/or respect for diversity and difference
- Build relationships and communicate with families
- Constructively manage classroom behaviors
- Use positive behavioral intervention strategies
- Apply constructive disciplinary practices
- Teach students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others
- Engage students in school or classroom planning and decision making and maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

Administrative Guidelines and Procedures:

The Executive Director/Special Education Administrator is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying policy including the following:

- Each year time will be devoted to providing information, resources and training to staff about bullying and our bullying policy
- Each year the Special Education Administrator will make sure students, parents, and staff are informed of the Reed bullying policy and how to access the bullying incident form.
- Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Executive Director/Special Education Administrator or Director of Psychological Services will assess the



need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The Executive Director/Special Education Administrator or Director of Psychological Services will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

- The Executive Director will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.
- Students, parents, and other witnesses will report incidents of alleged bullying or retaliation to any staff member, orally or in writing in a timely manner. Reports may be made anonymously by accessing the bullying incident report form, though no disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- Staff members who witness or are informed of alleged bullying or retaliation will report the incident to the Executive Director/Special Education Administrator right away and complete the bullying incident report.
- If a staff member is a possible victim of bullying or retaliation, he/she will be notified immediately if she/he has not initiated the report him/herself.
- The Executive Director/Special Education Administrator will complete an investigation of the alleged bullying or retaliation incident within 24 hours of having received the report, including meeting(s) with involved students and witnesses. The parents or guardians of those involved will be immediately notified of the alleged incident,
- If the incident includes a possible criminal offense, the Framingham Police Department will be notified immediately.
- If the allegations of bullying or retaliation are substantiated, the Executive Director will meet with all Directors to determine the appropriate disciplinary response, which may include mediation, detention, suspension (in or out of school), or termination. The Special Education Administrator will also complete a written Incident Report detailing:
 1. Findings
 2. Disciplinary response, actions that will be taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation
 3. Actions that will be taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation
 4. The procedures and supports that will be used to restore a sense of safety for the victim

The student(s) parents or guardians will be immediately notified of the disciplinary actions.



Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include a warning, detention, or suspension (in or out of school).

If any perpetrator of bullying is a staff member, appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken and may include a reprimand, suspension, or termination depending on the severity of the incident.

If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from other schools, the other school will be informed so that both may take appropriate action.

If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Framingham police Department will be contacted immediately.

Support Services

Our behavioral modification program will now include specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be influenced by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- Using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including the underlying power imbalance;
- Emphasizing cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

When the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

The strategy for providing counseling for targets, aggressors, and appropriate family members of the involved student will be addressed as part of the on-going family therapy. The family therapist will refer families if outside services are needed. Protection will be available for all students regardless of their race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.



Reed will review the Bullying Policy at least biannually. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan has been posted on Reed Academy's website, reedacademy.net.

Reed will give parents and guardians annual written notice of the student-related sections of the local Plan. It has also been included in parent/student handbooks which are distributed upon admission and also annually.

Employee handbooks/policies and procedures contain relevant sections of the plan relating to the duties of educational staff and other staff.