

Maimonides School

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

I. Introduction

At Maimonides 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 Maimonides School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, set forth below, pursuant to the requirements of the Massachusetts law against bullying, as amended spells out Maimonides School's approach to addressing bullying and retaliation. This policy applies to the Elementary School, the Middle School and the Upper School of Maimonides School.

II. Policy against Bullying and Retaliation

The School does not tolerate any form of bullying, which includes cyber-bullying, nor do 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 is prohibited on school grounds and at school-sponsored events, activities, functions, and programs. Bullying is also 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 any 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.

What is Bullying?

Bullying: Bullying means repeated physical actions or gestures, written, verbal or electronic expressions, by one or more students or by any member of the school staff, that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the targeted student;
- damages a student's property;

- places a 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 any student;
- infringes on the rights of any student at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

For purposes of this policy, school staff includes, but is not limited to, any and all educators, administrators, school nurses, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.

Cyber-bullying: Cyber-bullying is any form of bullying (as defined above) through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, fax machines, cell phones, email, instant messaging (IM), text messages or the Internet. Cyber-bullying can include (but is not limited to) bullying through the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or knowingly impersonates another person as the author of posted content or messages and also includes bullying through the distribution of or posting on electronic media that may be accessed by others.

Retaliation: Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student or staff member who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

III. Prevention of Bullying

Maimonides School recognizes that certain classes of students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The School takes the following steps to support vulnerable students and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment:

From the earliest grades at Maimonides, students learn that each person is created with Tzelem Elokim, in the image of G-d, and must be treated with civility and respect at all times. We have implemented several programs to create a positive atmosphere and sense of community in classrooms and in the school as a whole, to teach social skills, and to create a culture in which bullying is not accepted. These programs include:

Jewish values and Midot, which are taught in the various Limudei Kodesh curricula

Open Circle (ES)
Responsive Classroom (ES)
Tzelem (MS)
BRAVE (Belief in the Rights and Value of Everyone) (MS)
Life Issues (US)
Wellness (US)
Facing History and Ourselves (US)

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

As a school, we take reports of bullying and retaliation seriously. Whenever bullying or retaliation is reported, the situation will be investigated promptly. Any student who is the target of bullying or has witnessed an incident of bullying or otherwise has relevant information about bullying prohibited by this policy, including cyber-bullying, should promptly report the matter orally or in writing to any administrator or to any other faculty or staff member with whom the student feels comfortable. Students in the Middle and Upper Schools are encouraged to report conduct they believe may violate this policy to their grade deans. Any student who is subject to retaliation by another student or staff member or by anyone else in violation of this policy or who knows of another student who has been subject to retaliation should promptly report such conduct. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously. Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians who believe that a student has been the target of bullying (including cyber-bullying), or retaliation, or have witnessed or otherwise have relevant information about bullying or retaliation, promptly should notify an administrator or any other faculty or staff member. Parents or guardians who believe that a student has been the target of bullying or retaliation by a staff member should notify a member of the appropriate division's administrative team immediately, or the Head of School. Furthermore, any parent or guardian who has himself/herself witnessed bullying or has relevant information concerning such an incident should report the incident to any administrator or to any other faculty or staff member. The form attached as Appendix A may be used to report bullying or retaliation to the School. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously.

Any member of the faculty or staff of the School who witnesses or otherwise becomes aware of or receives a report of bullying in violation of this policy, including reports of bullying by a member of the faculty or staff, or who becomes aware of retaliation against a student who reported information or cooperated in an investigation concerning a violation of this policy, is required to report it to the relevant school division administration immediately. This includes principals, assistant principals, associate principals and the Middle School Director. Reports may also be made directly to the Head of School. Reports regarding the conduct of the Head of School should be made to the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

V. School Response and Intervention

All allegations of bullying or retaliation shall be investigated. Because the School's goal of conducting a thorough investigation may require it to share information as part of the investigation or for other legitimate reasons, while the School conducts all investigations with appropriate discretion, the School cannot promise strict confidentiality as part of its investigation.

When a report of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation is brought to the attention of a member of the School's administration, initial steps may be taken, if deemed necessary, to protect the well-being of students and to prevent the disruption of their learning environment while the investigation is being conducted.

