

The Pike School
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
2011 -12

MISSION STATEMENT

The Pike School seeks to develop within its community a life-long love of learning, respect for others, the joy of physical activity and a creative spirit.

A Pike education is a journey that prepares students to be independent learners and responsible citizens.

I. Introduction

At The Pike School, we expect that all members of our school community will treat each other with civility and respect.

It is the policy of the School to provide and maintain a learning environment that is free of bullying and any other verbal or physical misconduct that disrupts the learning environment or makes it unsafe.

The Pike School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, set forth below, is published in response to the recently enacted Massachusetts Law against bullying and is an integral part of our efforts to promote learning and to prevent behavior that can impede the learning process. Our Plan spells out The Pike School's comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation.

This plan is consistent with broader protections at Pike against discrimination, harassment, bullying, and retaliation that appear in our *Student and Parent Handbook >Behavioral Expectations*, our *Faculty/Staff Employee Handbook*, and our *Acceptable Use Policy*.

It is important that this Plan be well understood by all members of The Pike School community. The Head of School is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Plan. Questions and concerns related to this Plan may be referred to him or to one of the School's Division Heads.

II. Policy against Bullying, Cyber-bullying and Retaliation

The School will not tolerate any form of bullying or cyber-bullying, nor will we tolerate retaliation against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited on school grounds and at school-sponsored events, activities, functions, and programs. Bullying and cyber-bullying also are prohibited at school bus stops, on school buses and other vehicles owned, leased, or used by the school, and through use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school.

In addition, bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited 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 the school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for a targeted student; infringes on the rights of a targeted student at school; or materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

Definitions under the Law

The following definitions are drawn from the Massachusetts Law and constitute the definition of terms under Pike's Bullying-Prevention and Intervention Plan.

Bullying: Bullying is defined as 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:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the targeted student or damage to the targeted student's property.
- Places the targeted student 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 targeted student.
- Infringes on the rights of the targeted student at school; or
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

Cyber-bullying: Cyber-bullying is bullying through use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, fax machines and the internet. It includes, but is not limited to, e-mail, instant messages, text messages, and internet postings, whether on a webpage, in a blog, or otherwise.

Hostile Environment: A 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: Retaliation is a 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.

Legal Definitions and School Policy

It is important to bear in mind that stricter standards of behavior may apply under The Pike School's policies in order that we may prevent inappropriate verbal and physical conduct before a student has been subject to bullying as it is defined under the law. For example, although the law defines bullying as "repeated use" of certain expressions, acts, and/or gestures, the School reserves the right to apply disciplinary measures and other corrective action in a case of a single expression, act or gesture, if the School determines that it is of sufficient severity to warrant disciplinary measures or other remedial action or that the repetition of that expression, act, or gesture might reasonably result in bullying as defined under the law.

III. Prevention of Bullying and Cyber-bullying

From the earliest grades at The Pike School, students learn that as members of our community they have a right to be treated with civility and respect. Our mission statement and curriculum emphasize respect for differences, and teachers are clear in their expectations for students' behavior. When necessary, parents are notified and asked to reinforce standards for membership in the Pike community.

The administration and faculty recognize that it is essential that expectations for student conduct extend to corridors, locker rooms, lunch, recess, carpool, buses and the like. The School strives to ensure that ample adult supervision is provided on School premises, including in the corridors and locker rooms, at lunch and at recess, and on School-provided transportation throughout the school day as well as at School-sponsored events.

LOWER and MIDDLE SCHOOL: Preventing Bullying

The Pike School employs The *Open Circle Curriculum* in its Lower and Middle Schools. The following data, taken from the Open Circle website, describes the program and details the lessons in the curriculum that explicitly deal with bullying and preventing bullying.

"Research shows that when schools take specific steps to improve school climate and encourage positive interactions among students and staff, they can significantly reduce bullying. When schools build bullying prevention efforts around an evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) program like Open Circle, they proactively address many of the social, emotional, and environmental issues that can lead to bullying.

Open Circle Lessons that Relate to Bullying

Some key social and emotional learning skills can decrease incidences of bullying behavior: self-awareness and self-management, positive relationships and social awareness, and

problem-solving skills and responsible decision-making. The lessons in the Open Circle Curriculum address these skills. The consistent teaching and practice of skills and Open Circle's whole school approach are critical parts of a school's bullying prevention effort. Here are some lessons that teach and reinforce these skills:

Self-Awareness and Self-Management:

- Being Calm, Getting Calm When You Feel Upset
- Practicing Self-Talk
- Speaking Up
- Understanding Feelings
- Body Language
- Expressing Anger Appropriately
- Recognizing Differences/Discrimination

Friendship Skills (Positive Relationships and Social Awareness):

- What Students Have in Common
- Listening Skills
- Compliments
- Including One Another
- Cooperating
- Leadership Skills

Problem-Solving Skills:

- Dealing with Double D Behaviors
- Dealing with Annoying Behaviors
- Dealing with Teasing
- Problem Solving
- Calm Down and Identify the Problem
- Decide on a Positive Goal
- Think of Several Solutions Using Brainstorming
- Evaluate the Solutions
- Make a Plan and Try It

“The Curriculum follows a developmentally-appropriate scope and sequence of skills. All the lessons in grades K-2 contribute to the foundation for bullying prevention. In grades 3-5, the Curriculum includes targeted lessons on the definition of bullying, and the role of bystanders in bullying episodes.

“The Curriculum also includes guidelines for teachers:

- A “Do’s and Don’ts” list to help teachers respond to bullying “in the moment”
- Clear connections for leveraging Open Circle
- Concepts and skills to prevent and address bullying”

In addition to these curricula, we know that to maintain a safe and respectful school environment, it is essential to gather information about social interactions through many different means. This is done through morning meeting conversations, "feedback boxes" in

classrooms where students can raise issues anonymously, and a safety survey which is given yearly to MS and US students.

