



Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
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Priority Statement

Argosy Collegiate Charter School is committed to providing all students and staff with equal opportunities, and a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyber bullying, harassment, and retaliation. We expect that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner with respect for differences. No person shall be excluded, discriminated against, or bullied in admission to Argosy Collegiate or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study on account of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. We understand that these students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. Argosy will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

In compliance with the Massachusetts Law Relative to Bullying in Schools¹, Argosy Collegiate Charter School prohibits any form of bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by Argosy Collegiate, or through the use of technology or electronic device owned, leased, or used by Argosy Collegiate, or at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Argosy Collegiate, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Retaliation against a person: whom reports bullying, provides information during the investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, shall be prohibited.

The Dean of Students promptly investigates all reports of bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation, and takes prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. The prohibition against bullying, cyber bullying, and retaliation is supported throughout our school through the curricula and instructional activities, professional development, and parent/guardian involvement.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber bullying, and ACCS is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. We have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber bullying, and retaliation. During Year One, the Dean of Students (DoS) is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan except when a reported bullying incident involves the DoS as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Executive Director shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim. If the Executive Director is the alleged aggressor, the Board of Trustees or its designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim.

¹ M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O

This plan applies to all community members including students and members of a school staff, including, but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals. Working together, we can help to ensure that all students are able to access a free and appropriate education in a safe, civil, and supportive learning environment.

I. Leadership

Middle/High School (representing grades 6 through 12) is the phase where adolescence students possess a desire for increasing independence in school, at home, and within the community. “In addition to providing academic curricula, effective middle schools focus on social/emotional development, life skills and engagement. And effective high schools provide support to enhance cognitive skills, engagement and the promotion of leadership. A special focus of high schools is also to prepare students for their transition to post-secondary education, vocational/education training, and initial entrance into the world of work.”²

At Argosy Collegiate, we envision a school culture in which shared DREAM Values of Determination, Respect, Excellence, Altruism, and Maturity: set the stage for academic achievement; are learned by staff during Summer Institute Staff Orientation (15 days in August); are learned by scholars during Student Orientation (5 days in August); and are reinforced daily by all adults in a consistent and warm manner. We envision a school in which a clear Code of Conduct, token economy system, and weekly Community Meeting are based on our DREAM Values. We envision a school with an inclusive, positive and strong school culture, where ambitious academic achievement can be realized for all learners, and where our middle school scholars can seamlessly transition to high school with little risk of dropping out, have consistent college-bound goals and a college-bound mindset, informed by the skills and knowledge to get them there as specifically supported by our College Skills Program. Through weekly community meeting and direct instruction of social skills, ACCS leadership will develop an inclusive culture where respect, civility and tolerance is evident among all stakeholders. During our weekly Student Support Team meetings, staff will identify “likely targets” (special education, ELL, LGBT students, etc.) of bullying to proactively address the needs of these individuals. Students demonstrating poorly developed social skills will have small group and or individual discussions with the dean of students or school counselor. Expectations that every staff member is responsible for the social emotional and academic support of each and every student will be conveyed during summer and weekly professional development.

A major focus of Argosy’s leadership is to build a school wide climate where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. ACCS’s integrated school-wide approach to social skills development and bullying prevention will consist of staff professional development, parent training, student instruction in social skills and bullying prevention, school counseling, both individual or small group, and referral to outside agencies as needed. This approach will require communication, coordination, and cross training between general, ELL, and special education staff, and between staff and parents, to ensure that the school wide efforts address the needs of all students.

² <http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/training-technical-assistance/education-level/middlehigh-school>, Accessed 2/21/14

Since Argosy Collegiate Charter School (ACCS) has just been awarded a charter, leadership from the Executive Director and a diverse Board of Trustees played a critical role in development and implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. While public involvement is required, this plan was written during our planning year. Once staff is hired and students are enrolled, and then again at the end of the school year, the Dean of Students will seek input from parents, students, and staff to make any necessary revisions in this plan. In addition, during summer orientation students will complete a questionnaire to determine the level of bullying that has been going on in their lives.

