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Bullying Prevention Plan

v. September 2024

Introduction

Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus School (the "School") acknowledges that its purpose for existence is rooted in the mission of the Church. In fulfilling its role within the educational mission of the Church, the School must share and live out, through Catholic Christian tradition, the message of Jesus Christ and be committed to providing an integrated Catholic educational environment that permeates all aspects of its daily life and operations. Each child must be challenged to reach his/her full potential by fostering in each child a love of learning and by providing an environment that also fosters respect and understanding of one another. In this regard, it is essential that a safe, positive and productive educational environment be established where students can attain the highest academic achievement and where no student shall be subjected to Bullying, Cyber-Bullying or Retaliation. Bullying, Cyber-Bullying or Retaliation or other similar disruptive or violent behaviors constitute conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and the School's ability to educate its students in a safe and embracing environment. The School's Staff is expected to demand that all students behave appropriately and treat others with civility and respect. Bullying, Cyber-Bullying and Retaliation are not to be tolerated.

Accordingly, the School hereby promulgates this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the "Plan") as required by the Archdiocese of Boston Bullying Prevention Policy (the "RCAB Bullying Prevention Policy").

Definitions

For purposes of this Plan, the following definitions shall apply:

"Aggressor", means a student who engages in Bullying or Retaliation.

"Bullying" is 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 Target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the Target or damage to the Target's property;
- places the Target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- creates a Hostile Environment at School for the Target;
- infringes on the rights of the Target at the School; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the School.

By way of example only, Bullying may involve, but is not limited to:

- unwanted teasing
- threatening
- intimidating
- stalking
- Cyber-Stalking
- physical violence
- theft
- sexual, religious, racial or any other type of harassment
- public humiliation
- destruction of School or personal property
- social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
- rumor or spreading of falsehoods

For the purpose of this Plan, whenever the term "Bullying" *is* used it is to denote either Bullying or Cyber-Bullying (as defined below).

"Cyber-Bullying" means Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetics
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-Bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of Bullying.

Cyber-Bullying shall also include 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 conditions enumerated in the definition of Bullying.

"Hostile Environment" means 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 the student's education.

"Retaliation" means any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports Bullying, provides information during an investigation of Bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about Bullying.

"School Grounds" mean property on which a School building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased or used by a School for a School-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.

"Staff" includes, but is not limited to, educators, faculty, Principal, Pastor, School nurses, custodians, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, and paraprofessionals.

"Target", means a student against whom Bullying or Retaliation has been perpetrated.

Overview

Bullying is *"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 target that:*

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;*
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;*
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;*
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or*
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school."*

For participants and observers, bullying and harassment interfere with learning and healthy growth both emotionally and academically. A safe learning environment is one in which every student Develops emotionally, academically, and physically in a caring and supportive atmosphere free of intimidation and abuse.

A goal of the Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus School is to enhance and sustain safe and healthy learning environments in part by reducing the reported incidence of bullying in every school through a multi-tiered strategy that includes prevention, effective and compassionate intervention, and community-wide social promotion.

Priorities

The School expects that all members of the School community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

The School is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from Bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of Bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

The School will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the School community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to Bullying.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of Bullying or Retaliation, in our School, on School Grounds, or in School-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of Bullying and Retaliation and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the Target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our School community, including curricula, instructional programs, Staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

This Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing Bullying, and the School is committed to working with students, Staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of Bullying and Retaliation. The Principal, working under the oversight of the Pastor is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

Prohibition

Bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation are prohibited on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs (whether on or off school grounds), at bus stops, on school busses or other vehicles owned or operated by the School or their contractors, or through the use of technology or electronic devices owned, leased or used by the School.

Bullying is also 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 a school if the act or acts in question create a hostile environment at school for the target(s), infringes on the rights of the target(s) while at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly

operation of a school - regardless of whether said bullying takes place on school grounds, nearby properties, at school functions or using school technology, are also prohibited.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to make clear to students and staff that bullying, cyberbullying, retaliation and/or harassment in the school building, on school grounds, or at school sponsored functions will not be tolerated.

Reporting, Response and Investigation Procedures

The Principal and designated members of the Staff, working under the oversight of the Pastor, are collectively responsible for the implementation of bullying prevention and intervention procedures, including investigating and responding to all charges of bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation.

