

THE MOOG CENTER
FOR DEAF EDUCATION
Where Deaf Children Talk

Bullying Prevention Policy

The Moog Center for Deaf Education believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. We have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance. Bullying and cyberbullying are contrary to Missouri and Illinois state law pertaining to school district policies.

The Moog Center will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. Bullying and/or cyberbullying 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. A student shall not intimidate, harass, or bully another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes: direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation.

The Moog Center expects students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to a teacher, coordinator, or the director. Staff who witness such acts should take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds and school-sponsored activities, on or off campus. Bullying incidents off campus reported during non-school sponsored events will be addressed with student and family as deemed necessary or reported to local authorities. Teachers should discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

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

Reasonable effort will be made to complete the investigation of a reported bullying incident within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the investigation about the reported incident of bullying. All appropriate school personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process will be included in the investigation.

The department coordinator and/or Executive Director or a designee will be notified of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.

Consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights and providing parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

When a bullying incident occurs, all students involved will participate in social-emotional skill building activities, to include descriptions and explanations related to the bullying incident. Referrals to counseling and community-based services will be provided as necessary and appropriate.

The school prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process. Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is strictly prohibited and those person/s who retaliate are subject to disciplinary action. Any person who falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying will be subject to disciplinary action.

The Student Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Any student who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to a teacher, coordinator, or the Executive Director.
- Students can rely on staff to promptly begin an investigation each complaint of bullying in confidential manner within 24 hours.
- Parents/Caregivers of all students involved in a bullying incident will be informed within 24 hours.
- If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the student or the parent of the student should contact the Executive Director, Betsy Moog Brooks, at 314-692-7172 or via email at bbrooks@moogcenter.org. All reporting will be kept strictly confidential.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, students, and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting intimidation and bullying: at the beginning of the school year, as part of the information packet, and as part of new student orientation.
- The school will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of investigation confidential.
- Staff who witness acts of bullying shall take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. People witnessing or experiencing bullying are strongly encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the target or witnesses in any way.

The Moog Center will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy by collecting and sharing data including:

- Frequency of instances
- Student, staff, and family observations of safety at school
- Identification of areas of school where bullying occurs
- The types of bullying that are common or occurring
- Bystander intervention or participation

This information will be shared with stakeholders through verbal and/or electronic communications.

This bullying and cyberbullying policy is in alignment with other practices and policies of the Moog Center for Deaf Education, which can be found in the *Family Handbook of School Policies* and the *Employee Handbook*.