

New England Pediatric Care

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

NEPC's school handbook/admission materials (and local updated Plan) is consistent with the amendments to the Massachusetts anti-bullying law, which became effective July 1, 2013.

The amendments extend protections to students who are bullied by a member of the school staff. As defined in G.L. c. 71,37O(d), as amended, a member of the school staff includes, but is not limited to, an “educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional.”

A member of the school staff may be named the “aggressor” or “perpetrator” in a bullying report.

The school at New England Pediatric Care prohibits all of its students and staff from bullying, cyber bullying and any type of retaliation related to both. New England Pediatric Care Day School educates medically fragile students with significant cognitive disabilities that include deficits in expressive and receptive speech, and therefore are not identified as perpetrators or aggressors. However, students and staff may be at risk to be targets of bullying. NEPC’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention has written this policy to protect our students from any type of Bullying behavior, and any incidents of bullying that are reported , NEPC will act swiftly and accordingly. Additionally, NEPC students participate in social skills group that provides them access to social communication and developmentally appropriate responses to bullying.

If a student or staff knows or suspects that bullying or cyber bullying is taking place or they are in fear of retaliation the must report it immediately to school personnel. If any parent or guardian knows or suspects that their son or daughter is the victim of bullying or cyber bullying or are in fear of retaliation for either themselves or their son or daughter they must report it immediately to school personnel.

Known or suspected bullying and any type of retaliation can be reported to any school employee but should be reported to the classroom teacher, the Director of Education or the Program Director.

All school employees are required to notify the Program Director of any known or suspected case of bullying, cyber bullying or retaliation.

In all cases, bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation can be reported anonymously, verbally, or in writing to the appropriate personnel. However disciplinary action shall not be taken against a student or staff solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

All employees of the school that receive a report of bullying, cyber bullying or retaliation must report it to either the Director of Education or the Program Director Immediately. The Director of Education upon receiving such report must notify the Program Director immediately and an investigation will be started.

The investigation will consist of interviewing all of the parties involved along with obtaining written statements.

If a student is found to be guilty of bullying, cyber bullying, threatened or acted upon retaliation the disciplinary action may be anything from counseling to expulsion from school

If a staff member is found to be guilty of bullying, cyber bullying, threatened or acted upon retaliation the disciplinary action may be anything from counseling to written warning to termination.

Any person that reports bullying or retaliation, provides information about bullying or witnesses bullying will be protected as necessary on a case by case basis.

If an investigation results in determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred then we will immediately notify the parents or guardians of a target and an aggressor. The parent or guardian of the target will also be notified of the action taken to prevent any further acts off bullying or retaliation. The parents of the aggressor will be notified of the results of the investigation and of the course of action the school is going to take, where applicable law enforcement will be notified.

Any student or staff that makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action which could range from suspension to counseling.

New England Pediatric Care in conjunction with the student's school district will provide counseling or make a referral for the appropriate services for targets and aggressors for appropriate family members and affected students.

A student's or staff's legal status does not affect their protection under this plan in any way.

All employees of the school will be required to attend in-service training annually on this plan and on the following

1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying
2. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents
3. Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target and witness to the bullying.
4. Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment
5. Information on the incidence and nature of cyber bullying and internet safety issues as they relate to cyber bullying

The school will develop a curriculum related to bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation that includes how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home and support the plan. Along with the dynamics of bullying, online safety and cyber bullying

This Plan will be reviewed and updated if necessary at least biennially, reviewed April 2018.

Definitions

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below.

A Perpetrator or Aggressor is defined as a student or 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 extra-curricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying behavior. A member of the school staff may be named the “aggressor” or “perpetrator” in a bullying report.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students, or by a member of school staff including, but not limited to an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extra -curricular activity or para professional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber bullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyber bullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, 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.

Staff includes, but is not limited to educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, and athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, para professionals.

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