

Phoenix Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Statement of Purpose

Phoenix Charter Academy (PCA) is committed to providing all students with a safe, healthy and welcoming learning environment. Additionally, PCA is committed to ensuring its students experience equitable educational opportunities free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, prejudice and hate crimes. All community members are expected to treat each other with respect and appreciate the different and richly diverse personal qualities and skills of members of our school community. This Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is central to PCA's comprehensive efforts towards eliminating all violent, threatening, harmful, and disruptive behaviors and promoting learning across all settings. This comprehensive plan also seeks to enrich students' lives by validating their sense of belonging and guiding their efforts towards achieving their personal and academic potential and becoming active and successful citizens in our diverse society.

PCA will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior including bullying in all forms and types towards others in any school or at school related activities. PCA will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, and take prompt, effective action to end that behavior and prevent its recurrence. PCA will support this plan in all aspects of its activities, including its curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and family partnerships.

Guidelines

Bullying in all forms and types are part of a continuum of aggressive or sometimes violent behaviors. Some acts of bullying can and do constitute other categories of misconduct such as assault, battery, child abuse, or criminal activity and, as such, violate other PCA policies. In such cases, Heads of Schools are obligated to follow appropriate reporting and response guidelines.

Definitions

Perpetrator (Aggressor) is a student or member of a school staff who engages in acts of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students or member of a school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a (student) victim (target) that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the victim (target) or damage to the victim's (target's) property;

- places the victim (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 victim (target)
- infringes on the rights of the victim (target) at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the internet. It includes, but it is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, facsimile communications and internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71 & 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying. Cyber-bullying shall include: use of digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

Hostile environment as defined in M.G.L. c. 71 & 370, 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 or complains about bullying, aids or encourages the filing of a report or complaint of bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

School Community Members consist of students, parents, staff, district or school independent contractors, and school volunteers.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Victim(target) is a student against whom bullying in any form or type, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation

PCA will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including bullying in all forms and types, cyber-bullying or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses and at school bus stops or in school-related activities. Schools will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying in all forms and types, cyber-bullying, and

retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the victim's (target's) sense of safety. PCA will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian partnership.

Acts of bullying (in all forms and types), including cyber-bullying are prohibited:

- on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored or a 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, leased, or used by a school district; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district, and
- at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the victim (target) or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the appropriate function of a school. (Heads of School and all school staff have a responsibility to report, follow up with incidents reported by students and more importantly investigate and implement safety and intervention plans for all students involved, including others implicated in the incident. This responsibility is applicable in all environments that bullying occurs regardless of the location the incident takes place.)
- Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. As stated in M. G. L. c. 71 & 370, nothing in this plan requires the district or school to staff any non- school related activities, functions or programs. (If a Principal, Headmaster or School Personnel determines that a student knowingly retaliated against a student or person who provided information is also a violation of PCA policies and subject to disciplinary action under section 7.2.7 of the PCA Code of Conduct.

Reporting Procedures

Reports received by Staff:

All accusations of bullying will be taken seriously. First, a formal report will be logged in PowerSchool by a staff member. Further, all reports will be cc'd to the Director of School Culture and the Head of School. A staff member may be named an aggressor or perpetrator of bullying in a report.

Second, the parent or adult supporter of the victim and accused bully will be notified by the Director of School Culture and/or the Head of School.

For retaliatory behavior, the same procedures are to be followed:

- Make record of report in PowerSchool
- Cc Head of School and Director of School Culture
 - Director of School Culture or Head of School will then follow up with parents of both victim and accused and begin investigation (see below)

Reports received by Parents:

First, parents or adult supporters should call the Director of School Culture or Head of School to report bullying. A staff member may be named an aggressor or perpetrator of bullying in a report.

Parents or adult supporters can also disclose to another staff member who will notify the Director of School Culture or Head of School. Any staff member who receives such a report will be asked to record the report in PowerSchool.

For retaliatory behavior, the same procedures are to be followed:

- Report to Director of School Culture, Head of School, or teacher
- Make record of report in PowerSchool (A staff member may be named an aggressor or perpetrator of bullying in a report).
- Cc Head of School and Director of School Culture
- Director of School Culture or Head of School will then follow up with parents or adult supporters of both victim and accused and begin investigation (see below)

To make an **anonymous report** of either bullying or retaliation, parents can leave a message at the Head of School's voicemail at 617 889 3100 ext. 135 or the Director of School Culture's voicemail at 617 889 3100 ext. 120.

Reports received by or shared by students

Students will be given confidential space to confide or share what they know or have experienced. After a disclosure, the above protocols will be followed, beginning with reporting to the Director of School Culture or Head of School.

To make an **anonymous** report of either bullying or retaliation, students can leave a message at the Head of school's voicemail at 617 889 3100 ext 135 or the Director of School Culture's voicemail at 617 889 3100 ext. 120. Students may also anonymously fill out the attached form.

Anonymous Report of Bullying or Retaliation

Date:_____

Is victim a member of the PCA student community?

Is the perpetrator or accused a member of the PCA student community? Please share as much as you can about what is happening:

Thank you for taking care of your community.

This form should be dropped off in the SSC drop box. You do not need a staff present to complete this form.