II. Training and Professional Development

As required by M.G.L. c. 71 § 370, Argosy Collegiate will provide ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff members, including educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, paraprofessionals, and advisors to extracurricular activities, to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. Said professional development shall include: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witness to the bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying including information about specific categories of students who have shown to be at risk for bullying in the school environment, including but not limited to, students with disabilities, and strategies for said students to avoid and respond to bullying; (v) information about the nature of cyber-bullying; (vi) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying; (vii) information for parents and guardians about the bullying prevention curriculum including information about how the curriculum can be enforced at home; (viii) faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the plan applicable to the school.

On a yearly basis, the staff will be surveyed to determine PD needs to enhance social emotional and academic learning. Part of our staff professional development will to explore “ways to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences.”³ During the fifteen-day summer staff orientation and through weekly PD opportunities, staff will review the Argosy Bullying and Prevention Plan and Massachusetts law related to bullying. Using the evidence-based Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center’s “ Train the Trainer Model”, all staff members will be trained to recognize, stop, report, and investigate bullying incidents. During this training, staff will learn our core values and brainstorm ways to promote a healthy and positive school climate where all staff members are responsible to develop the social emotional and academic skills of each and every scholar. Staff will receive written notice about the Bullying Prevention Plan and mandatory reporting requirements during summer staff orientation. This written notice will be included in the Staff Handbook.

“Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.”⁴

³ *Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, (BPIP), page 5.*

⁴ *Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, (BPIP), page 5.*

Provision of Student Instruction

In compliance with the Massachusetts Law Relative to Bullying in Schools, ACCS shall provide evidence-based and age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade. Along with the MARC 's middle school violence prevention curriculum, we will use Second Step Middle School Curriculum to teach empathy and communication, emotion-management and coping skills, and decision-making. These lessons will be taught on a weekly basis.

Parent Instruction

Once a year, the DoS will use the parent portion of the Second Step Program to provide a program to train parents on bullying and social skill development. Parents will be invited to read Argosy's Bullying Prevention Plan and encouraged to made suggestion for improvement.

Publication of Bullying Prevention Plan

Annual written notice of the relevant student-related sections of ACCS's Plan to Prevent Bullying shall be published in the Student Handbook in age appropriate terms and in the languages most prevalent among students, parents, or guardians. On a yearly basis, the staff will review the ACCS Bullying Prevention Plan during summer orientation and professional development.

III. Access To Resources and Services

A. Identify Resources

Argosy Collegiate is a newly authorized charter school that will open in August of 2014. During our planning year, we are building resources to promote a positive school climate that ensures the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others. Part of our 15 days of summer staff professional development and 5 days of student summer orientation, will be focused on building a positive school culture where respect is the foundation our school is built upon. Using the Bridgewater State University Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center's outreach program and curricula, all staff will be versed in bullying prevention and intervention. Each staff member will be required to review the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan on a yearly basis. For students, weekly school culture meetings will focus on Argosy's DREAM Values. During these weekly meetings and as part of the Health and Wellness Program, the DoS will use the middle school *Second Steps Program* to promote skills for social and academic success. ACCS will offer several parent advisory groups in order for staff members to learn how the community views our staff and programs.

Two important components of our program are the Student Support Team (SST) and a daily ninety minute support and extension period. During this support period, the SST will provide social/emotional skill instruction to reinforce bullying prevention activities to classes, small groups, and when necessary, to individuals. Members of the Student Support Team will meet regularly to develop individual social emotional or academic plans for students at risk. During these SST meetings, an appropriate safety plan for a target or bystander may be reviewed. All safety plans will be shared with all staff members. In addition, a plan to address the needs of the aggressor will also be reviewed.

B. Counseling and other services

The Dean of Students will promote and monitor school culture. This individual will receive all bullying incident and/or behavior reports, immediately separate the aggressor from the target and witnesses, immediately investigate the complaint, meet with students, make a determination whether or not the incident was bullying, notify all parents involved and immediately develop a safety plan for the target and witnesses. When necessary, a

counselor or psychologist will conduct a functional behavior assessment and/or a functional behavior plan for the aggressor. The DoS or the counselor/psychologist, depending on the situation and the relationship built between the student and the adult, will also be responsible for investigation and documentation of all reports of bullying or retaliation.

