

South Central Community Services, Inc.
Day Treatment
Elementary and High School Programs
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

I. **Purpose:**

It is the goal of the South Central Community Services, Inc. to create a learning environment in the school where students are protected from bullying, so they feel safe and supported in their efforts to succeed academically and develop emotionally into responsible caring individuals.

- II. **Scope:** Bullying is contrary to Illinois law and this policy is consistent with the policies of the school board, charter school, non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school, federal laws, state laws, rules governing student privacy rights and the Illinois School Code. This policy protects South Central Community Services, Inc. students against bullying and harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin or immigration status, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identify 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.

This policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parent/guardians. South Central Community Services, Inc. Board of Directors or its designee will re-evaluate this policy every two (2) years based on an assessment of its outcomes and effectiveness, including, but not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff and family observations of safety at school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The information developed will be made available on the South Central Community Services, Inc.'s website. A copy of the Anti-Bullying policy will be placed in the school student/parent handbook and given to parent/guardian yearly. Staff will receive annual training and given a copy of the Anti-Bullying policy. Anti-Bullying policy will be posted in each classroom and throughout the school where other policies and school rules are posted.

III. **Procedures:**

- A) South Central Community Services, Inc., students, with the support of his/her parent(s), guardian(s) and the adults at school, to commit to the following principles, which will apply to everyone on school property and at school-related activities:
- I will not bully others
 - I will try to help anyone I suspect is being bullied,
 - I will work to include students, who are left out,

- If someone is being bullied, I will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

B) Bullying and harassment are prohibited:

- 1) During any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned program or activity.
- 2) In school, on school property, on school buses or other SCCS provided transportation.
- 3) Through the transmission of information from SCCS computer or computer network, or other electronic school equipment.
- 4) When communicated through any electronic technology or personal electronic device while on school property, on school buses or other SCCS provided transportation, and at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities:
- 5) When it is conveyed that a threat will be carried out in a school setting, including threats made outside school hours with intent to carry them out during any school-related or sponsored program or activity or on SCCS provided transportation.

C) Definitions

“Bullying” 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 one or more of the following effects:

- (1) Placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or property.
- (2) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s physical or mental health.
- (3) Substantially interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
- (4) Substantially interfering with the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

D) Bullying 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.

- 1) “**Cyber bullying**” means using information and communication technologies to bully,
- 2) “**Retaliation**” means any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information

during an investigation, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

- 3) **“Peer Conflict”** means disagreements and oppositional interactions that are situational, immediate and developmentally appropriate. When school employees are aware of peer conflict, they are expected to guide students in developing new skills in social competency, learning personal boundaries and peaceably resolving conflict, and to model appropriate social interactions. These interventions are designed to prevent Peer Conflict from escalating to Bullying.
- 4) **“Prejudice or bias”** means motivation for bullying or harassment based in part or in whole by actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin or immigration status, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identify 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.
- 5) **“Restorative Measures”** means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline that are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, contribute to maintaining school safety, protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, teach, students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successfully in school and society, serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students’ behavioral health needs.

E) **Intervening to Address Bullying**

Responsibilities of SCCS Employees and Consultants

All SCCS employees and consultants, including security officers, lunchroom staff, maintenance staff and support staff witness incidents of bullying or school violence or who possess reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying must:

- (1) Intervene immediately in a manner that is appropriate to the context and ensures the safety of all people involved.
- (2) Report the incident of bullying or retaliation to the Geneva Reynolds, Director of Special Education 773-374-2223, reynolds@sccinc.org as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours, on an incident form.

- (3) Cooperate fully in any investigation of the incident and in implementing any safe plan established by the Principal/Designee, Clinical Supervisor or Dean of Students.

F) Responsibilities of Students, Parents and Guardians

No student who witnesses bullying may stand by or participate in bullying, but must notify an adult at school and an adult at home as quickly as practicable. Any parent or guardian who witnesses or is notified of bullying has an obligation to advise the Principal/Designee as quickly as practicable.

G) Investigation

- (1) The Principal, Dean of Student or a designee will perform the investigation.
- (2) Investigation of a bullying incident shall be initiated within 24 hours of a complaint completed within 5 school days, unless due to extenuating circumstances it cannot be completed.
- (3) The investigation shall include:
 - a. Identifying the perpetrator(s), target(s) and bystander(s), as well as any adult who witnesses the incident or may have reliable information about it;
 - b. Conducting an individual interview in a private setting with the alleged perpetrator and target. The alleged perpetrator and target should never be interviewed together or in public. Individual interviews shall also be conducted in private with student and adult bystanders.
 - c. Determining how often the conduct occurred, any past incident or continuing pattern of behavior.
 - d. Assessing the individual and school-wide effects of the incident relating to safety and assigning school staff to create and implement a safety plan that will restore a sense of safety for the target and other students who have been impacted.
 - e. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if South Central Community services, Inc. investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining and consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

H) Notification

On the same day the investigation is initiated, the Principal/Designee shall report to the parent/legal guardian of all involved students, via telephone, personal conference and/or in writing, the occurrence of:

Any alleged incident of bullying.

- 1) If the investigation results in the imposition of consequences the Principal/Designee may advise the parent/legal guardian of students other than the perpetrator. S/he may not advise them of the specific consequences imposed, as that would violate the confidentiality of school-record information required by law.
- 2) When communicating incidents of bullying to the target's parent/guardian, the Principal/Designee should consider whether the student may want to keep certain information confidential. For example, if a student is bullied after coming out as gay, the Principal/Designee shall not disclose the student's sexual orientation to the parent/guardian without the student's permission, unless there is a legitimate, school-related reason for doing so.
- 3) Parents will be told that policy is consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights. Parent/guardian of the students who are parties to the investigation will be given an opportunity to meet with the principal/designee to discuss the investigation, findings and actions taken to address the bullying incident.

I) Imposing Consequences

- 1) Schools must respond to bullying in a manner tailored to the individual incident, considering the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Appropriate responses and consequences are outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. SCCS should avoid using punitive discipline (detention, suspensions, and expulsions).
- 2) When an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the Principal/Designee shall explain the consequences in a non-hostile manner and shall impose any consequence immediately and consistently. The Principal/Designee shall keep communicating and working with all parties involved until the situation is resolved. Some key indicators of resolution include:
 - The perpetrator is no longer bullying and is interacting civilly with the target.
 - The target reports feeling safe and is interacting civilly with the target.
 - School staff notices an increase in positive behavior and social-emotional competency in the perpetrator and/or the target.
 - School staff notices a more positive climate in the areas where bullying incidents were high.

- 3) Interventions that may be used to address bullying within the school are: increase use of school social work services, referral to outside resources within the community, social-emotional skill building and peer conflict resolution.

- 4) School Anti-Bullying policy can be located on SCCS website: www.sccsinc.org under Educational Program.

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