



Policy to Address Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation

In accordance with the provisions of Section 7-424.1 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Sheppard Pratt School has revised and adopted the following policy based on a Model from the Maryland State Board of Education to address bullying, harassment, or intimidation:

Purpose

At Sheppard Pratt School, we believe that all members of our community have the right to a learning and work environment that is free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. All stakeholders, including staff members, students, and parents, share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore healthy relationships. We believe that bullying, harassment, and intimidation 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.

This policy builds on Sheppard Pratt School's Seven Major Rules policy and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports) framework.

Definition

As used in this policy and per Maryland State Department of Education, "bullying, harassment, or intimidation" 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.

"Electronic communication" means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device. Cyberbullying is a form of bullying, harassment, and intimidation. Cyberbullying means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device and includes the use of social media sites. Cyberbullying shall include any future applications that fall under "electronic communication".

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation is:

- motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or,
- threatening or seriously intimidating;
- occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or,
- substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

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 Sheppard Pratt School community (students, staff, and parents). 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.
- PBIS and LSCI are used in part as school-wide evidence-based anti-bullying programs implemented as part of a system of positive behavioral supports and school improvement efforts at all grade levels.
- 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
- Frequent observations and feedback by behavior specialists

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

- take positive action to stop bullying if they witness an incident
- inform school administration (Education Director/Principal/Program Coordinator) of any reports or observations of bullying
- foster a supportive community

At Sheppard Pratt School **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

Response to Bullying

Bullying is considered a major violation of our school rules and behavioral expectations. As a result, Sheppard Pratt School 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 the form of payment for or repair of damage to a possession.

Possible Remedial Measures:

- Restitution and restoration
- Peer support group
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience
- Implementation of a behavioral contract
- Student counseling
- Parent/student conference
- Education about the effects of bullying, harassment or intimidation

Procedures for Reporting

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

A. School staff are required to report observed or suspected alleged incidents of bullying to the Education Director, School Principal, and/or Program Coordinator. In addition to verbally reporting the incident, staff are required to complete a reporting form.

B. 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 of bullying, harassment, or intimidation with a staff member, the staff member will make an effort to provide the student with a practical, safe private, and age-appropriate way of doing so.

C. 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.

D. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an alleged incident of bullying are prohibited. Any student who is determined to have knowingly falsely accused another of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences.

E. *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Forms* may be obtained in the school's main school's main (front) office or a counselor or therapist office. A student, parent, close adult relative, or staff member may submit the form to school administration. A student may request assistance from a staff member to complete the form if the student wishes. Copies of the reporting form may also be found in the student handbook.

Procedures for the Prompt Investigation of Acts of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation.

- A. All reports must be written using the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form*. They must then be promptly and appropriately investigated by school administrators or the administrative designee, consistent with due process rights, using the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Incident Investigation Form* within 2 school days after receipt of a reporting form or as timely as possible for school administration.
- B. School administrators or the 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 school and health system 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 ultimate outcome of the investigation.
- D. School administrators or the administrative designee will notify parents of the victim and offender of the incident within 2 school days.

- E. School administrators or the administrative designee will apply consequences and/or remedial actions consistent with due process rights using the range of listed consequences as a guide. The offender will be informed that retaliation against a victim or bystander is strictly prohibited and that progressive consequences will occur if the activity continues.
- F. 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, witnesses, and offender. Discussions with all parties should be documented as soon as possible after the event.
- G. Staff will follow up with both the victim and the offender to determine if whether the bullying, harassment, or intimidation has continued and whether additional consequences need to be implemented. Staff will continue follow-ups with the victim and offender until it is determined that staff intervention is no longer required.

References

- o Annotated Code of Maryland, Education, 2008
- o Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), Title 13A State Board of Education
- o Delaware's Model Bully Prevention Policy, Title 14, Section 4112D, Delaware Code Annotated.
- o DRAFT – *Towards A Maryland's Model Bully Prevention Policy*, Jorge Srabstein, MD and Members of the Coalition for the Prevention of Bullying and Related Health Risks, September, 2008.
- o Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2007, U.S. Department of Education NCES 2008-021, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs NCJ 219553.
- o Maryland State Department of Education (2005), Safe Schools Reporting Act, Directions for Students and Parents Completing Bullying/Harassment Referral Form.
- o Maryland State Department of Education (2008), Suspensions, Expulsions, and Health Related Exclusions Maryland Public Schools, 2007-2008, MSDE-DPA 11/08.
- o Maryland Youth Risk Behavioral Survey, Maryland State Department of Education, September 2008.
- o New Jersey's Model Policy and Guidelines for Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying on School Property, At School-Sponsored Functions and On School Buses, New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:16-7.9.
- o Maryland State Department of Education (2009) Model Policy to Address Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation.

Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form

Today's Date: _____

Person Reporting Incident: _____

Name of victim(s):	Name of student(s) bullying:	Name(s) of witnesses/bystanders (if any)
Location of incident:	Time of incident:	

Description of Incident (please be specific):

Administration only

Description of actions taken to investigate this incident and results of investigation:

Administrator Signature:

Date: