



Saint Agnes School

Arlington Catholic High School



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16 Medford Street, Arlington, MA 02474

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Arlington Catholic High School strives for a safe learning environment that is free of bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, awareness of Christian values, and to promote and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

Arlington Catholic High School Philosophy

- To create and develop an awareness of Christian values.
- To foster an individual and communal relationship with God.
- To encourage a spirit of service and leadership within the school, local, and global communities.
- To provide an academic atmosphere which will enable students to recognize and desire excellence.
- To challenge students to think critically and creatively.
- To encourage the growth of independent learning.
- To promote respect for self and others.
- To help students develop and preserve physical and mental health.
- To offer opportunities for students to experience belonging, caring, and relating to others.

All schools are required by M.G.L. c.71, sec. 370 to adopt a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and/or measures. This includes among other things, procedures for receiving reports of bullying and retaliation; promptly investigating and reporting to them; notifying parent/guardians of targets and aggressors of the investigation and, if bullying is found to have occurred, of actions taken to prevent further acts; and restoring a sense of safety for the target of bullying. The law prohibits bullying on school grounds; on adjacent property; and in a non-school-related location, or through the use of technology, if it infringes on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or orderly operations of the school.

In order to implement a successful bullying intervention and prevention plan, Arlington Catholic High School is committed to build upon its mission, philosophy, and social and academic expectations from its students and school community. This plan will include and review the following components:

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Leadership:

The Arlington Catholic High School administration under the leadership of the Principal, Associate Principal(s), Dean of Students, Guidance Counselors, and/or other designees conduct a biennial review of its Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and has trained all Arlington Catholic High School administrators regarding their responsibilities to investigate allegations of bullying.

The Principal/Dean of Students will be responsible for receiving reports on bullying, be responsible for documenting such reports, and responsible for the implementation and enumeration of the plan.

Policy Statement:

Arlington Catholic High School is committed to promoting respect for self and others by providing a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment or any retaliation thereof. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive plan to provide a culture where all forms of bullying or disruptive behavior will not be allowed to disrupt the social and/or academic learning process.

Professional Development:

Annual Staff training:

All staff will receive in-service training which reviews the main components of the recent bullying and hazing legislation as well as the Arlington Catholic High School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

Age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade is incorporated into the curriculum for all students in Physical Education/Health classes, Theology classes, Social Emotional Learning Program and/or school curricula across academic disciplines.

Access to Resources and Services:

Arlington Catholic High School employs three full-time guidance counselors and one guidance/social worker. Guidance counselors take an active role in the development of the academic and social life of each student at Arlington Catholic High School. Counselors along with administration will intervene in any and all allegations of bullying.

- Guidance counselors provide assistance and support to identified targets, witnesses, and aggressors. Individual counseling and group counseling are provided.
- parent/guardian, Classroom teachers and counselors provide discussions on bullying, respect for others, and provide discussions to promote and reinforce a positive school climate and environment that is healthy and safe consistent with the school's philosophy and its commitment to Christian values.
- The School Nurse also provides resources and support for students, staff, and parent/guardians promoting a climate that is healthy and safe.
- The Principal/Dean of Students will provide safety plans for students who have been the targets of bullying or retaliation.
- Physical Education/Health classes, Theology classes, Social-Emotional Learning Program and/or age-appropriate curricula across academic disciplines provide anti-bullying curriculum to all students at Saint Agnes School.
- Arlington Catholic High School has a long-standing relationship with the community and outside agencies that provide additional resources for students, parents/guardians, and staff.

Academic and Nonacademic Activities:

Arlington Catholic High School strives to follow the Academic Benchmarks set by the Archdiocese of Boston (RCAB) across all aspects of the curriculum. The theory and practice of the Church's social teachings are embedded into the curriculum. The Scripture and Catholic intellectual traditions are used in all subjects to help students develop the ability to think critically and ethically about the world around them. At age-appropriate levels, the moral and spiritual life of Saint Agnes School, through its culture, climate, and curriculum, is designed to help students identify, define, and live in accordance with the core principles of Catholic school teachings and habits of mind that aid in the age-appropriate development of strong moral character. Bullying is a topic that is discussed, embedded, and reviewed.

The following skill-building approaches that may be utilized include:

- Using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- 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;
- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying with emphasis on the imbalance of power the aggressor has over the target;
- Emphasizing cyber safety both in and out of school, and the appropriate use of social networking sites;
- Supporting and educating students for respect of one another by emphasizing and practicing the school's values and mission;
- Encourage Arlington Catholic High School students to become "Upstanders" where appropriate. Students can emphasize social support of the target, even in minor forms. The friend or other friends helping the target is KEY to supporting targets.
- Encourage students to embrace the concept of reducing "Gateway Behaviors" (rolling of the eyes, mocking, being mean, teasing, laughing, staring, etc.) and that this "littering" of the school culture is unacceptable. Empower students with this responsibility.

The following teaching approaches and skills will be utilized:

- Teachers and all adults at Saint Agnes School must respond to "Gateway Behaviors" (rolling of the eyes, mocking, being mean, teasing, laughing, staring, etc.). Talk and teach realistically about bullying as a health issue. Educate students about bias. Focus on relationship-building as a way of improving student resiliency.
- Creating safe school and classroom environments that promote respect for others and a culture that will not tolerate incidents of disrespect, by setting clear student expectations, across all classrooms, in regards to behavior;
- Reporting and responding to derogatory comments and all alleged incidents of bullying
- Educating students about the Bullying Law, emphasizing the importance of reporting incidents and communicating to students the ways in which reports can be made
- Providing students with Internet and media safety information emphasizing appropriate use of various social networking sites such as Facebook, texting, and cell phone/smartphone usage

Policies and Procedures:

Reporting bullying or retaliation

- All Arlington Catholic High School staff members are required to immediately report to the Principal/Dean of Students any instances of bullying or retaliation about which the staff member becomes aware or witnesses.

- Staff, students, parents/guardians, and others may report bullying or retaliation orally or by voicemail and/or in writing or by email. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be given to the Principal/Dean of Students and will be recorded.
- Reports made by students, parents/guardians, or other individuals who are not school staff members may be made anonymously orally or in writing and will also be recorded.
- The Incident Report Form is posted on the website for parents/guardians, staff, and students.

Use of the Incident Report Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school will:

- 1) include a copy of the Incident Report Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parent/guardians;
- 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the Principal/Dean of Students and
- 3) post it on the school's website.

At the beginning of each school year, the school will provide the entire school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parent/guardians, with written notice of its policies and procedures for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation.

A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Principal/Dean of Students, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school website, and be available to parent/guardians, all staff, and all students.

Reporting by staff

A staff member will report promptly to the Principal/Dean of Students when he or she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation.

Reporting by students, parent/guardians/guardians

Arlington Catholic High School expects students, parent/guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal/Dean of Students. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents/guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the Principal/Dean of Students.

Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal/Dean of Students 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; predetermining 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; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The Principal/Dean of Students will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation as necessary.

The Principal/Dean of Students will implement appropriate strategies to protect from bullying or retaliation any student who has reported bullying or retaliation, witnessed bullying or retaliation, provided information during an investigation, or who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

Obligations to Notify Others

Notice to parent/guardians or guardians

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal/Dean of Students will promptly notify the parent/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/Dean of Students contacts parents/guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice to another school

If the reported incident involves students from more than one nonpublic school, charter school, public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal/Dean of Students first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal/Dean of Students 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 privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice to Law Enforcement

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal/Dean of Students 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/Dean of Students 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. In making this determination, the principal will consult with other individuals the Principal/Dean of Students deem appropriate, consistent with the plan and with applicable school policies and procedures.

Investigation

The Principal/Dean of Students will promptly investigate 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/Dean of Students will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents/guardians, and others as necessary. The Principal/Dean of Students will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

The Principal/Dean of Students, other staff members as determined by the Principal/Dean of Students, in consultation with the school counselor and school administration as appropriate, may conduct interviews. To the extent practicable, and given his or her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Principal/Dean of Students will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal/Dean of Students will maintain a written record of the investigation. All acts of bullying that have been investigated and confirmed will be recorded.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal/Dean of Students will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

Determinations

The Principal/Dean of Students will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after an investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Principal/Dean of Students will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or limited from benefiting from school activities.

The Principal/Dean of Students will:

- 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any
- 2) determine what corrective actions and/or disciplinary actions are necessary. Disciplinary measures will be left to the administrator's discretion within the guidelines of the school handbook and age appropriateness.

Depending upon the circumstances, the Principal/Dean of Students may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parent/guardians to identify any underlying issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional support.

The Principal/Dean of Students will promptly notify the parent/guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All

notices to parents/guardians must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations.

Confidentiality

Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the Principal/Dean of Students 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. It is imperative that the confidentiality of the parties involved (complainant and witnesses) will be maintained to the extent practicable given the school's obligation to investigate and address the matter.

Responses to Bullying

If bullying or retaliation is substantiated, Saint Agnes School (principal, dean of student, designee, teachers, counselors, and relevant staff) will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or limited in benefiting from school activities. As with the investigation, the response will be individually tailored to all of the circumstances, including the nature of the conduct and the individuals involved. The principal or dean of students will follow up and monitor both the aggressor and the target.

