



Keshet Education

Bullying Prevention Policy

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. This bullying policy is consistent with that of the organization's policies on Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination.

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 contrary to State law and the policy of the non-sectarian nonpublic school and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this Section [free exercise of religion]. Nothing in this Section is 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 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

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.

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 and this policy is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians.

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.

Bullying Defined

Bullying, which includes "cyber-bullying", is harassment. 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; 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.

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 ILCS 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, photoelectric 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 or parent who believes that she/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. Keshet prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying and the consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation. Additionally, consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying.

Consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying within 24 hours after Keshet administration is made aware of an incident involving bullying; and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. Diligent efforts to notify parents and/or legal guardians will be made utilizing all contact information available. Additional procedures include:

- (A) Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
- (B) Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- (C) Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- (D) Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

Interventions that can be taken to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to, school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

"Restorative measures" means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that:

- (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community,
- (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety,
- (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate,
- (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society,
- (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and
- (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in

- school.
- (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

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 or site managers at the day school and high school/transition programs. Full contact information is below:

Day School Site Manager: Dr. Shirley Drelich, sdrelich@keshet.org, (224)808-3009

High School/Transition Site Manager: Anthony Atsaves, aatsaves@keshet.org, (224)808-3017

Director of Education: Robert Lee, rllee@keshet.org, (847)205-1234

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. We will be kind to each other, we will keep our hands to ourselves, and 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.
- Ongoing discussions with students to clearly and consistently enforce 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.

Policy Evaluation

Per Keshet policy, the Bullying Prevention Policy will be reviewed at least on an annual basis or more often if needed, based on engagement from a range of stakeholders including students, parents, staff, administration, and board members. As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating the policy, Keshet will assess the outcomes and effectiveness of this policy that includes, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. Keshet education programs will use relevant data and information collected for purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation will be made available on the school's website and be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

Updated 3/10/2023, 10/9/2023, 1/8/2024


Rev. 7/23/2024

Approved by:



CEO

08/07/2024
Date



Board of Directors, Board Chair

08/13/2024
Date