Violations of School policy and procedures will be addressed in conformance with existing disciplinary policies. In addition, all reporting, investigations and response shall be consistent with local, state and federal law regarding the anti-discrimination and the protection of civil and human rights. Consultation with the Catholic Schools Office, Office of the General Counsel of the Archdiocese, and representatives of local, regional and state law enforcement and justice agencies may be required to ensure the rights of targets and aggressors are maintained.

- A. Reporting bullying or retaliation: A school member *is* required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation that the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses.

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others. These reports may be oral or written and can be made face-to-face, via telephone, by email, or through the Internet when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or staff members, may be made anonymously.

Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus School will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form (a copy of which is attached to this Plan), a dedicated mailing address, and an email address. Use of the Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report.

The school will:

- Include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students

and in the *Parent-Student Handbook*.

- Make the Incident Reporting Form available in the school's main office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee
- Make the Incident Reporting Form available as a downloadable document on the School's website.

At the beginning of each school year, the school will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying *and* retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Principal or designee, will be incorporated into:

- Parent-Student Handbook,
- Faculty Handbook
- On School website.

A1. Reporting by Staff

Any staff member who encounters an interaction that may be construed as bullying will first be asked to try to address the incident between the target(s) and aggressor(s). The staff member will then report the incident immediately to the Principal or designee so the investigation process may begin. This initial report should ideally include:

- Date, time and location of the incident
- Individuals involved and their roles (e.g. target, aggressor, bystander)
- Information about if/how the incident is part of a pattern of bullying
- Any actions taken by the staff person to defuse the situation.

This initial report may be done orally, by email or via a written note. The initial report must be followed by a written report using the Incident Reporting Form within 72 hours of the initial report of the incident.

A2. Reporting by Students, Parents/Guardians, and Others

The school expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal or designee. This may be done by telephone, face-to-face, by email, in writing, or anonymously.

a. Students, parents/guardians and others are not required to complete the Incident Reporting Form to report an incident or alleged bullying or retaliation.

Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report.

Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age and developmentally- appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee. Students who are non-verbal or not yet proficient in English will be assisted in making

reports of alleged incidents of bullying and/or retaliation.

If a student, parent/guardian or other member of the school community makes an oral report of a bullying incident the Principal/Designee will complete an Incident Reporting Form to document in writing the allegation.

An Incident Reporting Form may also be completed by the Principal/designee to complement written reports of bullying by a student, parent/guardian or other school community member in those instances where additional data is secured to substantiate or complete the allegation. This form may be completed by school staff to complete the incident file.

b. Anonymous reporting will be managed at the School level. Students, parents/guardians and others will be able to make anonymous bullying reports by telephone, by mail, or email.

Anonymous reports will ideally include at least the following information:

- Date, time and location of the incident
- Individuals involved *and* their roles (e.g. target, aggressor, bystander)
- Any knowledge of prior incidents that were reported or not
- The relationship of the reporter to the incident (e.g. witnessed firsthand, third party report)

Upon receipt of an anonymous report the School will initiate a preliminary investigation. If the anonymous allegation is deemed to have potential merit an Incident Reporting Form will be completed by the investigating staff member, and the investigation process at the school level will proceed.

No disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

B1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal and a team designated by her/him will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to:

- Creating a personal safety plan
- Pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus
- Identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target
- Altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target.

The Principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

Following the investigation, the Principal and her/his team will implement appropriate strategies

for protecting from further acts of bullying, retaliation any students who (a) report bullying or retaliation, (b) witness bullying or retaliation, (c) provide information during an investigation of allegations of bullying or retaliation, or (d) has reliable information about an alleged act of bullying or retaliation. Strategies that may be used to create a safer environment for the target(s) and/or aggressor(s) may include to:

- Increasing adult supervision at times and /or in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.
- Temporarily and/or permanently changing the aggressor(s)'s schedule and/or seating arrangements to reduce opportunities for retaliation
- Establishing a safe zone for the target to when s/he feels vulnerable.

This is not an exhaustive list. The creation of safe environments for targets, aggressors, and/or other people impacted by the incident will be considered for each individual person and incident.

