

# BRITTEN SCHOOL

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### Bullying Prevention

**Policy Statement:** The General Assembly (P.A. 98-669) finds that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve and that bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with students' ability to learn and participate in school activities. Bullying is contrary to state law 105 ILCS 5/27 -23.7 and Britten School's policy and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this section (free exercise of religion). Nothing in this section is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression of the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

### PROCEDURE

#### Bullying Definition

Bullying is defined in 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7 as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property
2. causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health
3. substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance
4. substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school

Bullying as defined above may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive (P.A. 98-669).

#### Cyber-Bullying Definition

Bullying includes cyber-bullying and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student or students' person or property
2. causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student or students physical or mental health
3. substantially interfering with the student or students' academic performance
4. substantially interfering with the student or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school

Cyber-bullying as defined in 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7 means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system,

photoelectronic system, or photo optical system including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying as defined above. Cyber-bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying as defined above.

### **Restorative Measures**

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly notifying parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. "Restorative measures" means a continuum of school based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that (i) are adapted to the particular needs of Britten School and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning environment, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school, (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

### **Guidelines**

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited at Britten School. No student shall be subjected to bullying:

1. during any school-sponsored education program or activity
2. while in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities
3. through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment

Britten School utilizes a three-tier framework evidence-based public health approach to bullying prevention. The tiers are as follows:

**Tier One-** Includes universal prevention which is school wide systems for all students, staff, and settings. These include twice weekly social skills groups, monthly all school community meeting, structured classrooms and continuous supervision of students based on a low faculty to student ratio. Faculty training on bullying prevention will occur throughout the school year. During October, which is Bullying Prevention Month, school-wide assemblies and Pledge Days will be planned. The Reynolds Bully Victimization Scales for Schools (RBVSS) will be administered biannually, in October and May, to students in grades 3 through 12 to measure the impact of bullying behaviors and victimization among students, provide insight into the social and emotional climate of our school community, and identify at-risk students that may benefit from additional intervention.

**Tier Two-** Includes selective prevention which is specialized group intervention and supports for students with risky behavior such as changing a student's classroom placement or assigning seating on bus to and from school and requesting additional supervision on a school bus. Faculty also provides small group processing for bus related incidents and peer mediation when clinically appropriate.

**Tier Three-** Tier Three prevention includes intensive, individualized interventions that focus on students who are already displaying bullying behavior or have a history of being bullied. Students who have not been responsive to Tier One and Tier Two supports will be required to engage in more specialized interventions, including risk assessments, one-on-one processing, enhanced social skills or assertiveness training, and/or individual therapy. One or more of the Reynolds Bully Victimization Scales will be utilized for close monitoring and/or data collection as well. If school-based individual therapy is not appropriate, a referral will be made for community-based counseling. Special programming, which might include removing the students from group therapy or changing school bus assignments/removing students from the school bus, will also be considered. Students displaying bullying behavior will also lose their good standing status in the school milieu, which limits less structured social privileges throughout the school day, as well as participation in field trips and community activities. Targeted students will have the opportunity to make an impact statement to the student displaying bullying behavior, outlining how the bullying behavior has affected them emotionally, behaviorally, or socially. Parents of those students displaying bullying behavior may be asked to participate in a home-school meeting with Administration, and if the problem is repetitive and severe, the referring school district may also be included in the meeting. If students are unresponsive to Tier Three intervention and all support options have been exhausted, administration will consider alternate placement, as the physical and emotional safety of our students is our top priority.

### **Reporting**

School Social Workers will be responsible for receiving verbal and/or written reports of alleged bullying from parents/guardians, faculty, adults, and students. All faculty are required to immediately inform the School Principal and/or Dean of Students of any perceived bullying or targeted incident that is witnessed or verbally reported by parents/guardians, other faculty, adults, or students.