The principal or his designee shall contact the school counselors and social worker to determine what appropriate intervention(s) and strategies should be put in place for both the aggressor and the target.

In addition to disciplinary action, the following are examples of steps that Arlington Catholic staff may take to prevent any recurrence:

1. Holding parent/guardian conferences
2. Transferring the aggressor's classroom
3. Limiting or denying the aggressor's access to a part of the school
4. Increasing adult supervision during after school hours
5. Excluding the aggressor from participation in school-sponsored or school-related functions, after-school activities, or extracurricular activities.
6. Providing relevant educational activities for individuals or groups of students such as group counseling, peer mediation, and relevant workshops
7. Providing resources for outside counseling

8. Ongoing support and consultation for students involved such as check-ins with counselors, teachers, nurse, associate principals, dean of students and/or other administrators

Taking Disciplinary Action

Arlington Catholic High School absolutely prohibits bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation as defined. Students who engage in bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action; however, disciplinary action taken must balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior based on the facts and evidence gathered in the investigation. The range of disciplinary action based on the handbook includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

1. Verbal warnings
2. Oral/written warnings
3. Reprimands
4. Detentions
5. Diversionary Programs
6. Suspension: short-term and long-term, in-school or out of school
7. Exclusion/withdrawal as determined by the Principal/Dean of Students

If the Principal/Dean of Students determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action as well.

Nothing in this plan is intended to prevent school administration from taking disciplinary action against a student for conduct that does not meet the definition of bullying or cyberbullying, as defined in this plan, but nevertheless is inappropriate for the school environment.

Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The Principal/Dean of Students will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others. The Principal/Dean of Students may choose 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/Dean of Students 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/Dean of Students will work with appropriate school staff to implement these immediately.

Collaboration with Families:

Arlington Catholic High School is committed to ensure that all parents/guardians understand both intervention and prevention activities that their children will experience as students at school. Arlington Catholic High School is also committed to work with parent/guardians and understands how important developing a partnership with parent/guardians is to educate their children in anti-bullying strategies.

Arlington Catholic High School is committed to:

Publish and distribute the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to all parents/guardians via the Arlington Catholic High School website and request all families sign off and validate they have read and discussed it with their student(s).

Publish bullying reporting, response, and investigation procedures in student handbooks as well as the Incident Reporting Form.

Publish online the key elements of the Bullying Prevention Curriculum available to all parents/guardians.

Provide parent/guardians with access to the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center's (MARC) "parent/guardian Presentations" that are tailored to each group or community's needs. Topics include:

- Handling bullying and cyberbullying effectively with your child's school
- Managing children's and teen's screen time and technology use
- Understanding topics like social media and sexting
- Coping with the emotional outcomes of a pandemic
- Encouraging healthy relationships

MARC parent/guardian presentations can be requested by emailing marc@bridgew.edu

Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation:

Acts of bullying, which includes cyberbullying, are prohibited.

- on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at/ on public transportation, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by the school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school, and
- at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or

witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the school to staff any non school personnel.

Definitions:

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, s.370, 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'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 or substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying may include conduct such as physical intimidation or assault, including intimidating an individual into taking action against his/her will; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; stalking; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

Cyberbullying, as defined in M.G.L. c 71, s. 370, is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not 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, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant message or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying also includes:

- (i) The creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- (ii) The knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying; and

(iii) 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 clauses (i) to (v), inclusive of the definition of bullying.

Cyberbullying may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing or threatening email messages, instant messages, or text messages; creating websites that ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate others; or posting on websites or disseminating embarrassing or inappropriate pictures or images of others.

Gateway Behaviors are any behaviors that are minor (rolling eyes at a friend, making unwanted noise, mocking, whispering, and annoying someone) all of which can eventually lead to bullying. Adults responding to gateway behaviors can make a big difference.

Hostile Environment, as defined M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370, is 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 a student's education.

Resiliency is the ability of a student to resist or bounce back from an adverse experience or circumstance due to bullying.

Repeated Use is at least three documented and reported incidents of inappropriate conduct directed at a target during a period of one calendar year, unless aggravating factors dictate an extended time period.

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

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Upstanders are students who are willing to support targets. These are assertive friends that are willing to "stick with the target" and offer support. Upstanders are taught NOT to confront the bully. Having friends is a huge support to victims of bullying.

Relationship to Other Laws

Relationship to nondiscrimination laws

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school, Arlington Catholic High School does not discriminate against any student obtaining the advantages, privilege, and courses of study on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents Arlington Catholic High School from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law or school policies.

Relationship to existing disciplinary regulations

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, s. 37H or 37H1/2, other applicable laws, or school policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

NOTE: The Arlington Catholic High School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was reviewed and/or updated: July 1, 2025.