

 Sheppard Pratt		Policy Number: 103
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Manual: SPSHS Day Schools		Effective: 11/9/2022
Section:	Sub-section:	Prepared by: Leonard, Charity A.
Title: Sheppard Pratt Schools Bullying Policy and Procedure		

In accordance with the provisions of Section 7-424.1 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Sheppard Pratt Schools have revised and adopted the following policy based on the model of the Maryland State Board of Education to address bullying, harassment or intimidation.

Purpose :

Sheppard Pratt Schools believe that all members of our community have the right to a learning and work environment that is free from bullying, harassment, intimidation and cyberbullying. All stakeholders, including staff members, students, and parents, share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore healthy relationships. We believe that bullying, harassment, intimidation and cyberbullying are unacceptable and share a responsibility for preventing it. We strive to create an inclusive community focused on growth, support, and teamwork. We reject any ideas and actions that marginalize and victimize individuals.

Definitions:

As used in this policy and per Maryland State Department of Education, “bullying, harassment, intimidation or cyberbullying” means intentional verbal, physical, or written conduct or electronic communication that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being.

Bullying - is unwanted, demeaning behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or is likely to be repeated over time. To be considered bullying, the behavior must be intentional and include: 1) an imbalance of power (students who bully use their physical, emotional, social or academic power to control, exclude or harm others), 2) repetition (bullying behaviors happen more than once or are highly likely to be repeated based on evidence gathered).

Harassment – includes actual or perceived negative actions that offend, ridicule or demean another student with regards to race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, family/parental or marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socio-economic status, physical or mental ability or disability.

Intimidation – is any communication or action directed against another student that threatens or induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority. Retaliation maybe considered a form of intimidation.

Cyberbullying – is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through texting, apps, or online via social media, forums or gaming where people can view, participate in or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting or sharing negative, harmful, false or hurtful content about another student. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or shame.

Limitations of Liability

In accordance with the statute, a school employee who reports an act of bullying, harassment or intimidation under the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 7-424.1 in accordance with the Sheppard Pratt School’s policy is not civilly liable for any act of omission in reporting or failing to report an act of bullying, harassment or intimidation under this section.

Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation

Incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation are more likely to be reduced through prevention strategies that involve the entire school community (students, staff, and parents). The Sheppard Pratt School commits to the following ongoing preventative measures:

- Explicit teaching of positive behaviors embedded within the curriculum addressing supportive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action, etc.
- Schools will use evidenced-based anti-bullying programs such as PBIS and LSCI.
- Vigilant supervision in all areas of the school including hallways, playground, lunchrooms, and arrival/dismissal
- Therapeutic and/or social skills groups that are embedded in students’ schedules. Students are involved in weekly group sessions focused on teaching social skills, anger management and conflict resolution and fostering a community of interpersonal respect and support.
- Availability of school counselors, social workers, and therapists and other Sheppard Pratt staff
- Frequent observations and feedback by clinical, behavioral and/or educational staff

At Sheppard Pratt Schools **students** are encouraged to:

- take positive action to stop bullying if they witness an incident
- immediately report the incident to a staff member
- foster a supportive community

At Sheppard Pratt Schools **staff** are encouraged:

- take positive action to stop bullying if they witness an incident

- inform school administration
- foster a supportive community

At Sheppard Pratt Schools **parents and guardians** are encouraged:

- listen to their child and encourage their child to speak to an administrator
- contact the school with any concerns or reports of bullying
- Complete the *Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation Reporting Form*

Procedures For Reporting

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation of any person on school property or at school-sponsored functions or by use of electronic technology at a school is prohibited in all Maryland schools. Reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report acts of bullying, harassment or intimidation or who are victims, witnesses, bystanders or others with reliable information about an act of bullying, harassment or intimidation is prohibited in all Maryland schools.

Bullying or suspected bullying is reportable in person or in writing (including anonymously) to school personnel.

- Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation Reporting Forms* will be made accessible to all students, staff and family. A student, parent, close adult, relative or staff member may submit the form to administration. A student may request assistance from the staff member to complete the form if the student wishes.
- The Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation Reporting Forms* should be used to report alleged incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation that occur during the current school year on school property, on a school bus, on the way to and/or from school or through electronic means on or off school property.
- School staff are required to report observed or suspected alleged incidents of bullying school administration. In addition to verbally reporting the incident, staff are required to complete the reporting form.
- Students who are believed to have been bullied or are aware of incidents of bullying are strongly encouraged to report this behavior to a staff member or school administrator. If a student expresses a desire to discuss an incident with a staff member, the staff member will make an effort to provide the student with practical, safe and age-appropriate way of doing so.