### **School Principal- Michele Hixon**

10110 Gladstone Street  
Westchester, IL 60154 [mhixon@brittenschool.org](mailto:mhixon@brittenschool.org)  
708 343-7500  
Fax: 708 343-0363

### **Dean of Students- Dr. Elaine Moor**

10110 Gladstone Street  
Westchester, IL 60154 [emoor@brittenschool.org](mailto:emoor@brittenschool.org)  
708 343-7500  
Fax: 708 343-0363

The School Administrators may be contacted by telephone, email, or fax. It is the responsibility of the Administration to provide parents/guardians with their contact telephone number and direct extension. Upon notification of a suspected bullying incident, the school administration will determine if the act of bullying is within the school's jurisdiction. If not, the school will provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the school/community in terms of counseling, support services or other programs. Federal and state laws and rules governing student's privacy rights include the requirement for promptly informing parents/guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing as appropriate the availability of social work services, counseling, and school psychological services other

interventions and restorative measures. There is also a designated mailbox located in the main school office for anonymous reporting for students. The location of this mailbox and bullying prevention information will be posted and clearly visible to students who are informed of the process and mailbox availability upon orientation to the school program and annually during Anti-Bullying Month.

### **Investigating**

According to Public Act 98-669, schools are required to make all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date of the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration any additional relevant information received during the reported incident of bullying. However, Britten School strives to complete the investigation in 2 school days. Parents of any students involved either as a victim of or perpetrator of bullying will be notified within 24 hours. During the investigation process, the student or students will be removed from class to ensure the safety and welfare of the alleged victims. These investigations involve qualified school support personnel with knowledge, experience and training on bullying prevention as deemed appropriate in the investigation process. Parents/Guardian of the students who are parties in the investigation will be provided an opportunity to meet with the school administrators to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying. The discussion includes the interventions that can be taken to address bullying which may involve but are not limited to school social work service restorative measures, social/emotional skills building, counseling, psychological service, and community- based service. Once faculty obtains the necessary information for the investigation, the student may return to class unless the information obtained warrants a Tier Three intervention.

Reprisal or retaliation against any student or person who reports an act of bullying is in violation of the Public Act 98-669. Additionally, false accusations as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying are also in violation of the Public Act 98-669. There will be consequences and appropriate remedial actions in keeping with Tier Three interventions for any students that engage in reprisal, retaliation, or false accusations as a means of retaliation. Identified victims of bullying will be provided information regarding services available within the community, such as counseling and victim support services.

### **Policy Evaluation**

Britten School has an established Discipline Committee which meets on a quarterly basis to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the School Anti-Bullying Policy and includes but is not limited to, factors such as:

1. The frequency of victimization
2. Observations of safety concerns at school will be shared by students, faculty, and families with school administration.
3. Identification of areas of school where bullying occurs
4. The types of bullying that are common or occurring
5. Bystander intervention participation
6. The information developed as part of the evaluation process must be posted on the school's website. In addition, this information will be shared with parents during annual registration and parent information night.
7. If the internet website is not available, the information is provided to the school's administrators, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

Britten School's policy and procedure includes a process to investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction. In addition, referrals are made to the victim for services in the community. The school's bullying policy is aligned with other school policies. (see "Reporting" section)

### **Data Collection**

In accordance with current research and the state's Bullying Prevention Public Act 98-669, Britten School monitors and collects data on behavioral incidences that are potentially acts of bullying. Effective the 2022-2023 school year all out of classroom referral documentation has been modified in order to track incidents of targeting and/or bullying. This allows faculty the ability to collect data for the number of incidents where targeting and/or bullying have occurred and to determine which interventions have been most successful. Data trends will be brought to the Discipline Committee on a quarterly basis by the Assistant Dean of Students for the purpose of policy evaluation and creating new interventions.

### **Development, Notification, and Posting**

Britten School's Bullying Prevention Policy is based on engagement with the school stakeholders, including parents, guardians, and students. The full policy is posted on the school's website and a summary of the policy is in the student handbook. The student handbook, as well as a fact sheet summarizing the policy are distributed annually to parents, guardians, and students. Faculty and school personnel receive annual training in the school policy along with a copy of the policy. The school's policy is included in the new faculty orientation.

### **Public Information**

Information on this Bullying Prevention Policy is in the Student Handbook that each student and parent/guardian receive annually. The Bullying Prevention Policy is posted on the school website at <http://www.brittenschool.org> and is provided to parents during the annual registration process. All Faculty are trained in the Anti-Bullying policy and procedures annually.

### **Administrative Approval**

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School Principal

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Dean of Students

Adopted: August 25, 2015

Date of Last Revision/Review: 12/2017, 2/2020, 4/2020, 9/27/2021, 11/10/2021, 12/08/2021, 9/20/2023, 2/5/2024, 8/2025

