



Phoenix Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

This Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the "Plan") has been adopted by the Board of Trustees for Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Chelsea, Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Springfield, and Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Lawrence (collectively, "Phoenix"). This Plan is located online at <https://www.phoenixcharteracademy.org/policies/>.

Phoenix believes that a positive, safe, and civil environment in school is necessary for scholars to learn and achieve. Bullying is prohibited by Massachusetts state law and disrupts a scholar's ability to learn by preventing that scholar's full engagement with their education. Moreover, bullying compromises a school's ability to educate its scholars in a safe environment. Phoenix prohibits bullying in accordance with state law, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, and school policy. This Plan applies to scholars and members of school staff, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, scholar advisors, and paraprofessionals.

1. Definitions:

Phoenix uses the following definitions for the purposes of this Plan:

"Aggressor" means a scholar or staff member who engages in bullying and/or retaliation against a target.

"Bullying" means the repeated use by one or more scholars or a member of the school staff 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 of damage to their 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 the purposes of this Plan, bullying shall include "cyberbullying."

"Cyber-bullying" is defined as 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, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system,

including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

- Cyber-bullying includes (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (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 listed in clauses (i) through (v) of the definition of bullying.
- Cyberbullying 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 conditions listed in clauses (i) through (v) of the definition of bullying.

"Hostile environment" refers to 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 target's education or employment.

"Parties" refers to the target(s) and aggressor(s) involved in an incident of bullying or retaliation.

"Retaliation" means any form of intimidation, harassment, aggression or cyber response against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

"Target" means a scholar or staff member against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetuated.

2. Prohibitions:

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- 1) 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 a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school district; and
- 2) 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 Phoenix, 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 the school.

Phoenix understands that certain scholars may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including but not limited to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, housing status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Phoenix will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the Phoenix community and to provide all scholars with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment.

Aggressors, including scholars and staff members, who participate in bullying and/or retaliation are subject to disciplinary action, described in further detail below.

3. Reporting Procedures:

Reports received or made by Staff:

All accusations of bullying will be taken seriously. First, a formal report of bullying will be logged in Phoenix's behavioral management program ("BMP"), e.g., Kickboard, by a staff member. All reports of bullying will be copied to the Director of School Culture and the Head of School.

Second, the parents/adult supporters of both the target and the aggressor will be notified by the Director of School Culture and/or the Head of School.

The Director of School Culture and/or the Head of School will then investigate the alleged bullying, as described in Section 4 below.

For allegations of retaliatory behavior, the same procedures are to be followed:

- staff to make record of report in the BMP;
- staff to copy Head of School and Director of School Culture on report; and
- The Director of School Culture or Head of School will then follow up with parents/adult supporters of both target and aggressor and begin investigation.

Reports made by Parents/Adult Supporters:

Parents/adult supporters of scholars who witness or become aware of bullying and/or

retaliation should call the Director of School Culture or Head of School to report that conduct. Parents/adult supporters can also disclose reports of bullying and/or retaliation to another Phoenix staff member, who will then notify the Director of School Culture or Head of School.

To make an anonymous report of either bullying or retaliation, parents/adult supporters can leave a message for the Head of School or Director of School Culture at the applicable Phoenix campus using the contact information below:

Phoenix Charter Academy Springfield at (413) 273-1236
Phoenix Charter Academy Lawrence at (978) 681-7710
Phoenix Charter Academy Chelsea at (617) 889-3100

Once a parent/adult supporter makes a report of bullying and/or retaliation to the Director of School Culture, Head of School, or another Phoenix staff member, the protocols described in "Reports received or made by Staff" above will be followed.

Reports made by Scholars:

Scholars who witness, become aware of, or experience bullying and/or retaliation should report that conduct to the Director of School Culture, Head of School, or another Phoenix staff member. After receiving a report of bullying and/or retaliation, the protocols described in "Reports received or made by Staff" above will be followed.

To make an anonymous report of either bullying or retaliation, scholars can leave a message for the Head of School or the Director of School Culture at the applicable Phoenix campus using the contact information below:

Phoenix Charter Academy Springfield at (413) 273-1236
Phoenix Charter Academy Lawrence at (978) 681-7710
Phoenix Charter Academy Chelsea at (617) 889-3100

Scholars may also file an anonymous report by submitting to the Student Support Center the anonymous reporting form located in Appendix A.

4. Investigation Procedures:

After receiving any reports of bullying and /or retaliation, the Head of School and/or Director of School Culture will conduct an investigation in the following ways:

- Interview the parties and any relevant witnesses separately and take written statements. After each interview, make a report in the BMP.

- Contact the parties and the parents/adult supporters of scholar parties to share information gleaned in interviews.
- Meet and review evidence to determine whether bullying and/or retaliation occurred. If evidence indicates that bullying and/or retaliation occurred, the parties and the parents/adult supporters of scholar parties will be notified, and disciplinary procedures may follow in accordance with the school's disciplinary policies and code of conduct as outlined in the Scholar Handbook.