- E. Parents and other adults who believe that an incident of bullying has occurred are encouraged to report this behavior to a staff member or school administrator.
- F. Parent or guardian of alleged targeted student shall be notified within three business days after the date the act is reported
- G. Parent or guardian of alleged perpetrator shall be notified within 5 days after the date the act is reported.

Investigation of Acts of Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation

Sheppard Pratt Schools will investigate and intervene, as safety permits, quickly and appropriately if a student complains that he/she/they is currently the targeted student of bullying, harassment or intimidation.

- A. All reports must be completed using the Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation Report Form. School administrator or Administrative Designee, consistent with due process rights will complete the Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Incident Investigation Form within two days of after receipt of reporting form or as timely as possible for school administration.
- B. School Administrators or administrative designee will determine whether bullying, harassment or intimidation actually occurred by taking steps to verify who committed the act of bullying, harassment or intimidation and whether others played a role in perpetuating this act. Other related complaints, if any, will be reviewed in making this determination.
- C. All Sheppard Pratt policies regarding privacy and confidentiality will be adhered to throughout the course of the investigation and subsequent report of findings. It cannot be predicted what will be discovered or if a hearing may result from the outcome of the investigation. Some acts of bullying, harassment or intimidation could also be delinquent acts and shall be reported promptly to the responsible law enforcement agency in accordance with Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.01.15.
- D. School Administrators or the Administrative Designee will apply consequences and/or remedial actions consistent with due process rights using the range of consequences as a guide. The offender will be informed that retaliation against a victim or bystander is prohibited and progressive consequences will occur if the activity continues.
- E. The administrator/designee will create a written record of the bullying, harassment or intimidation incident and any disciplinary actions taken, as well as the statements of the victim, offender and witnesses. Discussions with all parties shall be documented as soon as possible after the event.

Response to Bullying

Bullying is considered a major violation of our school rules and behavioral expectations. As a result, Sheppard Pratt Schools will implement procedures that ensure the appropriate consequences and remedial responses to a student who commits an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. The following factors will be considered when determining an appropriate consequence and remedial measure:

Factors for consequences:

- Age, development, and maturity levels of the individuals involved
- Degree of harm (physical and/or emotional distress)
- Surrounding circumstances
- Nature and severity of the behaviors
- Incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behavior
- Relationship between the parties involved
- Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred

Factors for remedial measures:

- Life skill competencies
- Social relationships
- Experiential deficiencies
- Academic performance
- Strengths

Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying and harassment will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of similar behaviors. Remedial measures are designed to correct the undesired behavior, prevent future occurrences of the behavior, and protect the victim of the act. The consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited, to the following examples:

Possible Consequences:

- Participation in a guided reflection process designed to teach alternative behavior
- Loss of privileges
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Verbal Reprimand
- Detention
- Reparation to victim in form of payment for repair to damage of possession
- In school interventions

Intervention and Supports for Students

All Sheppard Pratt School students will be exposed to interventions and supports regarding bullying, harassment or intimidation. Exposure will be delivered via explicit teaching of positive behaviors

embedded in the curriculum addressing supportive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action, review of FBA and BIP, embedded anti-bullying practices within existing schools, PBIS approaches, bullying awareness, social skills stories and review of review of behavioral expectations with students individually and school wide.

Sheppard Pratt students who are identified as victims, alleged perpetrators or offenders of bullying, harassment or intimidation may be provided with additional interventions and supports as deemed appropriate by school administration. These interventions may include but not limited to: A physical, safe space free from interaction with alleged perpetrator, Increased access to mental health services (e.g. access to counselor or other Sheppard Pratt staff, increased in individual an/or group counseling), social stories, peer mediation and individualized targeted behavior interventions for bullying perpetrators.

Professional Learning

Sheppard Pratt School employees shall receive professional learning in the areas of bullying, harassment and intimidation upon hire and throughout their employment through participation in New Employee School Orientation, completion of online training modules on an annual basis, during professional development and in-service learning days.

References:

Attachments:

Revised Dates:

Reviewed Dates:

11/22

Signatures:

Claire Cohen: 11/03/22

Maust, Charles K., VP and Chief of Schools and RTC's (416VCS): 5/09/22

Kathleen Flannery: 11/09/22