

SCHOOL OF EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND LEARNING

Policy Name: Bullying	
Reviewed Date: 9/13/2020	
Originate Date: 8/25/2010	Revised Date: 9/16/2022
Approved By: Administration	Policy Number: SE-PPBBP28

Purpose:

(105 ILCS 5/27-23.7) The General Assembly finds that **a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve**. Bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with students' ability to learn and participate in school activities. The General Assembly further finds that bullying has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, using drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Because of the negative outcomes associated with bullying in schools, the General Assembly finds that school districts and non-public, non-sectarian elementary and secondary schools should educate students, parents, and school district or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school personnel about what behaviors constitute prohibited bullying.

Policy:

According to Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7-23.10), Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in all school districts and non-public, non-sectarian elementary and secondary schools. No student shall be subjected to bullying:

- (1) during any school-sponsored education program or activity;
- (2) while in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities; or
- (3) through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
- (4) through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed through a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (4) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

"Bullying" includes "cyber-bullying" and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the

following:

- (1) placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- (3) substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- (4) substantially interfering with the students or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

"Bullying," as defined above, may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation 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 system, photo electronic system, or photo optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyber-bullying" includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. "Cyber-bullying" also includes 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 effects enumerated in the definition of bullying as defined above.

Procedure for Reporting Bullying:

- A student who experiences bullying as defined above is encouraged to immediately report the incident orally or in writing to a trusted staff member. If preferred, a student may also leave an anonymous note in their counselor's mailbox.
- Reports of bullying or harassment can also be sent to info@seal-il.com. Any information sent to this address will be reviewed by a member of S.E.A.L. Administration and directed to the proper Clinical Team Member.

Procedure for Prompt Investigation:

- The trusted staff member will then report the incident to the building's Clinical Coordinator(s) and Program Coordinator(s) who will investigate and make a determination of next steps regarding communication with the guardians and counselors of the involved students, additional supports, disciplinary action, and restorative measures.
- The Clinical Coordinator(s) and Program Coordinator(s) will promptly notify the remaining campus coordinators, and in some cases, the Leadership Team/Administration as well should the severity of the case require additional counsel.

The team will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report was received. Coordinators should take into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.

- As a part of the investigation, the primary investigating Coordinator will see that parents or guardians of any involved students are informed of the incident and ongoing investigation. The parents or guardians will also be offered the opportunity to discuss the incident as it relates to their student only, via phone conference or video conference due to the vast geographical locations served at each campus and therefore the limited availability and convenience to meet in person. This Coordinator will also ensure that the procedure for informing parents or guardians strictly follows federal and Illinois state laws regarding student privacy rights. At no time will S.E.A.L. staff discuss a student with an adult who is not their legal parent or guardian.

Procedure for Intervention and Remedial Action:

- There should be no reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying. The Program Coordinator in consultation with the classroom staff, clinical staff assigned to the student's case, along with the Coordinator Team, Leadership Team, and Administration will determine consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.
- The team will determine consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying.
- In addition to addressing remedial actions, S.E.A.L. is committed to following up with all involved parties, and will offer sufficient counseling services to all involved students from one of the school's Licensed (Clinical) Professional Counselors. S.E.A.L. is also able to provide resources for students or families who may seek counseling, support services, and/or other programs outside of school, as a result of the bullying incident.
- If it is determined that an act of bullying falls outside of the scope of The School of Expressive Arts and Learning's jurisdiction and capability, proper local law enforcement may be contacted by S.E.A.L. Administration.
- In the case of a threatening electronic message that may impact the school environments or those present in the milieu, the team will evaluate the level of threat and may collaborate with local law enforcement to investigate the incident in order to keep all parties safe. Cyber communications that may impact a student in their home environment (rather than school environment) will likely lead to school personnel recommending guardians to contact their local police departments independent from the school's handling of the situation.

Policy Efficacy and Evaluation Process:

- The School of Expressive Arts and Learning acknowledges that a policy alone is not enough to combat or prevent bullying in a school setting. S.E.A.L. is committed to creating a culture that fosters healthy development amongst our student body. Staff are encouraged to provide tools to our students to discuss healthy relationships, promote positive psychological health, and to show empathy and support to all students, whether a staff member perceives the student as the victim or the aggressor of bully behavior.

- Staff members are trained bi-annually in areas such as “Working with Students in a Therapeutic Day School,” as well as in areas regarding student privacy, dignity, and identifying signs of depression or suicide.
- The School of Expressive Arts and Learning also relies on evidence-based Social Emotional Learning. According to the *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning* (CASEL), “Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.” An emphasis on SEL from our teachers and counselors, allows the School of Expressive Arts and Learning to foster a culture with reduced bullying and greater understanding of a student’s emotional support needs.
- The School of Expressive Arts and Learning is also committed to training select clinical staff in trauma-informed therapy services, through attending annual conferences and certification programs.
- Following incidents of bullying, the Coordinator team will document the event as well as contribute to a record for identifying:
 - 1) the frequency of victimization
 - 2) student, staff and family observations of school safety
 - 3) areas of the school where bullying occurs
 - 4) the types of bullying occurrences
 - 5) actions, interventions or participation of bystanders
 - 6) summary information
- The content of this policy and a bullying data summary will be available at seal-il.com, and updated annually.

The School of Expressive Arts and Learning acts in accordance with Illinois State Board of Education guidelines regarding bullying in the following ways:

- (1) Providing ongoing training to all employees on preventing, recognizing, and handling bullying or potentially bullying situations.
- (2) Maintaining communication with families and outside agencies where necessary, when/if concerns are present regarding the bullying of or by students at our facility.
- (3) Enforcing immediate and appropriate disciplinary actions as consequence for any bullying behavior.
- (4) Providing students with education and counseling specific to avoiding bullying behavior related to both being the aggressor and/or the victim of bullying.

Employee Name _____

Date _____

(10) Is posted on the school district's, charter school's, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school's existing Internet website, is included in the student handbook, and, where applicable, posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted in the school and provided periodically throughout the school year to students and faculty, and is distributed annually to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

(11) As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating the policy under subsection (d) of this Section, contains a policy evaluation process to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy that includes, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The school district, charter school, or non public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation must be made available on the Internet website of the school district, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school. If an Internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.