B2. Obligations to Notify Others

The Principal or designee has primary responsibility to notify the following constituencies by phone or through an email message - when bullying or retaliation has occurred.

a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

b. Notice to Another School. If the reported incident involves students from another school district, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal education and privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

c. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. The Catholic Schools Office will also be notified.

C. Investigation:

The Principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages *of* the students involved.

During the investigation the Principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the Principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the Principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal *or* designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal or designee will consult with the Office of the General Counsel of the Archdiocese about the investigation.

- D. Determinations: The Principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances.

The Principal/designee and/or a team designated by her/him will:

- Determine what remedial action is required, if any
- Determine what responsive actions is necessary, and/or
- Determine disciplinary action is necessary.

Remedial, responsive and disciplinary actions will balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behaviors in order to enhance the safety of the learning environment.

The Principal or designee will promptly notify the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what (a) disciplinary and (b) future prevention action is being taken. All notice to parents/guardians must comply with applicable local, state and federal education and privacy laws and regulations.

Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the Principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent/guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

- E. Responses to Bullying and Allegations of Bullying: The creation of school environments where every student feels a sense of belonging is integral to student success.

After an investigation of bullying, cyberbullying, retaliation and/or harassment, regardless of whether the claim is substantiated, the Principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that any student involved in the incident is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities.

To this end, Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus School will modify or institute procedures by grade level as necessary to provide a safe environment at all times of the school day including non-classroom times such as lunch, recess, and after-school and other out-of-school time, particularly for students who have been targets of substantiated allegations of bullying/cyberbullying/retaliation, as well as aggressors of said actions as needed to restore a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

EI. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the Principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 370(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that the Principal/designee and/or a team designated by the Principal may consider include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's anti-bullying curricula
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with appropriate school personnel
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals
- Meeting with parents/guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home
- Adopting behavioral plans or contract to include a focus on developing specific social skills
- Making a referral for any further evaluations as appropriate.

a. If a student who is found to be the target or aggressor in a substantiated bullying incident has an individualized education plan (IEP) and the cause of the incident is related to her/his disability, then the provision of skill building training and any other appropriate accommodations or services as agreed upon by the Team shall be integrated into that student's IEP.

E2. Taking Disciplinary Action

a. If the Principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's code of conduct.

b. If the Principal or designee determines that a false allegation of bullying or retaliation has been made appropriate actions will be taken. This may include disciplinary actions for those incidents where the accuser is a student.

E3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

Upon the completion of the investigation, the Principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and the sense of safety for others as well. One strategy that the Principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the Principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

a. Depending upon the circumstances, the Principal and a team of people he/she designates may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development, professional mediation, or other supportive services.

b. Depending upon the circumstances, the Principal may choose to invite a law enforcement officer to conduct a safety evaluation of the target(s) and/or aggressor(s) in order to inform strategies for promoting safety of students and the school environment.

c. If deemed appropriate and agreed upon by both the target and the aggressor, the matter may be referred to the Principal and Pastor for mediation. The Principal and Pastor will then schedule age appropriate mediation with the students.

Support Services

The school shall have a team of professionals organized by the Principal who shall be responsible for helping to create and monitor the safe and supportive learning plan for targets and/or aggressors of bullying/cyberbullying/retaliation and other acts of aggression among and between students. This team may be an existing group with expanded function or a new team convened exclusively for this purpose.

Activities of the team may include the following:

- Making referrals to provide support services for students exhibiting bully behaviors.
- Providing social skills lessons to prevent bullying
- Monitoring classroom or school-wide programming to address the deleterious effects of bullying, retaliation or allegations of bullying and/or retaliation on the school environment

The School may consider current tools including, but not limited to, behavioral intervention plans.

- A. Students with disabilities: As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability, the Team will consider the instructional services, accommodations or other service the individual student may need in her/his IEP to support the development of the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

- B. Services for other vulnerable populations:
If an incident of bullying and/or retaliation is found to be related to a student's identification with a protected class, the Principal/designee may consult with local experts on the provision of specialized support services for the individual(s) involved and the school community.