5. Disciplinary Action and Protection of Target and Others:

Discipline:

Upon a determination that bullying has occurred, Phoenix will take all necessary steps to stop the bullying, remedy the effects of bullying and prevent recurrence of bullying. Aggressors who engage in bullying and/or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary measures shall balance the need for accountability with the need to remind the aggressor of behavior expectations at Phoenix.

The consequences for a scholar who engages in bullying or retaliation may include, but are not limited to, suspension and detention as well as other forms of reparation to the school community. Upon re-entry to school, the aggressor scholar will be expected to sign a contract committing to ceasing all similar types of bullying and/or retaliatory behavior. Targets and the parents/adult supporters of target scholars will, to the extent consistent with state and federal law, be notified of actions taken by Phoenix to prevent any further acts of bullying and/or retaliation. Please note that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a scholar solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

A staff member who engages in bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary consequences that may include, but are not limited to, oral or written warning, probation or termination from employment.

Prevention:

In order to prevent further acts of bullying, all parents/adult supporters of scholars accused of or targeted in bullying will be asked to reread the bullying policies and protocols of Phoenix. Next, parents/adult supporters will be given weekly updates as to their scholar's behavior by an advisor through a check-in phone call. Further, the Director of School Culture will build in Advisory lesson plans that target bullying prevention for the entire school population.

Safety of Target and Others:

To ensure the safety of the target, Phoenix will hold a safety plan meeting with the target and the target's parent(s)/adult supporter(s). At this meeting, a strategy will be put in place to identify a safe place for the target to go (physically) and a person to whom the target can report (verbally or in written form) any incident that continues to threaten his / her safety.

Further, all targets will be provided an opportunity to meet with a Phoenix social worker after reporting bullying. The social worker, in consultation with the target, the parent(s)/adult supporter(s) of the target scholar, and other relevant staff will determine if other case management needs are evident.

In an effort to maintain the safety of all scholars who report bullying, anonymous reporting systems are available as described above.

All scholars who feel threatened or triggered by bullying or retaliation can request a meeting with the Director of School Culture and/or a social worker. In addition, scholars at Phoenix have the benefit of being able to leave class and visit the Student Support Center whenever issues (inside or outside of school) are preventing or limiting their learning.

The opportunities described above are available to any scholar who reports feeling unsafe in connection with their experience of:

- reporting bullying / retaliation;
- providing information to help an investigation of bullying / retaliation; and/or
- witnessing an act of bullying / retaliation.

Law Enforcement:

When appropriate and necessary, parents/adult supporters of targets will be notified of their right to contact local police and file formal complaints. All parents/adult supporters will be informed of their right to pursue criminal charges when appropriate through the city and local police departments. Additionally, Phoenix reserves the right to file charges against an aggressor who endangers the school community, and the school will immediately notify local law enforcement when criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. As mandated reporters, staff members may have additional reporting obligations under M.G.L. c. 119, § 51A.

6. False Accusation and Retaliation:

Phoenix scholars will be informed at the beginning of every quarter of the consequences for making a false accusation of bullying or retaliation. As stated in the

Scholar Handbook, any scholar who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying is subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, removal from school for up to three (3) days, depending upon the severity of the incident. The Head of School and Director of School Culture will follow discipline procedures as outlined in the Scholar Handbook. Upon return, the scholar will be encouraged to bring a parent/adult supporter to discuss the false accusation and to apologize to the person(s) falsely accused.

Retaliation is prohibited by law and this Plan. Therefore, scholars who retaliate in any way towards a target or other participant in the bullying investigation process, such as a witness, during or after a bullying investigation are subject to disciplinary consequences including, but not limited to, removal from school.

7. Support Services:

Phoenix takes seriously its responsibility to all who are affected by a bullying incident including the target, the aggressor, and the appropriate family members of the involved scholars. Currently, we have a Director of School Culture, Managers of Scholar Success, and social workers that work with individual scholars on socio-emotional needs, depending upon the incident.

The targeted scholar will be offered counseling from a school social worker and support from the Director of School Culture as the incident is resolved and afterwards, for as long as the scholar needs. If the scholar's parent/adult supporter prefers an outside agency, Phoenix will make arrangements for the scholar to see a counselor or therapist at a neighboring agency. We currently have partnerships with three counseling agencies.

Aggressor scholars, after facing school consequences, may request to also see the school counselor or an outside counselor, depending upon the severity of the incident. The Student Support Team and the families of all interested parties will have input into this decision but ultimately the Director of School Culture, Head of School and school social workers will make a plan to keep the involved scholars and the school community safe.

The school social worker and other support staff will also offer short-term counseling services to any parent/adult supporter and any appropriate family members that need support around a particular bullying incident.

The Director of School Culture will call and check in with parents/adult supporters of both targeted and aggressor scholars at least two (2) weeks after all relevant

information/evidence has been reviewed and a determination is made that bullying/retaliation occurred in order to see how both families are feeling about school safety and support at school.

8. Protection of all Scholars:

All Phoenix scholars have a right to the protections and supports described in this Plan regardless of their status, including with respect to race, color, age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, legal status, creed, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical, emotional or mental disability, educational or academic achievement, special need, and proficiency in the English language or a foreign language.

9. Phoenix Staff Training / Professional Development on Bullying Prevention and Intervention:

Phoenix will provide all staff with ongoing professional development with respect to bullying prevention and intervention.