We anticipate hiring at least a .5 FTE Student Adjustment Counselor in year one. Depending on the identified or developing needs of students we will increase the part/full time status of the SAC and/or additionally contract with vendors to support students' needs. We look to hire a full time student adjustment counselor as soon as possible. The SAC will provide counseling to students who are targets of bullying and or retaliation; provide social skills counseling to prevent bullying; and offer intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. The School Adjustment Counselor will meet with the DoS to develop safety plans for targets of bullying or retaliation.

C. Students with disabilities

“As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the SST will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.”⁵

At ACCS, when the IEP Team determines that a student has a disability (including autism spectrum disorder) which impacts social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the SST will include language in the IEP indicating specific action necessary to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Sample questions the IEP/Student Support Team may consider are:

- **Self-Awareness:** Can the student accurately assess one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths/abilities, and maintain a well-grounded sense of self-confidence?
- **Self-Management:** Can the student regulate one's emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles; set personal and academic goals and then monitor one's progress toward achieving them; and express emotions constructively?
- **Social Awareness:** Can the student take the perspective of and empathize with others; recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences; identify and follow societal standards of conduct; and recognize and use family, school, and community resources?
- **Relationship Skills:** Can the student establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation; resist inappropriate social pressure; prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflict; and seek help when needed?
- **Responsible Decision:** Can the student make decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate standards of conduct, respect for others, and likely consequences of various actions; apply decision-making skills to academic and social situations; and contribute to the well-being of one's school and community?

⁵ *Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, (BPIP), page 6.*

- “Have all of the student's needs for modifications and accommodations to access the general education bullying prevention and intervention curriculum been addressed?”
- “Are instructional personnel or supplementary aids and services needed during identified periods of the school day (e.g., lunch, recess, study hall, bus, if applicable) when the student requires additional support?”
- Are the student's non-academic strengths (music, art, sports, etc.) being used as ways to bolster the student's self-esteem and social skills?
- What supports does the student need, and what corresponding changes need to take place in the activity the student is joining, for the student to participate successfully, without fear of bullying?”⁶

IEP teams may also:

- Identify a "safe" adult to whom the student can go for support when feeling vulnerable or targeted.
- Provide additional counseling for skill-building supports to prevent or respond to bullying.
- Provide a communication skills/social pragmatics skills group.
- Provide a Functional Behavioral Analysis and develop a Behavioral Intervention Plan that identifies target or aggressor behaviors, identifies antecedents to these behaviors, and proposes interventions for teaching the student to reduce and/or avoid these behaviors.
- Teach appropriate responses to bullying, harassment, and teasing.
- Provide opportunities for the student to develop and practice a safety action plan.
- Identify skills or accommodations necessary for school success - educationally and socially.”⁷
- Implement a school-wide safety plan.
- Any other option the team determines is necessary for student success.

D. Referral to outside services.

While the Dean of Students or Student Adjustment Counselor will provide most bullying prevention services, we recognize that some individuals may need additional services. We have contracted with a certified school psychologist to work with students as needed. In addition, we have a partnership with Heath First Family Care Center and will make necessary referrals as needed. In addition, both the Dean of Students and SAC will maintain a list of outside referral sources.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Argosy Collegiate Charter School seeks to establish a safe and caring learning environment where respect is demonstrated by all stakeholders and evident in all activities. Students, parents, and staff members will be trained in Argosy's DREAM Values and learn about our social skill development and anti bullying program. During weekly community meetings and academic and social/emotional support periods, the Dean of Students will implement two programs to help promote social skills and reduce bullying incidents. The evidence-based program developed by Massachusetts Aggression Research Center at Bridgewater State

⁶ Addressing the Needs of Students with Disabilities in the IEP and in School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Efforts, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/considerations-bully.html>, accessed 3/19/2014.

⁷ Special Education: Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2011-2: Bullying Prevention and Intervention, http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisorics/11_2ta.html, Accessed 3/19/2014.

University - "Grades 6-12 Advisory Curriculum: Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention" will be used in conjunction with the evidence-based *Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention for Middle School* to "teach empathy and communication, emotion-management and coping skills, and decision making. These skills help students stay engaged in school, make good choices, set goals, and avoid peer pressure, substance abuse, bullying, and cyber bullying."⁸

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches. Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students or school staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications;
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference; and
- explicit instruction about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING

⁸ "Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention for Middle School", <http://www.cfchildren.org/second-step/middle-school.aspx>, accessed 3/19/14.

