



POLICY: 4.5

PREPARED BY: Operations Committee

DATE ISSUED: April 21, 2016

INCLUDED IN PERSONNEL MANUAL: Y

INCLUDED IN CRISIS MANUAL: N

INCLUDED ON SCHOOL WEBSITE: Y

SUBJECT: Bullying, Intimidation and Harassment

APPROVED BY: Board of Directors

DATE REVISED: August 17, 2024

INCLUDED IN PARENT HANDBOOK: Y

INCLUDED IN BY-LAWS: N

BULLYING, INTIMIDATION AND HARASSMENT

At Brickton Montessori School, we take a proactive stance on bullying, intimidation and harassment. As a community, we work to create a learning environment where students are prepared to clearly articulate their concerns, speak honestly, appreciate individual differences and feel empowered to advocate for themselves and others. As a Montessori school, education for peace is an integral part of our curriculum, with our ground rules of respect for the individual and the environment, as the central guide to appropriate conduct for students. Through peace education, we work with students at each level to see the cause and effect of their behavior in ways that are developmentally appropriate.

The school ground rules, posted in each classroom as a reference for the students, are introduced to the classrooms by the teachers and are consistent throughout the day. Expectations for behavior vary based on the development of the students at each program level. Based on Montessori pedagogy, our policy is to assist children in developing self-discipline and skills to control their behavior, incorporating conflict resolution skills to address disagreements in a peaceful manner. In the Toddler and Children's House programs the teachers may, as needed, remind the children of the written rules. In the Elementary and Middle School programs, the students create and sign the ground rules, using them to facilitate independent conflict resolution discussions. Adults step in when a student asks for assistance, or if the adult feels that the situation warrants support or intervention from an adult.

This policy prohibits bullying, intimidation and/or harassment of students on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, mental status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, military status, unfavorable discharge from military service, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, academic status, pregnancy, parenting status, homelessness, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic. Bullying is contrary to Illinois state law as well as the policy of Brickton Montessori. This is not intended to infringe upon the right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously views protected under the First Amendment of the US Constitution.

Bullying Defined

“Bullying”, including “cyberbullying,” is defined 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:

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



Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation: pushing, hitting, threatening, stalking, name-calling, or other physical or verbal conduct of an aggressive, belittling or browbeating nature; sexual harassment; sexual violence; public humiliation; threatened or actual destruction of property; using derogatory slurs; wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice against individuals based on one or more of the distinguishing characteristics listed in the third paragraph of this policy; or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying.

“Cyber-bullying” relates to bullying using 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 in this Section. “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 in this Section.

Responding to Bullying and Harassment

Our *Problem Resolution* policy in the *Parent Handbook* allows for respectful action to resolving problems, including an outline of a course of action for both parents and personnel. Students and parents are encouraged to report claims or incidents which they reasonably believe could constitute bullying, intimidation, or harassment of a student to their lead teacher and/or the Head of School (phone: 773-714-0646; email: erica.lane@brickton.org). Staff are also encouraged to report claims or incidents which they reasonably believe could constitute bullying, intimidation, or harassment of a student to the Head of School. Anonymous reporting can be sent to the school via USPS (8622 W. Catalpa Ave, Chicago, IL, 60656) or left at the main office in a sealed envelope addressed to Brickton Head of School at any time. Brickton Montessori School will inform parents or guardians of any alleged incidents of bullying that their student may be involved in, or instances of self-harm determined to be the result of bullying, within 24 hours after the school administration is made aware of the students’ involvement in the bullying incident or self-harm. The school must make diligent efforts to notify parents or guardians, including by utilizing all contact information the school has available or that can be reasonably obtained by the school within 24-hours. All reports shall be promptly and thoroughly investigated and completed within 10 school days after the date of the reporting. All reports shall be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to fully investigate the complaint. There shall be no retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying; if this occurs, the perpetrator will face consequences to their actions. Any person found falsely accusing another individual of bullying shall face consequences appropriate the situation and will participate in conflict resolution practices to rectify the accusation.

Any student who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in conduct prohibited by this policy will be subject to a range of consequences and remedial action, including but not limited to, oral and/or written reprimands, loss of special privileges, up to and/or including expulsion from school. When appropriate to the situation, the recommendation of social/emotional work, including therapy, social skills groups, or an alternate temporary educational setting, may be made. Community restorative justice meetings are regularly a part of the return to the classroom community. Parents of all students involved in the incident(s) will promptly be informed of the outcome of the investigation and the resulting outcomes. Any school employee who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in conduct prohibited by this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Brickton Montessori School



is also required to collect all bullying information and submit non-identifiable data regarding all verified allegations of bullying and whether the bullying was based on actual or perceived characteristics in an annual report to the State Board of Education by August 15 of each year starting with the 2024-2025 school year.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION

If you have a question or concern about your child or your child's program, please contact your child's lead teacher. It is usually best to write your concern down in a note or email to share with your child's lead teacher. If deemed necessary, the parent and lead teacher will map out a course of action and time frame to obtain a meaningful resolution. If the problem continues, then the Head of School will meet with the parent and lead teacher to further refine the action plan and time schedule.

If after reasonable attempts, the parent is still dissatisfied, the parent may submit a written statement to the Board. The Board will consider such statements in a closed meeting and advise the parent of its disposition of the statement.

This policy is regularly reviewed by the administration based on recent data and the needs of the student body. The Board of Directors reviews all school policies at regular intervals for alignment to the school mission.