Staff Training:

All Phoenix staff will receive training on this Plan, as well as copies of the corresponding training materials, towards the beginning of each school year. Annual staff training on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the procedures for responding to and investigating reports of bullying and retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout Phoenix. 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.

Ongoing Professional Development:

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of the 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, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The content of professional development will be informed by research and will include:

- 1) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent and respond to bullying;
- 2) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop and respond to bullying incidents.
- 3) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can

take place between and among respondents, targets, and witnesses to the bullying;

- 4) research findings on bullying including information about specific categories of scholars who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment.
- 5) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- 6) internet and electronic device safety as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for scholars with disabilities that must be considered when developing scholars' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of scholars with autism or scholars whose disability affects social skills development. Additional areas identified by the school for professional development may include:

- 1) promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- 2) fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- 3) building relationships and communicating with families;
- 4) managing classroom behaviors constructively;
- 5) using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- 6) applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- 7) teaching scholars skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- 8) engaging scholars in school or classroom planning decision-making; and
- 9) maintaining safe and caring classrooms for all scholars.

10. Parent/Adult Supporter Information:

Bullying protocols and procedures will be an ongoing topic during Adult Supporter Advisory Council meetings. These meetings occur quarterly.

Each year, the Head of School and/or Director of School Culture will notify parents/adult supporters of enrolled scholars about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula that are being used at Phoenix. This notice will include information about the following:

- the definition and types of bullying;
- dynamics of bullying;
- the internet, cyberbullying, and online safety;
- bullying prevention;
- how to report incidents of bullying and/or retaliation to Phoenix staff; and
- how to reinforce Phoenix's bullying prevention curriculum at home.

Phoenix shall provide to scholars and their parents/adult supporters, in age-appropriate terms and in the languages which are most prevalent among the scholars, parents/adult supporters, annual written notice of the relevant scholar-related sections of the Plan.

The Director of School Culture will build in Advisory lesson plans that target bullying prevention for the entire school population. To help with the reinforcement of Advisory lesson plans for scholars at home, Phoenix advisors will be available to parents/adult supporters to answer questions about the Plan.

Further, since parents/adult supporters are integral to the reintegration and rehabilitation of both targets and aggressors, advisors will maintain regular communication with the parents/adult supporters of scholars involved in an incident of bullying and/or retaliation weekly. Phoenix will respond to questions and concerns of parents/adult supporters as they develop.

11. Scholar Survey:

In compliance with Massachusetts law, Phoenix will administer to scholars every four (4) years a survey developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("DESE") to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in school. The survey results will be used to assess the effectiveness of Phoenix's bullying prevention curricula and instruction.

12. Problem Resolution System:

Any parent/adult supporter wishing to file a claim/concern with DESE alleging that Phoenix did not comply with federal or state education laws or regulations may do so using DESE's Problem Resolution System ("PRS"). Information about filing a claim or seeking assistance through PRS can be found online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/prs>. Individuals with questions about the PRS process can contact the PRS Office at 781-338-3700 or compliance@doe.mass.edu. Hard copies of this information are also available in the Main Office.

APPENDIX A

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report: _____

This line may be left blank if an anonymous report is being made

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. Check whether you are the: ☐ Target of the behavior ☐ Reporter (not the target)

3. Check whether you are a: ☐ Student ☐ Staff member (specify role) _____

☐ Parent/Adult Supporter ☐ Administrator ☐ Other (specify) _____

Your contact information/telephone number: _____

4. If student, state your school: _____ Grade: _____

5. If staff member, state your school or work site: _____

6. Information about the Incident:

Name of Target (of behavior): _____

Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior): _____

Date(s) of Incident(s): _____

Time When Incident(s) Occurred: _____

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): _____

7. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):

Name: _____ • Student • Staff • Other _____

Name: _____ • Student • Staff • Other _____

Name: _____ • Student • Staff • Other _____

8. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on the back if necessary.

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

9. Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ Date: _____

(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

10: Form Given to: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date Received: _____

II. INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): _____

Position(s): _____

2. Interviews:

☐ Interviewed aggressor Name: _____ Date: _____

☐ Interviewed target Name: _____ Date: _____

☐ Interviewed witnesses Name: _____ Date: _____

 Name: _____ Date: _____

3. Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, have incidents involved a target or target group previously? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION ☐ Yes ☐ No

Summary of Investigation:

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

☐ YES

- ☐ Bullying
- ☐ Retaliation

☐ NO

- ☐ Incident documented as _____
- ☐ Discipline referral only _____

2. Contacts:

- ☐ Target's parent/adult supporter Date: _____
- ☐ Aggressor's parent/adult supporter Date: _____
- ☐ District Equity Coordinator (DEC) Date: _____
- ☐ Law Enforcement Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

- ☐ Loss of Privileges ☐ Detention ☐ STEP referral ☐ Suspension
- ☐ Community Service ☐ Education ☐ Other _____

4. Describe Safety Planning: _____

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Report forwarded to Head of School: Date _____ Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date _____
(If principal was not the investigator)

Signature and Title: _____ Date: _____