



August 1, 2023

State of Illinois Bullying Policy requirements for FBS:

Forest Bluff School's Bullying Policy is to prevent students from engaging in harassment of any kind, be it physical, verbal or emotional. Respectful behaviors provide all students equal access to a safe, educational environment.

The State of Illinois states that "bullying," including "cyber-bullying," 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:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

"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, 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. "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 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policies of Forest Bluff School. In the spirit of Montessori education, we will not engage in or permit discriminatory behavior or statements. This extends to actions or statements made outside of school hours, including internet activity. For our part, we observe that the children who are independent and self-directed, make good choices throughout the day, engage positively with their peers, respect the work of others, concentrate well, and are more contented and at peace with themselves, are invariably those children who do not spend their free hours in passive screen entertainment, texting, e-mailing, surfing the net, or gaming. Therefore, we consistently encourage our families to avoid such activities for their children of all ages. No personal technology, including cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, etc., are permitted at school. Forest Bluff School complies with the Illinois State Board of Education, which mandates that we publish our bullying policy here.



Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child enrolled at Forest Bluff School is a victim of bullying or harassment shall immediately inform the Head of School, Lynn Jessen, at [office@forestbluffschool.org](mailto:office@forestbluffschool.org) or 847-295-8338. If it is deemed appropriate by the Head of School, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the child will meet to discuss the nature and extent of the harassment. This applies to anonymous reports of harassment as well.

Serious matters are handled immediately, decisively, and as discreetly as possible to protect families' privacy and, when needed, with confidently chosen professional assistance. Once the Head of School has met with the person(s) who reported the incident, the Head of School will inform the parents/guardians of any other student involved in the alleged incident, if needed/appropriate, and will discuss with them any services that might be needed by the student(s).

Once a bullying or harassment allegation has been made, an incident report is filled out by the teacher, Assistant Head of School, or Head of School within 10 business days. Following that report, a meeting is set up with the student, teacher, Head of School, and parent(s) or guardian(s). A second meeting is provided for the family with the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, and an outside counselor if needed. Third, a final meeting is held to review the outcome and decisions made from the allegation(s).

If a student feels uncomfortable with a situation, with a fellow classmate or with an adult, the procedure is for the student to speak up to the person involved, explain their feelings and what change they would like to see. When the matter is serious, the student will ask a chosen friend or teacher to be present. If the student wants some help thinking through what to say, or wants someone else to be aware of the situation, the student should go to a teacher and ask for their guidance. This process respects the nature of the trusting relationships in school. The goal is clear, honest communication that helps the student to take the best care of his/her self, while respecting others at the same time. This is Grace and Courtesy for successful relationships in adulthood. Feelings of harassment of any kind, be it physical, verbal or emotional, should be addressed as soon as possible and in this manner. This is our procedure for handling complaints of any kind at Forest Bluff School, which is consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights.

Apologizing is an important step in healing for all parties. Therefore, if a student learns from a classmate that their behavior, action or words are disturbing or hurtful, a verbal or written apology must be given. The teacher(s)/Director(s) will be with the students to help with this task as needed. If, in the rare case, the teachers/Directors find that a student's behavior continues to be decidedly negative or disruptive to the good of the school, they may suspend or even ask a student to leave Forest Bluff School permanently. Of course, such cases are handled individually and with confidentiality.

We firmly believe that children are in their formative years of life and will make mistakes. When this occurs, our teachers will collectively decide the school's actions to best aid the students involved and collaborate with their parent(s). In order to help their children, as they grow and learn, parents are asked to place their confidence and trust in our Directors to handle situations and to make decisions that will benefit, protect, and support all our students in their specific development. Simultaneously, we are open to hearing parents' feelings and insights, and we ask Forest Bluff parents to exercise a supportive attitude so that we can keep all energies focused on serving



our children. In addition, the student(s) bringing an alleged offense to the attention of adults will not face retaliation or consequences. If a student is found to have falsely accused another, that will be handled in the same way as stated above, individually and privately.

Forest Bluff School's Bullying Policy will be monitored and implemented by the Directors, Assistant Head of School, and Head of School. The students work together to understand the importance of respecting others, and the parents are educated on this topic as well.

Forest Bluff School's Bullying Policy is in our Family Guidebook, which is posted on our school website. This guidebook is distributed annually to all school families and staff.

As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating Forest Bluff School's Bullying Policy, the Directors, Assistant Head of School, and Head of School discuss procedures at the weekly staff meeting as needed. As areas of Forest Bluff School's Bullying Policy are reviewed and edited, the changes are approved by the Directors, Assistant Head of School, and Head of School. All changes are made to the Family Guidebook as needed.

Forest Bluff School's Bullying Policy is consistent with the policies of the school and the Montessori pedagogy in that it maintains respect for each child.