The relevant division's principal, assistant principal, associate principal or the Middle School Director shall be responsible for investigating the allegation of bullying or retaliation. Where students or faculty members in different divisions or staff are involved, a collaborative investigation by the administrations of the relevant divisions shall be undertaken. The investigation may include (but is not necessarily limited to) interviews with the person(s) who made the complaint, each student who was the alleged target, and the alleged perpetrator(s) of the incident, and any other students, faculty, staff or other persons who may have witnessed the events or otherwise have information relevant to the alleged incident.

Depending on the circumstances, the person(s) conducting the investigation may choose to consult with other teachers and/or the School Social Worker(s).

In the case of an allegation of bullying by a non-faculty staff member, the staff member's supervisor shall also be informed of the allegation and shall confer with the responsible investigating party regarding the investigation and any remedial actions considered. In the case of an allegation of staff or faculty bullying, the person conducting the investigation shall inform the Head of School of the allegation and also confer with the Head of School regarding the investigation and remedial actions considered. In the case of an allegation of bullying or retaliation by a member of the school administration, the Head of School shall conduct the investigation. In the case of an allegation of bullying or retaliation by the Head of School, the Board of Directors shall appoint or hire an individual not employed by the School to conduct the investigation. In any investigations of staff or faculty bullying or retaliation, students being interviewed as part of the investigation who are in grades K-7 shall be interviewed only in the presence of the appropriate division Social Worker, and only after such student has first met privately with the appropriate division Social Worker; students being interviewed as part of the investigation who are in grades 8-12 shall be interviewed only after they have first met privately with the appropriate division Social Worker, and have been offered the opportunity to have the Social Worker present for the interview.

VI. Resolution, Notification, and Follow-up

The goal of an investigation and any disciplinary or other remedial process that is imposed following that investigation is to correct the situation and to take steps to prevent a repetition of the incident, to prevent the student or students targeted and others who participated in the investigation from being subject to retaliation, and to ensure that all students, and especially those who may have been the target of bullying, are made to feel safe at the School.

Upon completion of the investigation, if the School administrator responsible for the investigation determines that bullying or retaliation in violation of this policy has occurred, he or she will notify the parents of the student or students who were the target of the incident and, as applicable, the staff persons, or the parents of any student or students who engaged in the conduct at issue of the results of the investigation and will inform the parties of the steps that will be taken to correct or address the situation and to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. The amount of information provided in these meetings may be limited by confidentiality laws.

In addition, when it is determined that the policy set forth in this Plan has been violated, the School, at its complete discretion, will determine what disciplinary action and/or other remedial action is appropriate and how it will be implemented. In the case of students, the disciplinary actions taken shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior and may include counseling, service requirements, written apologies, suspensions or any other discipline deemed appropriate by the School, up to and including expulsion. No disciplinary action shall be taken against a student or staff or faculty member solely on the basis of an anonymous report. In appropriate circumstances, counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators or victims and for appropriate family members of such students may be recommended or provided by the School counseling staff. In the case of a determination by the School that a member of its faculty or staff violated this policy, disciplinary action may be taken by the School, up to and including termination of employment. In cases in which the School determines that criminal charges may be pursued against a perpetrator, the Head of School will notify the local law enforcement agency immediately.

VII. Notice of the Maimonides School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Students & Parents: Students and parents will be provided with annual written notice of the Maimonides School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

School Staff: Faculty and staff will be provided with annual written notice of the Maimonides School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, and sections of the plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the Maimonides School employee handbook.

Website: The Maimonides School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be posted on its website.

VIII. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Training

Maimonides School faculty and staff shall be trained annually on the Bullying Prevention and

Intervention Plan.

IX. Responsibility for Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The principals, associate principals, assistant principals and the Middle School Director of Maimonides School are responsible for implementation and oversight of the Maimonides School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

X. Periodic Review of Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Maimonides School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis, and at least once every two years.

APPENDIX A

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Date: _____

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. Check whether you are the: Target of the behavior Reporter (not the target)

3. Check whether you are a: Student Staff member (specify role) _____

Parent Administrator Other (specify) _____

Provide your contact information/telephone number: _____

4. If you are a student, state your grade: _____

5. Information about the Incident:

Name of Target (of behavior): _____

Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior): _____

Date(s) and Times of Incident(s):

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): _____

6. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):

Name: _____ Student Staff

Other _____

Name: _____ Student Staff

Other _____

Name: _____ Student Staff

Other _____

7. Describe the incident (include the names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including the specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.