Instructional Services

In the long term, preventing bullying from happening is the goal of the School. Instructional activities will focus on helping students develop healthy social relationships with their adults and peers, and creating a positive school culture. Activities will include:

- A. Bullying instruction: Developmentally appropriate instruction in bullying prevention skills, strategies and attitudes shall be provided to students in grades K-12.

- B. Orientation to student responsibilities in bullying prevention: Annually at the start of the school year teachers will review the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan with students in their classes. Students new to the school community after the start of the school year will be offered this overview by the Principal/designee. In addition, this information will be documented in student handbooks updated regularly. Links to the school's online Bullying information will be clearly labeled on the school website. Anti-bullying messaging and information about student rights and responsibilities will be integrated into elementary instruction provided by teachers.

- C. Cyber safety instruction: All students are provided with instruction and guidance in cyber safety and media literacy skills through their Computer Classes. The students will engage in project based learning activities which focus on the areas of internet safety, cyberbullying and bullying. Students are oriented to the School's Student Internet Use Policy which (a) provides guidelines for the safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies, and (b) specifically prohibits use of the School's computers for cyberbullying and other forms of hostile and anti-social purposes.

D. Evidence-based prevention instruction: A program of evidence-based social/emotional learning instruction is offered to all students from grades PK-8. The curricula used in all school elementary classrooms - Second Step and Talk About Touching; A Personal Safety Program - are approved by the federal Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools for their effectiveness *in* addressing individual risk and protective factors¹ associated with bullying. These include:

Counteract the following risk factors

- Inadequate school climate / Poorly organized and functioning school / Negative labeling by teachers
- Antisocial behavior and alienation/ Delinquent beliefs / General delinquency involvement/ Drug dealing
- Early onset of aggression and/or violence
- Victimization and exposure to violence
- Poor refusal skills
- Lack of guilt and empathy
- Cognitive and neurological deficits/Hyperactivity
- Mental health concerns/Conduct disorders

Enhance the following protective factors:

- Good relationships with peers
- Presence and involvement of caring, supportive adults in school
- High expectations of students
- High quality school / Clear standards and rules
- Opportunities for prosocial school involvement
- Effective parenting
- Good relationship with parents / Bonding or attachment to family
- Individual social competencies and problem solving skills
- Positive / Resilient temperament
- Healthy / Conventional beliefs and clear standards Self-efficacy
- High individual expectations
- Perception of social support from adults and peers

The school will continue to implement these programs with fidelity in order to ensure all students have opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that will (a) prevent bullying and other forms of violence, and (b) promote positive social relationships and community culture.

¹ Risk and protective factor list from www.findyouthinfo.gov, a clearinghouse of federal government resources pertaining to youth healthy development.

These might include:

- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications;
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference;
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance.

E. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts: The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- Setting and reinforcing clear expectations for positive, pro-social behaviors and attitudes in the learning environment
- Setting and communication school standards for identifying, naming and rewarding good behavior including introducing positive behavior awards as part of quarterly Principal's Award program
- Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students
- Setting and communicating school standards for adult supervision during lunch, recess, bathroom and other unstructured time
- Supporting non-violent conflict resolution, including supervised, peer mediation
- Other prevention activities will be considered by the Principal, Faculty and Bullying Plan Subcommittee of the School Consultative Board.

Professional Development and Staff Training

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for Staff to create a School climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of Staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to Bullying. Professional development may be informed by research and may include information on:

- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent Bullying;
- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies *for* immediate, effective interventions to stop Bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an Aggressor, Target, and witnesses to the Bullying;
- research findings on Bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for Bullying in the School environment; information on the incidence and nature of Cyber-Bullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to Cyber-Bullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to Bullying or Retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students.

Additional areas identified by the School for professional development include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in School or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

A. Annual staff training on the Plan:

Annual training on the Plan for all School Staff, and, in the discretion of the Principal, volunteers who have significant contact with students, will include Staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Principal or his or her designee will follow upon receipt of a report of Bullying or Retaliation, and an overview of any Bullying prevention curricula to be offered at the School. Staff members hired after the start of the School year are required to participate in School-based training during the School year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

B. Written notice to staff:

The school will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan through the Faculty Handbook.