UPPER SCHOOL: Preventing Bullying

The Pike Upper School's bullying prevention program is embedded in its Advisor program. The foundation of that program is the relationships that advisors build with their advisees to help them develop the skills of being independent learners and responsible citizens. It is expected that each advisor will find ways to know each advisee well. This provides each student with an adult advocate who can help him or her navigate the challenges of middle school relationships. The program includes the elements listed below, which we believe are powerful ways to help students respond to bullying.

Advisor's Role

At least one adult who knows a child well.

Weekly team meetings to determine and address any social issues among the grade.

Provide input for creating sections to avoid situations where a student may feel unsafe.

Advisor Program

Grade 6 Lessons

Healthy friendships

Digital communication

Multicultural competency

Self-advocacy

Grade 7 Lessons

Service learning throughout the year provides opportunities for students to negotiate and communicate with peers about how to accomplish tasks that will benefit the community

Grade 8 Lessons

Decision-making

Assertion -- standing up to group pressure

Grade 9 Lessons

Curriculum focuses on service learning, social justice, and personal responsibility.

IV. Reports of Bullying, Cyber-bullying, or Retaliation

Any student who is the target of bullying or cyber-bullying or has witnessed an incident of bullying or cyber-bullying or otherwise has relevant information about bullying or cyber-bullying prohibited by this policy is strongly encouraged to promptly report the matter orally or in writing to the Head of School or Division Head or to any other faculty or staff member

with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Also, any student who is subject to retaliation in violation of this policy or who knows of another student who has been subject to retaliation is urged to report it as soon as possible.

A parent of a student who is the target of bullying or cyber-bullying or of a student who has witnessed or otherwise has relevant information about bullying or cyber-bullying is strongly urged to promptly notify the Head of School or a Division Head. Furthermore, any parent who has him or herself witnessed bullying or cyber-bullying or has relevant information concerning such an incident is strongly urged to come forward to the Head of School or a Division Head. A parent should also report any incident of retaliation in violation of this policy to the Head of School or a Division Head.

Any member of the faculty or staff of the School who witnesses or otherwise becomes aware of bullying or cyber-bullying in violation of this policy or who becomes aware of retaliation against a student who reported information concerning a violation of this policy is required to report it immediately to the Head of School or one of the Division Heads. There are to be no exceptions. A member of the faculty or staff may not make promises of confidentiality to a student or parent who informs him/her of an allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Faculty and staff may not make reports under this policy anonymously. The School also urges students and their parents not to make reports anonymously. Although there are circumstances in which an anonymous report can be better than none at all, it is far more difficult to determine the facts of what occurred if complaints are made anonymously. Students and parents are encouraged to bear in mind that the School takes its policy against retaliation seriously. Also, while the School cannot promise strict confidentiality, because information must be shared in order to conduct an effective investigation, the School releases information concerning complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation only on a legitimate need-to-know basis.

v. Responding to a Report of Bullying, Cyber-bullying, or Retaliation

A. *Preliminary Considerations*

When a complaint of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation is brought to the attention of the Head of School or a Division Head, an assessment is made as to whether any initial steps need to be taken to protect the well-being of students and to prevent disruption of their learning environment while the investigation is being implemented to prevent further bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation during an investigation.

B. *Obligation to Notify Parents*

It is the policy of the School to notify the parents of any student who is an alleged target of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation during an investigation.

C. *Investigation*

The following is an outline of the procedure that is pursued once a complaint has been brought to the attention of the Head of School or one of the Division Heads:

An impartial investigation of the complaint is conducted by the Head of School or by the Division Head. That investigation may include (but will not necessarily be limited to) interviews with the person who made the complaint; with the student who was the target of the alleged bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation; with the person or persons against whom the complaint was made; and with any students, faculty, staff or other persons who witnessed or who may otherwise have relevant information about the alleged incident.

Depending on the circumstances, the Head of School or the Division Head conducting the investigation also may choose to consult with other teachers and/or the School's Psychologist.

D. *Resolution, Notification, and Follow-up*

Following interviews and any other investigation undertaken, as the School deems appropriate, the Head of School or the Division Head will determine whether, and to what extent, the allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been substantiated. If it is determined that the policy set forth in this Plan has been violated, the Head of School or the Division Head will determine what disciplinary action and/or other remedial action is appropriate and how it will be implemented.

The goal of an investigation and any disciplinary or other remedial process that is imposed following that investigation is to correct the situation to the extent it is reasonably possible and to take such steps as can be taken to prevent there being a repetition of the incident and to prevent the student or students targeted and others who participated in the investigation from being subject to retaliation.

In appropriate circumstances, such as when a crime may have been committed or a child may have been subject to abuse or neglect of the type that is reportable under Section 51A of the Massachusetts Laws, law enforcement or another appropriate government agency may be notified.

Upon completion of the investigation, the Head of School or the Division Head who conducted the investigation will meet individually with the student or students who were the target of the alleged incident and the student or students against whom the

complaint was made and their parents to report the results of the investigation and, where disciplinary or other corrective action is determined to be appropriate, to inform the parties of the steps that will be taken to correct the situation. The amount of information provided in these meetings may be limited by confidentiality laws protecting student records.

Follow-up contacts will be made with any student found to have been targeted in violation of this policy and his/her parents to inquire as to whether there have been any further incidents.

VI. Conclusion

This plan is intended (1) to prevent bullying and cyber-bullying among our students, (2) to encourage students and their parents to have confidence in the School's procedures and to come forward promptly whenever a student is subject to conduct that is prohibited by this or any other School policy; and (3) to implement appropriate discipline and other corrective measures when they are found to be warranted.