AND RETALIATION

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. An Argosy staff member is required to report immediately to the Dean of Students, or to the Executive Director when the Dean of Students is the alleged aggressor or to Board of Trustees when the Executive Director is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnessed. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. Argosy Collegiate Charter School will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form⁹, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. ACCS will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the Dean of Student's office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the Executive Director; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, ACCS will provide the school community, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, paraprofessionals, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information for the Dean of Students, and the Executive Director if the DoS is the alleged aggressor, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the Dean of Students, or to the Executive Director when the Dean of Students or a school administrator is the alleged aggressor, or to the Board of Trustees when the Executive Director is the alleged aggressor when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report as provided does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

ACCS expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Dean of Students, or Executive Director when the DoS or another administrator is the alleged aggressor. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or

⁹ Exhibit A: Argosy Incident Reporting Form.

guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the Dean of Students, or Executive Director when the DoS or another administrator is the alleged aggressor.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation – Allegations of Bullying by a Student.¹⁰

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Dean of Students will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The Dean of Students will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The Dean of Students will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

2. Obligations to Notify Others

a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Dean of Students will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the student aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Dean of Students contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00. Notice to parents or guardians of a student who has been bullied based on sexual orientation or gender identity/expression will be completed with sensitivity and in conjunction with the use of: "Guidance on Notifying Parents When a Student Has Been Bullied Based on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity/Expression: Implementation of 603 CMR 49.05".¹¹

b. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Dean of Students first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

c. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Dean of Students has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the DoS will notify

¹⁰ Exhibit B Argosy Investigation Reporting Form

¹¹ "Guidance on Notifying Parents When a Student Has Been Bullied Based on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity/Expression: Implementation of 603 CMR 49.05", <http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/PNguidance.html>, January 2011, accessed April 19, 2014.

Executive Director and the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Dean of Students shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor.

In making this determination, the DoS will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable ACCS policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the Executive Director deems appropriate.

C. Investigation. The Dean of Students will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the Dean of Students, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The DoS (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews will be conducted by the DoS, in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the DoS will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The DoS will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with ACCS policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the DoS with the Executive Director will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

D. Determination

The DoS will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the DoS will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The DoS will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action are necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the DoS may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or student aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The DoS will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the DoS cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it

involves a “stay away” order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

E. Responses to Bullying.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the Dean of Students determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v).

Skill-building approaches that may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on Argosy's Second Steps and MARC's anti-bullying curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with the school adjustment counselor and other appropriate school personnel;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- making a referral for a functional behavioral assessment and/or special needs evaluation.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the DoS decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the DoS, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with ACCS's code of conduct. If the DoS determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

When a student continually exhibits unconventional behaviors, the school team may request parental permission to conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment. An FBA is an assessment of student behaviors that may be disruptive or otherwise inappropriate for school. The FBA is based on observations and discussions that help to determine when and why a behavior is happening so that positive behavioral interventions may be used to help the student to develop more appropriate behaviors. Based on the FBA, a Functional Behavior Plan may be written so that all staff will be able to address behavior in a consistent way.

Argosy Collegiate staff will follow guidelines in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act that govern discipline procedures for students with disabilities whether on an IEP or 504 Plan.

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The DoS will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the DoS will use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the DoS will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the DoS will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

F. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff

ACCS staff members are expected to uphold and model to the highest level, and with 100% consistency, respectful communications and behaviors when interacting with each other, families, and students. At all times, school staff members are expected to demonstrate and model our DREAM Values so that students understand that our values of Determination, Respect, Excellence, Altruism, and Maturity apply to everyone in our community. During our Summer Institute Staff Orientation and throughout the year in weekly professional development, the DoS will provide training and practice in positive framing when interacting, supervising students and managing student behavior. Staff members will practice phrasing, tone, body language, and word choice to consistently deliver positive messaging to students and to eliminate any possible negative interactions between students and staff or the possibility of bullying or harassment of students.