Communication and Collaboration with Families and Partners

Clear communication and consistent collaboration with staff, families, students and community partners is essential to achieving bullying prevention and other health and safety goals within Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus School. Communication with these and other constituents shall include information about the (a) dynamics of bullying including signs and symptoms of bullying/cyberbullying/retaliation, (b) strategies for preventing cyberbullying and promoting online safety, (c) strategies for preventing bullying and/or retaliation in the classroom, across the school community, at home and in the community, (d) information about how to report bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, and (e) school procedures for responding to and investigating bullying, including strategies for creating a safe learning environment for targets and reinforcing positive behavior standards among aggressors. This shall include communication of the school's Bullying Policy, Disciplinary Policies, and Internet Safety/Acceptable Use Policy.

Parent and community notification: To ensure all constituents understand both intervention and prevention activities the school will minimally:

- Publish bullying reporting, response and investigation procedures in the Parent/Student Handbook
- Public bullying reporting, response and investigation procedures in the Faculty Handbook;

- Create a bullying page on its website www.stcatherinesomerville.org as a resource for (a) anonymous reporting, (b) clarifying procedures for reporting, responding and investigating allegations of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, (c) communicating school positive behavior standards, and (d) expanding access to prevention education resources for families, teachers, students and community partners;
- Participate annually in No Name Calling Week as declared by the Governor every January.

Other communication and social promotion campaign activities will be considered by the Principal, Faculty and Bullying Plan Subcommittee of the School Consultative Board.

Leadership and Continuous Improvement

Leadership at all levels of the School community has played a critical role in developing and implementing this Plan in the context of other School and community efforts to promote a positive School climate. The Plan has been developed in consultation with the Pastor, School Consultative Board, School Staff, School volunteers, students, parents, and guardians. We all have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. The Principal and designated members of the Staff, working under the oversight of Pastor are collectively responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to Bullying. It is also the responsibility of the Principal and such designees to involve representatives from the greater School and local community in developing, implementing and periodically reviewing the Plan.

A. Assessing needs and resources:

The Plan is intended to be the School's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of Bullying within the context of other healthy School climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, School leaders, with input from families and the Staff, have assessed the adequacy of current programs; reviewed current policies and procedures; reviewed available data on Bullying and behavioral incidents; and assessed available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services. This "mapping" process has assisted the School in identifying resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, the School has revised or developed policies and procedures; established partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities.

B. Planning and oversight:

The Principal and designated members of the Staff, working under the oversight of the Pastor, will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Specific planning and oversight responsibilities will include:

- Receiving reports on bullying
- Collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes
- Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressor
- Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law

- Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors
- Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school will use
- Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them
- Amending the Parent-Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook and codes of conduct
- Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials
- Reviewing and updating the Plan biannually as required by law.

C. Biennial update of the Plan and community involvement:

This Bullying Plan will be reviewed and updated biennially to (a) ensure its effectiveness, and (b) establish strategies and indicators of continuous improvement in the effort to promote safe and supportive learning environment. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 the Bullying Plan Subcommittee shall include representatives from the following groups:

- Teachers
- School staff
- School volunteers
- Principal
- Pastor
- School Consultative Board
- Local law enforcement
- Student Representatives
- Parents/guardians.

A period of public comment will be open for at least three weeks soliciting feedback on improvements to the Bullying Plan from members of the community who may not be able to or comfortable with participating in a public meeting.

D. Outcomes and assessment:

The biennial update of the plan shall include a review of available data on social and emotional learning, the environment for the delivery of social emotional instruction in school, and data on school climate. This data includes:

- Youth Risk Behavior Survey data collected and analyzed.
- Instruction Checklists, completed by classroom teachers to document the extent to which evidence-based social emotional learning programs are implemented with integrity
- Peer mediation

This data shall be used to identify areas of programmatic strength, resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, the school will revise or develop policies and procedures; establish partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities.

Relationship to Other Laws

Consistent with Massachusetts and federal laws, and the policies of the school, nothing in the Plan

prevents the school from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, Massachusetts, or federal law, or school policies.

In addition, nothing the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school to take disciplinary action or other action under Mass. Gen. Laws. Ch. 71, Section 370 (d)(v), other applicable laws, or local school policies in response to violent, harmful or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.