

Keshet Day Schools

Bullying Prevention Policy

Approved by Keshet Board of Directors on 7/10/2021

Keshet Cares

At Keshet we are concerned about bullying because the physical and emotional safety of students at all of our schools is our number one responsibility each day. We support the Illinois School Code's anti-bullying policies because a student who is being bullied is being denied equal opportunity to participate in his/her educational program, is being isolated and demeaned.

We aspire for Keshet to be a place where every student feels that he or she has an opportunity to belong, to be appreciated, and to be nurtured. Our attention to the emotional and social needs of our students is absolutely crucial.

Bullying is much less likely to take place and persist in a setting where the adults have made it explicitly clear that they are paying attention, that they care, that they will not tolerate it, and that there are outlets for the victims and consequences for the bullies. Furthermore, bullying is diminished when student "bystanders" are prepared and encouraged to step in quickly and appropriately. Bullying thrives in an environment where students perceive that adults are looking the other way and that peers will not intervene.

Our Commitment

At Keshet, bullying is not acceptable and is strictly prohibited. Bullying covered by this policy is conduct that occurs on school property or at school-sponsored events, while students are being transported or walking to and from school-sponsored events; while students are waiting for transportation, or when the conduct otherwise would substantially interfere with the educational environment, *regardless* of where the conduct occurs. This can include cyber-bullying.

Bullying is contrary to state law and to the policy of the school district. Any student who engages in bullying will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension, notice of termination of Keshet Therapeutic Day placement, and referral to local law enforcement. A student's bullying conduct may also be addressed through other behavioral interventions per their Individual Education Plan (IEP). We understand that there is an opportunity for the school to teach a student who is bullying why their behavior is wrong.

Any student who is a bystander to any bullying conduct and who fails to take action to discourage bullying may also be subject to appropriate discipline. Bystanders who report bullying to an adult are behaving responsibly and compassionately.

Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A disciplinary meeting will be held with administration and/or the IEP team for any person engaging in reprisal or retaliation to determine appropriate remedial actions. Keshet will do everything in its power to keep reports confidential and the source anonymous.

Keshet's bullying policy is developed through collaboration of stakeholders to include, but not limited to; Keshet administration, staff, parents and/or guardians, and students (when appropriate). This policy will be updated every 2 years after its initial adoption, and will be filed with the Illinois State board of Education after the Keshet Board of Directors adopts or updates the policy. Keshet bullying policy will be posted on the Keshet website (www.keshet.org), will be included in both the parent and the employee handbooks, and will be distributed annually to parents/guardians, and school personnel; including new employees when hired.

Bullying Defined

Bullying, which includes "cyber-bullying", is harassment. According to Board policy, harassment is behavior, explicit or implicit, that has the intention or effect of harming or intimidating others or of creating a hostile or offensive environment for another.

Harassment can take many forms – verbal, written, visual, physical, and psychological – and is often, but not always, associated with race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or physical or learning differences. Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, name-calling, stereotyping, derogatory remarks or slurs, or wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred of, or prejudice against, one of the characteristics stated above.

Bullying, as defined in 105 ILC 5/27-23.7, may take various forms, including, but not limited to the following; harrassment, 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.

Cyber-bullying is any written or electronic communication of any type that incorporates language or depictions that would constitute bullying, using any medium (including, but not limited to, cell phones, computers, websites, electronic networks, instant messages, text messages, and e-mails).

Cyberbullying, as defined in 105 ILS 5/27-23.7, is 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, photoelectronic 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. "Cyberbullying" also includes the distribution by electronic means of communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons.

Keshet's Response

Any student/parent who believes that s/he or their child has been a victim of harassment, or who has witnessed harassment, should report this to an adult as soon as possible. While we prefer that a student report harassment to the Director of Education, any adult, whether a supervisor, teacher, staff member, or therapist, will respond to a student/parent report. Reports will be kept confidential, to the extent possible, given the need to investigate.

Students committing or involved in the act of bullying or harassment are subject to disciplinary action ranging from conferring with an administrator to termination from Keshet Therapeutic educational programs. Continued infractions will have a cumulative effect in terms of disciplinary action.

Incidences of bullying should be promptly reported to the Director of Education; (847-412-5750, mremaly@keshet.org), or Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction; (847-412-5769, corrine@keshet.org), by phone, email or in person. If anonymous reporting is preferred, a letter can be dropped off or mailed to Keshet Director of Education, 3210 Dundee Road, Northbrook, IL 60062.

In accordance with 105 ILSC 5/27-23.7, when an incident of bullying is reported:

- Keshet administration will promptly inform, by phone, parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying.
- Will make all reasonable effort to complete an investigation within 10 school days after the report of the incident was received.
- Involve school support personnel as appropriate; social worker, nurse, behavior consultant, case manager.
- Provide parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Director of Education/Assistant Director of Education to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.
- Convene the multidisciplinary IEP team to develop, review, and modify behavior intervention plans as appropriate, and determine consequences if appropriate.
- All incidences of bullying will be documented. Data related to bullying will be reviewed annually.

Making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as *bullying* for the purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions"

Expectations for Staff Response to Bullying

All staff will participate in a training regarding identification and response to bullying. Bullying thrives where adults and student bystanders look the other way. Bullying diminishes when adults show that they care and will respond, and when student bystanders are willing to get involved. It is our responsibility to help students develop more civil and compassionate social and emotional skills, accept responsibility for their learning environment, and understand consequences for poor choices and inappropriate behavior. In order to foster a positive school culture and climate, Keshet will promote mindful practices at the school and classroom level.

At the school level staff:

- Professional development to educate teachers, administrators, school staff, parents, students, and community members about bullying behaviors, response strategies, and available resources.
- Weekly multidisciplinary team meetings, typically consisting of an administrator, a teacher from each grade level, a guidance counselor, psychologist, and/or school nurse, and parent and student representatives to manage the program and evaluate its success.
- Ongoing communications between parents and school staff.

At the classroom level:

- A curriculum that promotes kindness, communication, cooperation, and friendship and includes lessons and activities stressing empathy, anger management, and conflict resolution skills.
- Class rules against bullying. Rules should be brief and clear.
 1. We will be kind to each other.
 2. We will keep our hands to ourselves.
 3. We will help our friends.
- Immediate consequences for aggressive behavior is determined per each student's IEP. The multidisciplinary team will reconvene to discuss student behavior and possible interventions.
- Weekly meetings to communicate to students clear and consistently enforced expectations and to engage them as resources in preventing bullying behavior.
- Ongoing communication with parents.

At the individual level:

- Serious talks with students
- Serious talks with the parents of bullies and victims
- Role playing of non-aggressive behavior with bullies
- Role playing of assertive behavior with victims

Keshet educational programs are dedicated to the social-emotional development, safety, and well-being of all children. This includes the prevention of bullying in our buildings/programs. While our programs/buildings provide a healthy, safe environment for children to learn and grow, bullying

behavior can still be present on occasion. Students are encouraged to seek the assistance of teachers, therapists, or administrators whenever necessary.