Investigation Procedures

After receiving any reports of bullying and or retaliation, the Head of School and/or Director of School Culture will begin an investigation in the following ways:

- Interview each party (accused and victim) and take written statements
- After said interview, make a report in PowerSchool under each student's account
- Call each adult supporter to share information learned in interview
- Meet and make decisions as to evidence of bullying. If proper evidence shows that there is evidence of an "unsafe environment", disciplinary procedures will begin

Disciplinary Action and Protection of Target and others

Discipline:

The consequences for bullying or retaliation may include suspension and detention as well as other forms of reparation to the community. Upon re-entry to school the student (aggressor) must then sign a contract committing to ceasing all similar types of behavior.

When appropriate and necessary, parents and adult supporters will be notified of their right to contact local police and file formal complaints. All parents will be informed of their right to pursue criminal charges when appropriate through the Chelsea and Everett Police Departments. Additionally, the school reserves the right to file charges against a student who endangers the school community.

Prevention:

In order to prevent further acts of bullying, all parents and adult supporters of students accused or targeted in bullying will be asked to reread the bullying policies and protocols of

PCA. Next, parents will be given weekly updates as to their student's behavior by the advisor through a check-in phone call. Further, the Director of School Culture will build in Advisory lesson plans that target prevention for the entire school population.

Safety of Target and Others:

To ensure the safety of the target, PCA will hold a safety plan meeting with an adult supporter and the target. At this meeting, a strategy will be put in place to provide a safe place for the target to go (physically) and report (verbally or in written form) any incident that continues to threaten his/her safety.

Further, all targets will be provided an opportunity to meet with the Academy Social Worker after reporting bullying. She will determine if other case management needs are evident.

In an effort to maintain the safety of all students who report bullying, anonymous reporting systems are in place. Further, all students who feel threatened or triggered by bullying or harassment can request a meeting with the Director of School Culture and/or Social Worker.

Students who report feeling unsafe because of:

- Reporting bullying/retaliation
- Providing information to help an investigation of bullying/retaliation
- Witnessing an act of bullying/retaliation will all be given the above opportunities. Further, their parents or adult supporters will be called and all parties will be invited to a meeting.
- Students at PCA have the benefit of being able to leave class and visit the Student Support Center whenever issues (inside or out of school) are preventing their learning. This time away from class will be extended to all parties who fit the above description.

FALSE ACCUSATIONS AND RETALIATION

PCA students will be informed at the beginning of every quarter of the consequences for making a false accusation of bullying or retaliation. As stated in the PCA Student Handbook, any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying is subject to suspension from school for up to three days, depending upon the incident. The Head of School and Director of School Culture will follow regular suspension procedures. Upon return, the student must bring a parent or other guardian to discuss the false accusation and apologize to the person or parties accused. The suspension will be listed on the student's permanent record.

Phoenix Charter Academy views retaliation against a target for disclosure, another and more egregious incident of bullying. Therefore, students who retaliate in any way towards a

target during or after an investigation of bullying are subject to consequences including suspension or possibly expulsion from school, depending upon the severity of the incident.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Phoenix Charter Academy takes seriously its responsibility to all who are affected by a bullying incident including the targeted student(s), the aggressor student(s), and the appropriate family members of involved student. Currently, we have one Director of School Culture, two full time social workers, a counseling intern and three case management staff that work with individual students on socio-emotional needs, depending upon the incident.

The targeted student will be offered counseling from the school social worker and support from the Director of School Culture as the incident is resolved and afterwards, for as long as the student needs. If the parent prefers an outside agency, PCA will make arrangements for the student to see a counselor or therapist at a neighboring agency. We currently have partnerships with three counseling agencies.

Aggressor students, after facing school consequences, may need to also see the school counselor or an outside counselor, depending upon the severity of the incident. The Student Support Team and the families of all interested parties will have input into this decision but ultimately the Director of School Culture, Head of School and school social workers will make a plan to keep the involved students and the school community safe.

The school social worker and other support staff will also offer short term counseling services to any parent or guardian and any appropriate family members that need support around a particular bullying incident.

The Director of School Culture will call and check in with parents of both targeted and aggressor students at least two weeks after an issue is resolved in order to see how both families are feeling about school safety and support at school.

PROTECTION OF ALL STUDENTS

All Phoenix Charter Academy students have a right and expectation of the protections and supports listed above regardless of status including race, age, gender, national origin, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical, emotional or mental ability, or educational or academic ability.

Students with disabilities: As required by M.G. L. c. 71B & 370, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines that the student has an autism spectrum disorder or 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.

PCA Staff Training/ Professional Development on Bullying Procedures and Prevention

Professional development plan:

All Phoenix Chelsea staff will be trained on Bullying Procedures and Prevention.

Adult Supporter Information:

Bullying protocols and procedures will be an ongoing topic during Adult Supporter Advisory Council meetings. These meetings occur quarterly. Parents and adult supporters will be trained on the nuances of bullying and the important role technology plays in bullying and victimizing students.

Parent component of bullying and intervention curriculum will be sent home annually.

This training will be run by the Head of School and Director of School Culture and will include the following:

- Defining bullying of all types
- Dynamics of bullying
- The internet and cyberbullying and online safety
- Bullying prevention
- Communicating with PCA staff and reporting incidents to PCA staff
- Reinforcing PCA's prevention plans at home (all training materials will also be mailed home)

To help with reinforcement of Advisory lesson plans, all advisors will be checking in with parents and adult supporters to answer questions about PCA's prevention plans.

Further, since parents are integral to the reintegration and rehabilitation of both targets and accused, they will be communicated with regularly through the advisor. PCA will respond to questions and concerns of parents as they develop.

All parents will receive a copy of approved bullying plans via mail.