



A BULLYING PREVENTION and INTERVENTION PLAN for THE CUSHMAN SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

At The Cushman School, we expect that all members of our 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 which disrupts learning or play or makes it unsafe.

The School will promptly investigate any report of bullying or retaliation. Upon determining that a case of bullying or retaliation has taken place, we will immediately take action to stop the behavior and address the safety concerns for any member of the community who has been victimized.

The Cushman School Bullying and Intervention Plan, set forth below, 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 Cushman School's comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation.

The Plan is consistent with broader protections at The Cushman School against discrimination, harassment, bullying, and retaliation that appear on our website and in our student, parent and faculty/staff handbooks.

It is important that this plan be well understood by all members of The Cushman School community. The Head of School is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Plan. Questions and concerns related to this Plan maybe referred to her or to the Dean of Students or one of the Division Directors.

The School will provide written notice of the relevant student-related sections of this Plan to students and parents or guardians at least annually. Relevant portions of the Plan are included in the Student and Faculty/Staff Handbooks and the Plan, in its entirety is located as an appendix to each handbook.

The entire Plan is posted on the school's website.

The School provides training on bullying for faculty and staff. The training, at a minimum, includes a review of the reporting obligations for all faculty and staff and the processes that the School will follow in response to a report of bullying or retaliation.

POLICY AGAINST BULLYING, CYBER-BULLYING, AND RETALIATION

The School will not tolerate any form of bullying or cyberbullying, nor will it tolerate retaliation against any person who reports bullying or who, in good faith, provides information during an investigation of bullying.

Bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited on school grounds and at school sponsored events, activities, functions and programs. Bullying and cyberbullying are also prohibited during off-campus activities such as ball games, athletic meets, field trips, transportation to and from such aforementioned activities, and through use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school.

In addition, bullying and cyberbullying 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, or materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

WHAT CONSTITUTES BULLYING?

Florida's Department of Education defines bullying as: "Systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees that is severe or persuasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance, or participation." This is backed up by Florida Statute 1006.147 also known as, "The Jeffrey Johnstone Stand Up for All Students Act."

The Cushman School defines bullying 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 victim, 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 upon the rights of the targeted student at school; or***
- ***Materially or substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school***

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is bullying (as defined above) through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, fax machines, and any device which can connect to the internet. It includes, but is not limited to, social media posts, e-mail,

instant messages, text messages, digital pictures, 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 any form of materially adverse action such as intimidation, reprisal, or harassment, directed against a student who reports bullying or who provides information during an investigation of bullying.

LEGAL DEFINITIONS AND SCHOOL POLICY

It is important to bear in mind that stricter standards of behavior may apply under The Cushman 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 "systematic" use of certain expressions, acts and/or gestures, The Cushman School reserves the right to apply disciplinary measures and other protective 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.

Prevention of Bullying and Cyberbullying

From the earliest grades at The Cushman School, students learn that as members of our community they have a right to be treated with civility and respect. Our curriculum emphasizes respect for differences and teachers are clear in their expectations for student behavior. As stated in our handbooks, we seek to partner with parents to reinforce the standards expected of Cushman students.

The administration and faculty recognize it is essential that expectations for student conduct extend beyond classrooms to all outside activities, hallways, playgrounds, lunch, recess, transportation and the like. The School strives to ensure that ample adult supervision is provided on school premises, including in the hallways, at lunch, on the playground, and on school-provided or endorsed transportation throughout the school day as well as at school-sponsored events.

Reports of Bullying and Cyberbullying or Retaliation

Any student who is the target of bullying or cyberbullying or who has witnessed an incident of bullying or otherwise has relevant information about bullying prohibited by this policy is strongly encouraged to promptly report the matter orally or in writing to the Dean of Students, the Guidance Counselor or the Division Director. 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. Students who knowingly make false reports of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

A parent of a student who is the target of bullying or cyberbullying or of a student who has witnessed, or otherwise has information about, bullying or cyberbullying is strongly urged to promptly notify the Dean of Students, the Guidance Counselor or the Division Director.

Furthermore, any parent or guardian who has himself or herself witnessed bullying or cyberbullying or who has relevant information concerning such an incident, is strongly urged to come forward to the aforementioned administrators. Parents or guardians should also report any incident of retaliation in violation of this policy to said administrators.

Any member of the faculty or staff who witnesses or otherwise becomes aware of bullying or cyberbullying 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 immediately report it to the Dean of Students or one of the Division Directors. 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 or her of an allegation of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

Faculty and staff may not make reports under this policy anonymously. Although it might appear as though there are circumstances in which an anonymous report might be better than none at all, it is far more difficult to determine the facts of what occurred if complaints are made anonymously. 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, cyberbullying, or retaliation only on a legitimate need-to-know basis.

Responding to a Report of Bullying, Cyberbullying or Retaliation.

A) Preliminary Considerations

When a complaint of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is brought to the attention of a senior administrator, 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 conducted. As appropriate, strategies such as increased supervision maybe implemented to prevent further bullying or cyberbullying.

B) Obligation to Notify Parents

It is the policy of the School to promptly notify the parents of any student who is an alleged target of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation and the parents of any student who may have been accused of engaging in such behavior after a complaint has been made.

C) Investigation

The following section is an outline of the procedure that is pursued once a complaint has been brought to the attention of the senior administration.

The Dean of Students, the Guidance Counselor or the Division Director will conduct an investigation on all reports of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation. The 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, cyberbullying, 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, those conducting the investigation also may choose to consult with other teachers along with other relevant personnel.

D) Resolution, Notification and Follow-Up:

Following interviews and any other investigation taken, as the School deems appropriate, the Dean of Students and/or the Division Director will determine whether and to what extent the allegation of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation has been substantiated. If it is determined that the policy set forth in this plan has been violated the Dean of Students and/or the Division Director will determine what disciplinary action is appropriate and how it will be implemented. **The nature of any disciplinary action imposed by The Cushman School is strictly confidential and will be discussed only with the parents or guardians of a student who is the recipient of such action.** In all circumstances where expulsion is considered as a disciplinary action, the Head of School will be consulted and will make the final determination.

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 might have been committed, or a child might have been subject to abuse or neglect of the type that is reportable under state or federal laws, law enforcement or other appropriate government agencies will be notified.

Upon completion of the investigation, the Dean of Students and/or the Division Director 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 the parents or guardians of all concerned to report the results of the investigation and, where disciplinary or other corrective action is determined to be appropriate, to inform the responsible parties of the steps that will be taken to correct the situation. The Cushman School will comply with applicable laws regarding disclosure of confidential information in meeting with students and parents or guardians.

In accordance with Florida Law, any disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior and no disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The Cushman School treats every situation as an individual circumstance and will determine the appropriate response to each individual situation as it arises.

The administrator who conducted the investigation, in consultation with the Guidance Counselor, may refer perpetrators, victims, and family members of such students for counseling or other services as appropriate.

The said administrator will ensure that there is follow-up contact made with any student found to have been targeted in violation of this policy, along with his or her parents or guardians, to inquire as to whether there have been any further incidents.

The Dean of Students will keep a file on all reports of bullying or retaliation, the investigation, and any actions taken in response to a finding of bullying or retaliation.

E) Conclusion

This Plan is intended (1) to prevent bullying and cyberbullying among our students; (2) to encourage students and their parents or guardians 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 disciplinary and other corrective measures when they are found to be warranted.