



POLICY

TOPIC: Student-to-Student Interactions **AREA:** Operational
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FUNCTION:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that standard definitions of unacceptable behavior, including potential abuse between students, are understood, and appropriately applied as well as staff who directly observe or suspect unacceptable behavior between students, including potential abuse, follow appropriate reporting guidelines.

(This policy covers TRS student-to-student interactions only. This policy is in alignment with other Richardson School and MyPath-wide Board policies.)

PROCEDURES:

Staff training and education:

- Staff should familiarize themselves with a student’s history and be knowledgeable about their current behaviors.
- Staff of TRS will receive training regarding their responsibilities in relation to recognizing, responding, and reporting unacceptable behavior, including potential abuse, between students.

Recognizing Unacceptable Behavior between Students:

- Bullying, intimidation, and harassment are detrimental to the learning environment.
- Bullying is prohibited on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic.
- Interactions between students that are age, environmental, and developmentally appropriate are encouraged.
- Interactions between students that may be considered age, environmental, and developmentally “normal”, but not necessarily acceptable (e.g., name calling, teasing, swearing, fighting, flirting, gossiping, etc.) should not unequivocally be considered inappropriate or abusive without proper exploration, as applicable.
- All staff (including student interns and volunteers) of TRS will be aware of the below definitions of unacceptable behavior and/or potential abusive contact between students:



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Physical Contact:

Significant physical injury inflicted on a student by another student other than by accidental means (unexpected or by chance without intent or volition) that can include, but is not limited to lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, severe or frequent bruising, or great bodily harm (bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death, permanent disfigurement, or loss or impairment of any body part).

Sexual Contact:

- Direct genital/oral/anal fondling or penetrating actions between students (either consensual or non-consensual); and
- Photography, videography, or any other recording of or display of a student engaged in sexual activity by another student (either consensual or non-consensual).

Verbal/Emotional Contact:

Any action by a student meant to harm another student's psychological, emotional, or intellectual functioning evidenced by, but not limited to, the following characteristics exhibited to a severe degree: anxiety, depression, withdrawal, aggression, substantial/observable change in behavior or ability that is not within the normal range of the student's age and stage of development.

Bullying:

- Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation, or harm.
- Bullying, as defined in this section, 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. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.
- Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power.
- The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as, but not limited to age; national origin; race; ethnicity; religion; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability or disability; and social, economic, or family status.
- Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of TRS and is not intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.



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- "Bullying" includes "cyber-bullying" and means 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:
 - placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property
 - causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health
 - substantially interfering with the student or student's academic performance; or
 - substantially interfering with the student or student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying, as defined in this subsection, 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. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of 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, photo electronic 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.



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Staff should exercise proactive measures to reduce the likelihood of unacceptable behaviors, including potential abuse, between students. Proactive measures can include:

- Frequently monitoring the location of all the students in the educational area.
- Strategically assigning seats or movement/transition order.
- Avoiding the use of blankets, pillows, or other objects that block staff member’s view/supervision of students.
- Keeping the doors to all rooms open, as appropriate to time of day and activities.
- Keeping all education areas well-lit.
- Intervening when a student is inappropriately exposing themselves (e.g., using appropriate materials to block the view of others, removing the student who is exposing themselves, or removing other students from the area, as appropriate).

Observation of Potential Abuse between Students:

- If observed or suspected unacceptable behavior between students is considered abuse (based on the above definitions), staff should contact the appropriate child protective agency (the agency with geographical jurisdiction over TRS service areas), with their direct supervisor or other supervisory-level staff as soon as possible, if not immediately.
 - Staff making the report should ensure they are calm and able to offer information related to the facts and circumstances of the situation in an unbiased, pragmatic manner. They should avoid offering speculative commentary or personal opinions. They should answer all questions as required by Child Protective Services to the best of their ability and knowledge.
 - Staff should complete an *Incident Report* prior to the end of their scheduled shift.
 - Staff should report concerns to the respective school leader listed below and/or Child Protective Services as applicable.

Use the below for reporting concerns:				
TRS Day School Director				
School Location	Child Protective Services	Name	Email	Phone Number
Appleton	920-832-5161	Dan Fourness	Daniel.Fourness@RichardsonSchool.com	920-944-9996
Beloit	608-757-5401	Jim Block	James.Block@RichardsonSchool.com	608-473-3244
Brookfield	262-548-7212	Jennifer Stuebs	Jennifer.Stuebs@RichardsonSchool.com	262-468-0700
Madison	608-261-5437	Rachel Elliott	Rachel.Elliott@RichardsonSchool.com	608-421-5267
West Allis	414-220-7233	Josh Cornelius	Joshua.Cornelius@RichardsonSchool.com	414-540-8500



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Upon the report of alleged potential abuse/neglect being made to the appropriate child protective agency, the student's family, or guardian, if appropriate, and the student's external case manager/funder, as applicable, should be informed.

- The Day School Director, school administrator, or designee shall be notified of the report as soon as possible.
- All reasonable efforts shall be made to complete an investigation in 10 school days after the report was received involving the Day School Director and the Student Rights Specialist as well as any other staff with knowledge, experience, and training – as deemed appropriate.
- Consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation will be provided information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator (Day School Director) or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

Observation of Unacceptable Behavior between Students (non-abusive):

If a staff at TRS observes or otherwise receives indication (verbally told them by a student or another staff, written documentation, report by an external stakeholder, etc.) that unacceptable behavior, including bullying between students, may have occurred BUT they do not have cause to suspect abuse (based on the above definitions), they should:

- Ensure the student's well-being
- Document any statements or details related to the situation that the student freely discloses, but refrain from conducting any formal investigation
- Contact their direct supervisor to review the situation; and
- Complete an Incident Report at the direction of their supervisor.
- Information obtained through the process outlined above will be sent directly to the Day School Director as applicable, for review and follow-up.

Non School-Related Reported Concerns:

- Concerns that develop during transportation:
 - The Day School Director will contact the sending school district case manager for the student(s) involved. It should be noted, transportation is contractually funded by the sending school district not The Richardson School.
- Concerns regarding non-school day community events:
 - The Day School Director will contact the parent/guardian to relay all relevant information shared. The Day School Director will contact Child Protective Services (see grid, page 4), as appropriate.



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- Other concerns reported but not related to school:
 - The Day School Director will contact the parent/guardian, County Case Manager, Child Protective Services or Law Enforcement as appropriate based on the information provided.

Follow-up:

All students have access to the following supports while enrolled:

- Restorative conversations
- 1:1 support time with staff
- Formal counseling as dictated in the student's IEP
- Referral to external county supports/counseling

This policy prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions will result for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation as well as for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying, up to and including parental or guardian contact.

As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating the policy, an evaluation process to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of this policy includes, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at school; identification of areas of the school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. Quarterly reviews will be performed by the Student Rights Specialist and the Day School Director.

APPROVED: 2/15/19; 7/25/19; 3/4/20; 9/17/21;
10/18/21
Date(s)

BY: Kevin Silkey
Kevin Silkey, Executive Director