School administration will investigate any report of bullying that allegedly involves a staff member at Argosy Collegiate Charter School. The same process for reporting, responding, investigating, and notification will be in place should the alleged bullying involve a staff member.

ACCS staff members are expected to uphold and model to the highest level, and with 100% consistency, respectful communications and behaviors when interacting with each other, families, and students. At all times, school staff members are expected to demonstrate and model our DREAM Values so that students understand that our values of Determination, Respect, Excellence, Altruism, and Maturity apply to everyone in our community. During our Summer Institute Staff Orientation and throughout the year in weekly professional development, the DoS will provide training and practice in positive framing when interacting, supervising students and managing student behavior. Staff members will practice phrasing, tone, body language, and word choice to consistently deliver positive messaging to students and to eliminate any possible negative interactions between students and staff or the possibility of bullying or harassment of students.

Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age appropriate ways to report an incident of bullying with a staff member, Dean of Students, and/or Principal. Steps will be taken to ensure safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from further incidents. Strategies to protect the reporter, witness or student who provides information from bullying or retaliation will be provided. All involved parties will be reminded of their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during an investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

If there is reason to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00. Consult with legal counsel may also be obtained should it be deemed necessary.

VI. Collaboration With Families

Exemplary communication with families is a key component of Argosy's plan for student success. Weekly written student reports that address academic as well as social emotional progress will be sent to parents and guardians.

A. Parent education and resources. ACCS will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, ELL Advisory Council, etc. The Bullying Prevention Plan will be posted on the Argosy Collegiate Charter School website: <http://www.argosycollegiate.org>.

B. Notification requirements. Each year the leadership of ACCS will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber bullying and online safety. ACCS staff will send parents yearly written notice about the student-related sections of the Plan and Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. Staff at ACCS will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyber bullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by ACCS; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by ACCS, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by ACCS, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires ACCS to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

VIII. Definitions:

A. Aggressor:

a student or a member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation.

B. Bullying:

as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;

- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

C. Cyber-bullying:

bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, 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, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include:

- 1) the creation of a web page or blog 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 conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.
- 2) the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that maybe accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v) inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

E. Gender Identify:

The term “gender identity” is specifically defined in the Mass. General Laws, as amended by *An Act Relative to Gender Identity* (the gender identity law).

- *Gender expression*: the manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice, or mannerisms.
- *Gender identity*: as defined in part at G.L. c. 4, § 7, is “a person’s gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person’s physiology or assigned sex at birth...”
- *Gender nonconforming*: a term used to describe people whose gender expression differs from stereotypic expectations. The terms “gender variant” or “gender atypical” are also used.
- *Transgender*: an umbrella term used to describe a person whose gender identity or gender expression is different from that traditionally associated with the assigned sex at birth.

F. Hostile environment:

a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student’s education.

D. Retaliation:

any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment by a current student or former student under the age of 21 directed against a person in response to an action that person has taken or knowledge that the person has.

G. School grounds:

property on which a school building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased or used by a school district, charter school, non-public school, approved

private day or residential school, or collaborative school for a school sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.

H. School Staff:

includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

I. Target:

a student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of Argosy Collegiate Charter School, no person shall be discriminated against in admission or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of ACCS on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Nothing in the Plan prevents ACCS from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or ACCS policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of ACCS to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L.c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, or ACCS policies, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

12. Signature: _____ Date: _____

II. INVESTIGATION (Exhibit B)

1. Investigator(s): _____ Position(s): _____

2. Interviews:

- Interviewed aggressor Name: _____ Date: _____
- Interviewed target Name: _____ Date: _____
- Interviewed witnesses Name: _____ Date: _____
Name: _____ Date: _____

3. Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor? Yes No
If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously? Yes No

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION Yes No

Summary of Investigation:

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

- YES NO
- Bullying Incident documented as _____
- Retaliation Discipline referral only _____

2. Contacts:

- Target's parent/guardian Date: _____ Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: _____
- Law Enforcement Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

- Loss of Privileges Detention Suspension Community Service Education
- Other _____

4. Describe Safety Planning: _____

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Report forwarded to Executive Director: Date _____ (If ED was not the investigator)

Signature and Title: _____ Date: _____