

JOYCE KILMER SCHOOL POLICY AGAINST BULLYING

INTRODUCTION

A necessary condition for academic success of all students is the feeling of personal safety - both physical and emotional. When students feel safe, they are open to academic exploration and discovery. When students feel safe, they feel confident taking academic risks. They become individuals with identities, beliefs, and differences to contribute for the common good. To fully enable students to reach their potential, all members of our school community, must actively promote a positive, safe, and bully-free climate.

Bullies derive their strength from those willing to look away or, worse, those who support them and/or take part in bullying others. There is no such thing as an innocent bystander: one either helps the person being bullied or helps the bully.

The Kilmer will not tolerate bullying. This policy defines bullying and outlines the Kilmer's shared philosophy, procedures, and practices to insure that the Joyce Kilmer K-8 School is safe and bully-free for all.

BULLYING: DEFINITION

Bullying 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 victim that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property
- Places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her property
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the victim
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means, including the creation of web pages or blogs in which the creator impersonates another person or the distribution or posting of information online that creates any of the conditions listed above.

State law prohibits bullying:

- At school and at all school facilities
- At school-sponsored or school-related functions, whether on or off school grounds
- On school buses and school bus stops
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, licensed or used by a school
- At non-school-related locations and through non-school technology or electronic devices, if the bullying affects the school environment.

HOW TO REPORT BULLYING

Anyone may report bullying at any time, including anonymously. Everyone is entitled to

protection from retaliation for reporting bullying.

State law prohibits retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is a witness to or has reliable information about bullying.

To report bullying, a Kilmer student or parent/guardian may:

- Tell any staff member
- Tell a staff member he/she especially trusts
- Fill out a Bullying Report Form (available in the Main Office, in Classrooms and on the school website) and leave it in the Main Office
- Leave a note reporting the details of the bullying incident in the Main Office
- Tell a parent/guardian and ask them to report it to the Main Office
- Call the BPS Bullying Hotline: (617) 592-2378

To report bullying, a Kilmer Staff Member must:¹

- Report the incident immediately to school administration
- Proceed to intervene as he/she would normally in a disciplinary situation

Upon receipt of a report of bullying, Kilmer Administration shall:

- Investigate the incident (confidentiality of victim and witnesses will be maintained to the extent practicable during the investigation)
- Determine whether bullying took place
- Notify parents of victim and aggressor, upon conclusion of the investigation
- Implement disciplinary procedures (outlined in BPS Code of Conduct)
- Follow-up with victim
- Follow-up with aggressor
- Submit all necessary reports to BPS and/or School Police

CONSEQUENCES FOR BULLYING

Pursuant to the BPS Code of Conduct, bullying may result in disciplinary measures including but not limited to suspension, long-term suspension, disciplinary transfer/alternative program placement, or expulsion.

First offenses: BPS Saturday intervention program for students who bully others. Referrals to this program may initially be made in lieu of suspension. Failure to attend and participate in the program may result in the other consequences, listed above.

Repeated offenses: will result in the filing of a police report.

Students who have bullied others will be closely monitored and provided with follow-up counseling following their return to school.

¹ All school staff are considered Mandated Reporters for bullying under the Massachusetts General Laws, similar to their obligation to report suspected abuse or neglect.

IMPLEMENTATION OF KILMER POLICY AGAINST BULLYING

The Kilmer will implement the following steps on an annual basis:

- This policy and the Upper and Lower School Bullying Report Forms will be included in full in the Kilmer School Handbook, Kilmer Faculty Handbook and will be posted on the Kilmer School website (along with links to appropriate resources, which will include the BPS Anti-bullying website).
- Kilmer will distribute this policy to each Kilmer student at the beginning of the school year and will require the student to sign acknowledgement of receipt of the policy.
- Kilmer will distribute a short form of this policy, including the definition of bullying and instructions for reporting bullying, ("Kilmer Policy Against Bullying – Short Form") at least one other time each school year.
- The Kilmer Policy Against Bullying – Short Form will be posted near all of the restrooms. Such postings shall note the location of the Bullying Report Forms and the BPS Bullying Hotline telephone number.
- Teachers in each classroom will hold discussions within the first month of school explaining the terms of this bullying policy.
- Teachers in each classroom will periodically throughout the year revisit the topic.
- Kilmer administration will designate a representative each year to make a presentation at a mid-year SPC meeting to discuss this policy with the Kilmer parents.
- Second Step kits will be provided for each Lower School grade level.
- Bullying Report Form will be made available throughout the school, including in all restrooms, in the Main Office, the nurse's office and at one other location on each floor of the building.
- A drop box for reports of bullying will be hung on each floor of both Kilmer buildings in a location that will facilitate anonymous reports of bullying.
- Anti-bullying signage will be hung throughout the school.
- Anti-Bullying assemblies and discussions led by community partners, including but not limited to the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC), Boston University medical students, MSPP Counseling Interns, the Home for Little Wanderers and/or the BPS Office of Special Education and Student Services (OSESS).
- Grade-level assemblies will be held at the Upper School, outlining explicit expectations, conducting role-playing, and discussing ways to help if one sees a student being bullied.

- Grade 7 and 8 climate- and community-building retreat to Nature's Classroom.
- Kilmer staff will encourage students to be proactively kind to others and to build skills in empathy.
- All Kilmer staff will receive BPS-provided training on bullying prevention and intervention. In addition, Kilmer will provide staff members with training in Social Thinking, a program that reinforces positive social skills in children with and without disabilities.
- Welcome Challenge: Students will be challenged to introduce themselves to one new person each day for one month, and to get to know that person a little better. This effort is to help new students adjust to the school, as well as to have students build relationships rather than move through school without knowing their peers well. With this understanding, we hope to reduce instances of teasing, name-calling, and exclusion on the basis of lack of familiarity between students.