

Stone Bridge School

Anti-Bullying Policy and Restorative Practices

Approved 10/8/24

Policy Statement

Stone Bridge School (SBS) strives to provide a safe and healthy school environment in which students may learn and grow. Towards that goal, SBS nurtures an atmosphere of tolerance, mutual respect, and kindness. SBS does not tolerate acts of teasing, bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

Authority

California Education Code Sections 234, 234.1, 234.2, 234.3 AND 234.5

Expected Behavior

Stone Bridge School expects our students' behavior to promote a respectful, safe, and responsible school culture. SBS believes that standards for campus behavior must be agreed upon and upheld by all members of its community (faculty, staff members, parents, and students).

Students, Parents and Faculty/Staff will ensure that the following practices are upheld.

- **Treat each other respectfully.**
- **Be inclusive** in play and other activities.
- **Be responsive** to those who appear to be excluded or hurt.
- **Refuse to bully others.** Resolve disputes without resorting to violence or unkindness.
- **Refuse to let others be bullied.**

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

Bullying can occur before, during, or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens within the scope of the school day, there is also a significant amount of bullying that happens in the neighborhood, via phone, and through social media (internet).

Bullying of any nature creates a hostile, disruptive environment and is a violation of a student's right to be safe and secure. Actions deliberately threatening, harassing, or intimidating others, placing an individual in reasonable fear of harm, damaging other's property, or disrupting the orderly and respectful operations of the school **will not be tolerated.**

These are the main forms of bullying:

- **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean or untrue things, and may include:
 - Teasing
 - Name-calling

- Inappropriate comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to use harm
- **Social bullying** involves hurting someone's feelings, reputation, or relationships. Examples:
 - Leaving someone out on purpose
 - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
 - Spreading rumors about someone
 - Embarrassing someone in public
 - Manipulating or coercing someone to act inappropriately
- **Physical bullying** involves harming a person's body or possessions. Examples:
 - Hitting/kicking/pinching
 - Spitting/biting
 - Tripping/pushing/tackling
 - Taking, hiding, or breaking someone's things
 - Making mean or rude hand/body gestures
- **Cyber Bullying** is the use of electronic information and communication devices to willfully and/or repeatedly harm either person(s) through electronic text, photos/images, voice messages, or videos. Digital devices may include computers, laptops, tablets, cell phones, digital cameras, and other personal devices. Verbal and social bullying often occurs within the context of cyber bullying. In some cases, this type of bullying can be a criminal offense.

Examples of cyber bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Sending false, cruel, threatening, or intimidating messages
- Creating websites or postings that have stories, cartoons, pictures, and jokes ridiculing others
- Breaking into an email account and sending vicious or embarrassing materials to others
- Engaging someone in electronic communication, tricking that person into revealing sensitive personal information, and forwarding that information to others
- Posting of a student's picture or personal information without their permission
- Taking/posting threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips via mobile phone cameras
- Making silent or abusive phone calls, or using the victim's phone to harass others to make them think the victim is responsible
- Sending threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Making menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a discussion group or chat-room
- Leaving unpleasant messages sent during instant messaging
- Posting unpleasant or defamatory information to blogs, personal websites and social media
- Catfishing - creating a fake identity online to deceive others.

SBS maintains a zero-tolerance policy for bullying behavior. However, it is understood that students are constantly learning how to interact and support each other in respectful, caring, and productive ways. Parents and school staff ideally collaborate with each other in supporting the healthy social development of each child.

Many children *will* exhibit negative, aggressive or hurtful behaviors at times. As noted above, bullying is *“unwanted, aggressive behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance... which is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.”* Teachers and staff members must evaluate problematic behaviors on an on-going basis and determine when/if bullying is occurring under the definition above. For example, a frustrated child may impulsively hit another student. While the teacher or staff member will intervene for *any* aggressive or inappropriate behavior, they will also evaluate whether there is a repeated pattern to the behavior that suggests bullying is occurring, resulting in a heightened awareness and response to the incidents.

Bullying Prevention will involve, at a minimum:

- Promoting respectful and caring social relationships between students through modeling kind, respectful, and supportive language and behavior, as well as facilitating class meetings.
- Teaching and modeling conflict resolution strategies through storytelling and playing cooperative games.

Anti Bullying practices:

When bullying occurs, students can call out “bully” behaviors by ...

- discouraging negative talk and rumors about another student.
- refusing to watch, join in, or ignore someone being bullied.
- finding an adult to help.
- accompanying the bullied peer to a safe place.
- providing support and understanding to the bullied student.

Response to Incidents of Bullying will include:

- 1) Conversation with all involved students
- 2) Completion of an Incident Report by staff member. Prompt and reasonable investigation of alleged acts of bullying is expected and will be facilitated by SBS Administration.
- 3) Communication with parents by Teacher or Administrator

4) Implementation of age and incident-appropriate restorative practices

All other members of the school community, including students, parents or legal guardians, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this Policy.

- Reports by a community member to an SBS employee must be documented on an official Incident Form by an SBS faculty or staff member.

Investigation

Administration is responsible for investigating any potential violations of this Policy. Other community members (students, faculty/staff members, parents) may be asked to participate, as needed.

Retaliation is Prohibited

Retaliation against a student because the student has filed a bullying complaint or participates in a bullying investigation is prohibited.

A student who knowingly files a false bullying complaint or gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to disciplinary action, as shall any student who is found to have retaliated against another.

Restorative Practices

Restorative practices are actions that seek to repair relationships that have been damaged. They accomplish this by bringing awareness to the damaging action(s), addressing the feelings created from the event(s), encouraging a sense of remorse in the offender, and seeking forgiveness by the receiver. The range of restorative practices can be from a simple apology to community service at school.

When dealing with bullying, it is important to assess and protect the safety of all students and to establish consequences that teach appropriate behavior and promote empathy for victims. Consequences will be linked to the level of severity, and shall be age- and educationally- appropriate. Often, a series of consequences is imposed. For consequences to be successful, educational, and productive, adults must monitor and teach new behaviors on an ongoing basis.

A consequence can be categorized as restorative if it:

- Embodies a school value, such as respect, responsibility, kindness, or safety
- Allows the person who was bullied to feel safer
- Requires effort from the student who bullied, including taking time to reflect on an appropriate restitution
- Is relevant to the specific bullying situation, where possible
- Meets the needs of others
- Deters repetition of bullying because of the effort expended to make restitution and because of the learning involved

- Makes amends to the person bullied and/or creates a more caring, respectful, safer school environment

For consequences to be successful, educational, and productive, adults must monitor and teach new behaviors on an ongoing basis. It is critical that restitution be supervised. Students are encouraged to come up with restorative ideas of their own, but an adult must be involved in the final decision and performance of the restorative action.

In some cases, direct restitution may not be possible. In that event, restitution can be made that helps make the school environment safer, more caring, or more respectful for all students.